



# What Kentuckians Think About

*Access to Affordable, Quality Healthcare for all Americans*

Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky

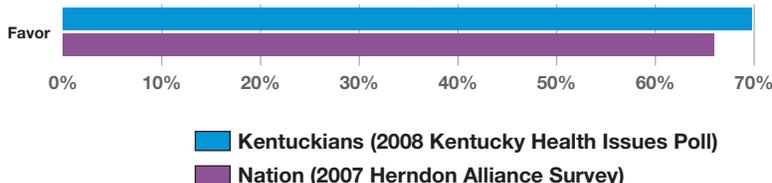


Nine in ten Kentuckians (91%) favor providing access to affordable, quality healthcare to all Americans, according to the 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll*. Of those who favor providing access, the majority favor it even if it means raising taxes (72%) or a major role for the federal government (70%). These rates are slightly higher than the national rates from the 2007 *Herndon Alliance Survey*.

**Do you favor providing access to affordable, quality healthcare for all Americans, even if it means raising taxes?**



**Do you favor providing access to affordable, quality healthcare for all Americans, even if it means a major role for the federal government?**



The 2008 *Poll* asked Kentuckians specific questions about access to affordable, quality healthcare. Over 80% of Kentuckians agreed that:

- the government should guarantee that everyone has access to affordable, quality healthcare (67% strongly agree, 19% agree somewhat);
- the government has a responsibility to guarantee that people get quality, affordable healthcare (62% strongly agree, 22% agree somewhat);
- people have a right to the very best healthcare they can find when they or their families need it (77% agree strongly, 16% agree somewhat); and
- quality, affordable healthcare coverage is a fundamental human right (56% strongly agree, 27% agree somewhat).

*Kentuckians more and less likely within demographic groups to strongly agree that the government should guarantee that everyone has access to affordable, quality healthcare*

Demographic Group	% who strongly agree
<b>Kentucky</b>	67%
<b>Sex</b>	
Female	73%
Male	61%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than high school	77%
College graduate	49%
<b>Family Income</b>	
Below 100% FPG <sup>1</sup>	76%
Above 200% FPG	60%
<b>Health Insurance</b>	
Uninsured	76%
Insured	65%

<sup>1</sup> 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2007 was an annual income of \$20,650 for a family of 4.

*Kentuckians more and less likely within demographic groups to strongly agree that people have a right to the very best healthcare they can find when they or their families need it*

Demographic Group	% who strongly agree
<b>Kentucky</b>	77%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	79%
African American	61%
<b>Age</b>	
30 and over	82%
18 to 29	65%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than high school	84%
College graduate	65%
<b>Family Income</b>	
Below 100% FPG <sup>1</sup>	87%
Above 200% FPG	77%

<sup>1</sup> 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2007 was an annual income of \$20,650 for a family of 4.



# What Kentuckians Think About

## Why Healthcare Costs Are out of Control

Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati  
and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky



The 2008 Kentucky Health Issues Poll asked Kentuckians why they thought healthcare costs were out of control. Specifically, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed that the reason healthcare costs are out of control is that:

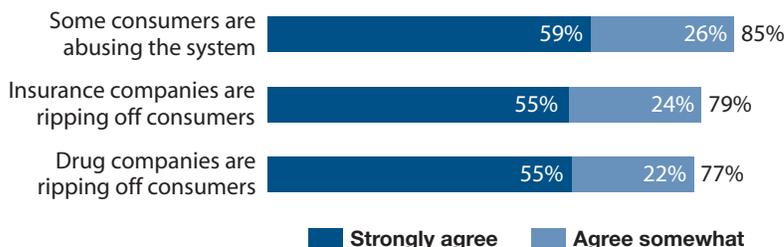
- insurance companies are ripping off consumers
- drug companies are ripping off consumers
- some consumers are abusing the system

Respondents were asked about the three reasons separately; they were not asked which one reason they felt was most responsible for costs being out of control.

About 85% of Kentuckians agreed strongly or somewhat that healthcare costs are out of control because some consumers are abusing the system. Just under 8 in 10 Kentuckians agreed strongly or somewhat that healthcare costs are out of control because insurance companies (79%) or drug companies (77%) are ripping off consumers.

In general, as income and education level increased, Kentuckians were less likely to **strongly agree** that healthcare costs were out of control for any of the three reasons but slightly more likely to **agree somewhat** that healthcare costs were out of control for any of the three reasons.

