



THE
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STRATEGY

To: AANA
From: The Mellman Group, Inc.
Re: Public Opinion Regarding CRNAs And Medicare
Date: August 1, 2012

This analysis represents the findings of a survey of 800 voters representing the likely 2012 electorate who were interviewed by telephone July 25-30, 2012. The study uses a registration-based sample and has a margin of error of +/-3.5% at a 95% level of confidence. The margin of error is higher for subgroups.

Our recent survey demonstrates that Americans are in broad agreement about many key issues relating to certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) and the care they provide. Huge majorities say they are comfortable with receiving care from a CRNA, favor Medicare continuing to cover pain care services provided by CRNAs, and believe it is important that patients should have the ability to visit a CRNA or other licensed health professionals of their choosing.

Americans Are Comfortable With Receiving Care From Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists

A large majority of Americans expresses comfort with receiving health care services from certified registered nurse anesthetists. After being given a short description of what CRNAs are and the kind of care they provide¹, nearly eight in ten voters (79%) say they would be comfortable with a doctor referring them to a CRNA if they needed care for chronic pain, including 55% who say they would be *very* comfortable. Only 16% say they would be uncomfortable being referred to a CRNA.

Large majorities across every major demographic subgroup say they would be comfortable with receiving care from a CRNA, including 78% of men, 81% of women, 84% of Democrats, 77% of independents, 77% of Republicans, 78% of whites, and 80% of non-whites. Among seniors over 65 years old, 75% are comfortable with receiving care from a CRNA, including 52% who are very comfortable. The comfort level is even higher among the younger voters, ages 18-39, with 86% saying they would be comfortable, and 60% very comfortable.

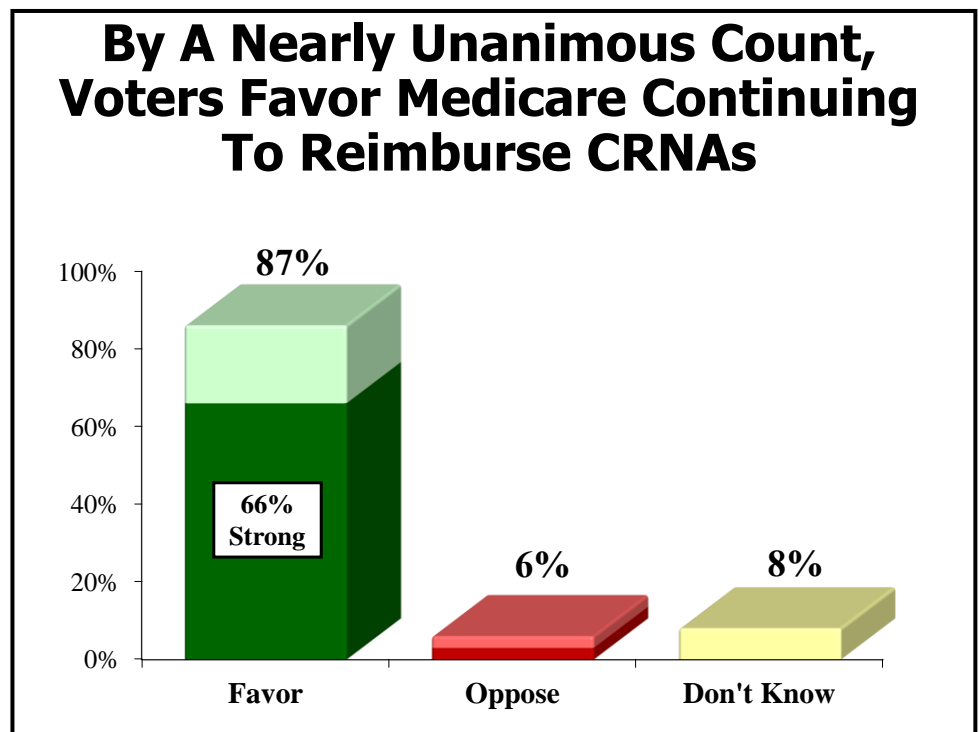
It is worth noting that substantial numbers of voters have received care from a pain care professional as well as from nurses and other non-physician caregivers. More than four in ten (42%) report having

