

Polling: Public Wants States to Use Federal Funds to Cover Uninsured Through Medicaid
January 22, 2013

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Jan. 23, 2013 – Public opinion polling [released](#) today by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) shows that registered voters in key states want their state to accept federal funds that are available to broaden access to health coverage through Medicaid, a move that would enable millions of currently uninsured people nationwide to get lifesaving preventive care and treatments for cancer and other serious diseases.

The polls, conducted by a bipartisan pair of polling firms, Lake Research Partners and GS Strategy Group, were fielded in in [Florida](#), [Iowa](#), [Kentucky](#), [Michigan](#), [New Jersey](#), [New Mexico](#), and [Texas](#)—a diverse set of states in terms of geography, politics and population that have been wrestling with the decision of whether to make health coverage under Medicaid available to individuals and families up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level, as urged by the Affordable Care Act.

“States have an opportunity to provide millions of currently uninsured people nationwide with lifesaving health coverage through Medicaid, and public sentiment in various areas of the country is decidedly in favor of states using available federal dollars to pay for it,” said Chris Hansen, president of ACS CAN, the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. “If states make that choice, families across the country will have the security of knowing they have access to proven cancer screenings and treatments they otherwise could not afford.”

Respondents in the seven states polled were informed that federal funds are available to pay 100 percent of the costs to cover more uninsured people through Medicaid beginning in 2014, with the federal share gradually decreasing to 90 percent. Respondents in each state were two to three times more likely to support accepting federal dollars to cover more people than they were to prefer turning down federal funds and leaving vulnerable populations uninsured.

State	% in Favor of Accepting Federal Funds	% Opposed to Accepting Funds
Florida	63	25
Iowa	67	27
Kentucky	63	23
Michigan	63	23
New Jersey	70	21
New Mexico	65	23
Texas	58	30

By similar margins, voters agree more with common arguments to accept federal funds than with arguments to reject the funds. The arguments were presented as follows:

Here are two sides to the issue.

Side A says we can cover more people in [state] and save taxpayer dollars that are currently spent on treating uninsured people in emergency rooms. Covering more people gives hard-working families the security of knowing they can get preventive care and see a doctor when they need to. The alternative is people showing up in the emergency room when they are sicker. By accepting the money, we could cover more people and save taxpayer dollars.

Side B says [state] will eventually have to pay 10% of the costs of covering these people, and even more if the federal government fails to follow through on its promises. We cannot afford to spend even more on health care coverage, which is already a big part of the state budget. We have too many other priorities in the state that need attention, like education and roads. By turning down the money, we could avoid future increases in state health care spending.
Which side do you agree with more?

Voters in each state agreed more with using federal dollars to increase access to Medicaid coverage by the following proportions:

State	% Who Agree More with Accepting Federal Funds	% Who Agree More with Turning the Money Down
Florida	62	28
Iowa	55	34
Kentucky	60	30
Michigan	62	29
New Jersey	65	29
New Mexico	61	29
Michigan	55	35

Majorities of self-described Democrats and Independents in each state favored accepting the federal funding. A minority of self-described Republicans in each state felt the same way. But in every other demographic group (determined by age, gender, ethnicity, income and education) a majority of respondents supported accepting federal dollars to increase access to Medicaid coverage.

Strong majorities of Latinos favored accepting federal dollars. In states with especially large Latino populations, Florida and Texas, Latinos were in favor by 66 percent and 73 percent respectively.

“Beginning next year, Medicaid will offer a defined set of essential benefits to prevent and treat a serious disease such as cancer,” Hansen said. “Broadening access to Medicaid coverage will save lives and reduce health care costs.”

ACS CAN is working in every state to support strong implementation of provisions of the ACA that enable people with cancer or at risk for cancer to access critical prevention measures such as mammograms and colonoscopies, treatments and follow-up care for cancer.

More information about the polling is available at www.acscan.org.

ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit www.acscan.org.