### The reason that healthcare costs are out of control is that...



### Kentuckians who Agreed that Some Consumers Are Abusing the System

Kentuckians who **strongly agreed** that the reason healthcare costs are out of control is that some consumers are abusing the system included those:

- living below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines<sup>1</sup> (FPG; 70%)
- with less than a high school education (65%)
- living in Western Kentucky (65%)
- who are uninsured (64%)

### Kentuckians who Agreed that Insurance Companies Are Ripping off Consumers

Kentuckians who **strongly agreed** that the reason healthcare costs

are out of control is that insurance companies are ripping off consumers included those:

- living below 100% FPG (70%)
- who are uninsured (64%)
- with less than a high school education (65%)
- who are African American (62%)

### Kentuckians who Agreed that Drug Companies Are Ripping off Consumers

Kentuckians who **strongly agreed** that the reason healthcare costs are out of control is that drug companies are ripping off consumers included those:

- ages 65 and older (73%)
- living below 100% FPG (67%)
- ages 46–64 (63%)
- living between 100–200% FPG (61%)
- with less than a high school education (60%)

<sup>1</sup> 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2007 was an annual income of \$20,650 for a family of 4.





# What Kentuckians Think About

## Important Issues for the 2008 Presidential Election

Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky



Healthcare and healthcare reform are among the popular topics discussed in the campaigns for the 2008 Presidential election. The *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* asked Kentuckians questions related to healthcare and its influence on their vote.

### Important Issues in Deciding the Vote for President

Over the last few months, national polls have shown a slight shift in the issues that would affect people's choice for president. Through 2007, the *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Election 2008*<sup>1</sup> found that the single most important issue in people's choice for president was the war in Iraq, followed by healthcare and the economy. These priorities changed in early 2008 to (in order):

1. the economy (39%)
2. the war in Iraq (30%)
3. healthcare (18%)

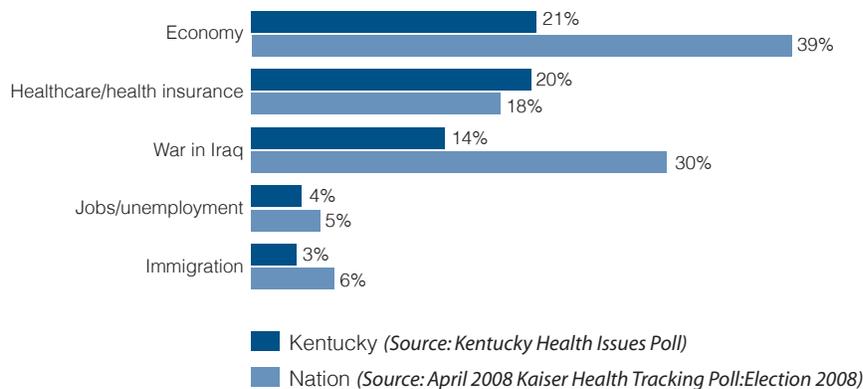
Kentuckians have slightly different priorities for what would affect their choice for president. The single most important issue in Kentuckians' choice for president was (in order):

1. the economy (21%)
2. healthcare (20%)
3. the war in Iraq (14%)

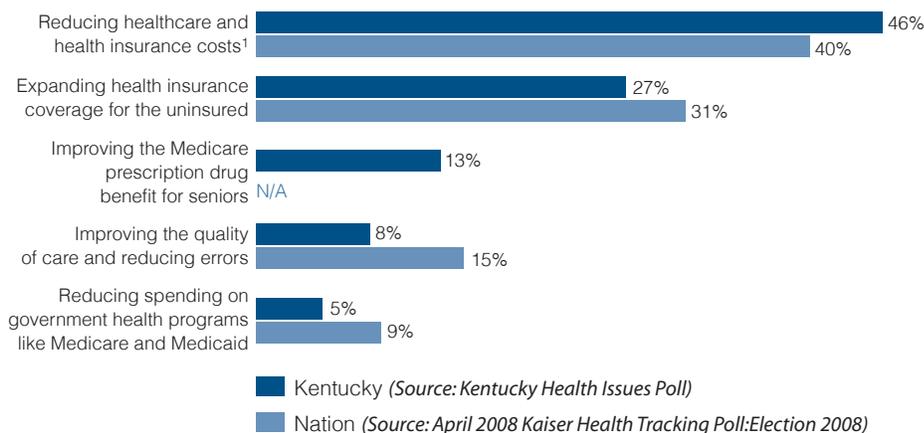
*(over)*

<sup>1</sup> Results of the Kaiser Health Tracking Poll can be found online at [www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/elections2008.cfm](http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/elections2008.cfm).

Suppose the 2008 election for President was held today. If the presidential election were held today, what do you think would be the MOST important issue in deciding your vote for President? (Only the top five responses from the Kentucky Health Issues Poll are shown here.)



Which one of the following healthcare issues would you MOST like to hear the 2008 presidential candidates talk about over the next two years and focus on in any health reform plan they may develop?