¹ As you may know, more than 100 million Americans suffer from chronic pain each year, for which many receive specialized treatment. Some Americans, particularly the elderly population, receive treatment for chronic pain from certified registered nurse anesthetists, who specialize in anesthesia and pain care. National guidelines require these specialized nurses must receive a masters or doctoral degree, pass a national certification exam, and be re-certified every few years. If you or a member of your family needed chronic pain care, would you feel comfortable or uncomfortable with your doctor referring you or a loved one to a certified registered nurse anesthetist to provide that care?

been to a doctor or other health professional for a procedure for which they were under anesthetic, including 29% who received care for pain management and were not under complete anesthesia. Importantly, eight in ten (80%) voters who have received care for pain management or had been under anesthesia in the past five years agreed that they would be comfortable with receiving care from a CRNA, almost identical to the 79% of those who had not received pain care in the past five years, with similarly small differences among those who had and had not received care from a non-physician health care professional (82% and 76%, respectively).

Voters Strongly Favor Medicare Continuing To Cover Pain Care Services Provided By CRNAs And Other Qualified Providers

Even larger majorities want Medicare to continue covering pain care services that are provided by qualified providers like CRNAs. (See exact question wording below.)² Nearly nine in ten voters favor continuing the current policy (87%), including 66% who favor it strongly, dwarfing the 6% who oppose it. Again, support spans demographic and partisan boundaries. Ninety percent (90%) of Democrats, 86% of independents, 84% of Republicans, 85% of men, 88% of women, 87% of whites, and 86%



of non-whites join 87% of seniors who think Medicare should continue to cover pain care services covered by CRNAs and other qualified providers. Nine percent (9%) or fewer are opposed among every major demographic subgroup. There are few issues in American politics that inspire so little opposition.

Again, support for the policy is just as strong among voters who have received pain care services in the past five years, with 86% saying they favor Medicare continuing to reimburse CRNAs and only 6% opposed, compared to 87% of voters who had not received pain care services.

² As you may know, for more than a decade, the Medicare program has covered pain care services provided by qualified licensed providers, including nurse anesthetists and physicians. Do you favor or oppose continuing this policy?

A Patient's Ability To Visit A CRNA Or Other Licensed Health Professional Of His Or Her Choosing Is Viewed As Very Important By Nearly All Voters

Respondents were read a list of statements pertaining to chronic pain care and asked how important they found each one in health care coverage relating to chronic pain. Nearly all voters feel that it was very important to them that "The responsibility of deciding a patient's care should lie between the patient and their health care provider" (89%) and "Government bureaucracy should not interfere with a patient's ability to see the qualified healthcare specialist of his or her choosing" (86%). For both of these statements, 42% believe they are one of the most important factors in health care and pain management.

There are similarly strong feelings about items directly related to CRNAs and Medicare. An identical 86% believe that it is at least very important that "patients should have the ability to visit a nurse anesthetist or other licensed health professionals of their choosing to keep treatment accessible and affordable." Eighty-five percent (85%) agree with the same statement after removing the term "to keep treatment accessible and affordable." And more than seven in ten (71%) think it is at least very important that "direct reimbursements for health care coverage should be permitted for all qualified health professionals providing chronic pain care services."

Conclusion

In summary, it is clear that voters of all ages have strong feelings about these issues surrounding pain management and Medicare coverage. They favor having coverage and direct reimbursement for CRNAs, and feel even more strongly that government should not get in the way of their health care decisions and their relationship with the health care provider of their choosing.

<i>Now I'm going to read some statements about health care coverage specifically related to chronic pain. For each, tell me if it is one of the most important things to you, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all to you in health care specifically related to chronic pain.</i>	% One of the Most Important or Very Important
The responsibility of deciding a patient's care should lie between the patient and their healthcare provider	89% (42% one of most)
Government bureaucracy should not interfere with a patient's ability to see the qualified healthcare specialist of his or her choosing	86% (42% one of most)
Patients should have the ability to visit a nurse anesthetist or other licensed health professionals of their choosing to keep treatment accessible and affordable	86% (35% one of most)
Patients should have the ability to visit a nurse anesthetist or other licensed health professionals of their choosing	85% (38% one of most)
Paperwork and restrictions should be kept to a minimum to help the broadest number of people with the least amount of red tape	78% (31% one of most)
Direct reimbursements for health care coverage should be permitted for all qualified health professionals providing chronic pain care services	71% (26% one of most)