<sup>1</sup> The Kentucky Health Issues Poll had "reducing healthcare costs" and "reducing health insurance costs" as two separate choices, while the Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Election 2008 had them as one choice. We combined Kentucky responses here for the sake of comparison to the national data. As separate items, "reducing healthcare costs" was chosen by 25% of Kentuckians, and "reducing health insurance costs" was chosen by 21% of Kentuckians.

Kentuckians most likely to consider the economy as the most important issue included those:

- who are college graduates (36%)
- living in Northern Kentucky (30%)
- living above 200% of the federal poverty guidelines<sup>2</sup> (FPG; 28%)

Kentuckians most likely to consider healthcare as the most important included those:

- who are African American (39%)
- living below 100% FPG (27%)
- living in Louisville (25%)

## Health Issues Kentuckians Would Like to Hear about

When asked which health issues they would MOST like to hear candidates talk about and focus on in a health reform plan, Kentuckians favored reducing healthcare and health insurance costs (45%) and expanding health insurance for the uninsured (27%). These were similar to the national results of the *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Election 2008* for April 2008.

Unlike the *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll*, the *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* included “reducing healthcare costs” and “reducing health insurance costs” as two separate items. When these two items are considered separately, the rankings for Kentuckians change.

Kentuckians would MOST like to hear the candidates talk about and focus on (in order):

1. expanding health insurance coverage for the uninsured (27%)
2. reducing healthcare costs (25%)
3. reducing health insurance costs (21%)
4. improving the Medicare prescription drug benefit for seniors (13%)
5. improving the quality of care and reducing errors (8%)
6. reducing spending on government health programs like Medicare and Medicaid (5%)

Kentuckians most likely to favor expanding coverage for the uninsured included those:

- who are African American (44%)
- ages 18–29 (35%)

There were no major differences among demographic groups of Kentuckians most likely to favor reducing healthcare costs.

Kentuckians most likely to favor reducing health insurance costs included those:

- who are college graduates (29%)
- living in the Louisville area (28%)
- living above 200% FPG (26%)

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<sup>2</sup> 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2007 was an annual income of \$41,300 for a family of 4.



# What Kentuckians Think About Their Own Health Status

Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati  
and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky



The 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* asked Kentuckians if they would say their own health was excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor. Almost half of all respondents rated their own health as excellent (20%) or very good (29%).

## Excellent or Very Good Health Status

As age increased, the percentage of people rating their health as excellent or very good decreased. As education level and income increased, the percentage who rated their health as excellent or very good increased.

There were minor differences between men and women and between African Americans and whites.

Kentuckians more likely to rate their own health as **excellent** or **very good** included those:

- with a college degree (76%)
- living above 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG; 66%)<sup>1</sup>
- ages 18 to 29 (64%)
- living in Northern Kentucky (58%)
- with some college education but not a college degree (58%)

- living in the Lexington area (57%)
- living in the Louisville area (56%)
- ages 30 to 45 (55%)

## Fair or Poor Health Status

Just over 2 in 10 Kentuckians rated their health as fair (12%) or poor (9%). As education level and income decreased, the percentage who rated their health as fair or poor increased. As age increased, the percentage who rated their health as fair or poor increased.

There were minor differences between men and women and between African Americans and whites.

Kentuckians more likely to rate their own health as **fair** or **poor** included those:

- living below 100% FPG (44%)
- with less than a high school education (41%)
- ages 65 and over (38%)
- living in the Appalachian Area Development Districts (ADDs; 34%)
- ages 46 to 64 (32%)
- living at 100–200% FPG (29%)

Kentuckians **more** and **less** likely within demographic groups to rate their own health as excellent or very good

Demographic Group	% who rate health as excellent or very good
<b>Kentucky</b>	49%
<b>Age</b>	
18 to 29	64%
65 and over	31%
<b>Education</b>	
College graduate	76%
Less than high school	28%
<b>Family Income</b>	
Above 200% FPG <sup>1</sup>	66%
Below 100% FPG	24%
<b>Health Insurance</b>	
Insured	51%
Uninsured	45%
<b>Geographic Region</b>	
Northern Kentucky	58%
Appalachian ADDs	38%

<sup>1</sup> 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2007 was an annual income of \$20,650 for a family of 4.

<sup>1</sup> 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2007 was an annual income of \$41,300 for a family of 4.





# What Kentuckians Think About

*the State of the State and Policy Priorities*

Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky



About 8 in 10 Kentuckians rate Kentucky as an excellent (38%) or good (43%) place to live, according to the 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll*. Another 15% give it a mark of fair. Kentuckians ages 65 and over were highest in their praise: 52% rated Kentucky an excellent place to live and another 39% rated it good. Young adults were less favorable, with 35% giving an excellent rating and 38% good.

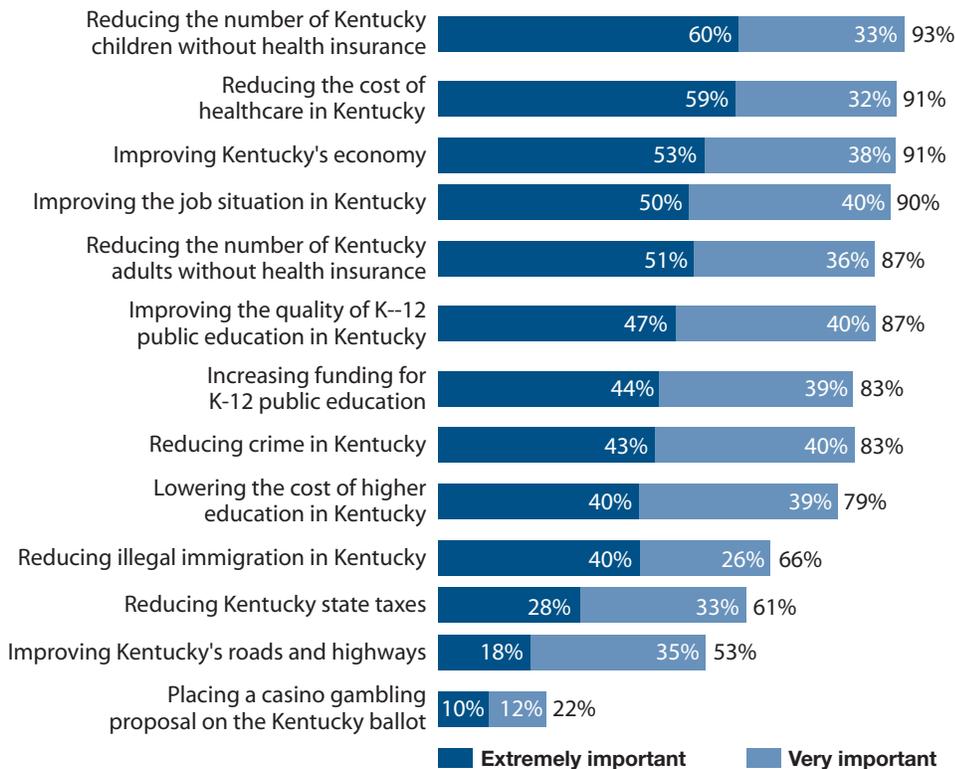
The 2008 *Poll* also asked respondents, "How important is it to you that Governor Beshear and the Kentucky Legislature work on each of the following issues in the next year?" Kentuckians placed greatest importance on:

- Reducing the number of children without insurance
- Reducing the cost of healthcare
- Improving Kentucky's economy
- Improving Kentucky's job situation

There was geographic variation on the importance of issues:

- "Reducing the number of children without health insurance" was the only item considered extremely or very important to address by 90% or more of respondents in all five regions of the state.
- "Reducing the costs of healthcare" and "Improving the state's economy" were considered extremely or very important to address by 90%

## How important is it to you that Governor Beshear and the Kentucky Legislature work on each of the following issues in the next year?



or more of respondents in four of the five regions.

- In the Appalachian Area Development Districts (ADDs), quality and funding of K-12 education and "Reducing the number of adults without health insurance" were deemed very or extremely important by 90% or more of respondents.

The *Poll* also found:

- African American respondents gave greatest importance to

"Reducing Crime" (100%) and "Reducing the number of children without health insurance" (100%).

- As education level increased, the percentage of people considering topics extremely or very important to address decreased. For those with some college education, only two areas drew 90% or more: "Improving the economy" and "Reducing the cost of healthcare."

These findings are from the *Kentucky Health Issues Poll*, funded by The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky. The *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* was conducted January 16-February 11, 2008, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A random sample of 1,632 adults from throughout Kentucky was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to ±2.4%. In addition to sampling error, there are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects that can introduce error or bias. For more information about the *Kentucky Health Issues Poll*, please visit [www.healthyky.org](http://www.healthyky.org) or [www.healthfoundation.org/khip.html](http://www.healthfoundation.org/khip.html).



# What Kentuckians Think About *The Importance of Medicaid*

Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky



Medicaid is a health insurance program run by the states that provides healthcare coverage to low-income adults and children. Each state determines its own eligibility guidelines for Medicaid. Kentucky's Medicaid program, called *KyHealth Choices*, has four plans that cover four specific groups of low-income people:

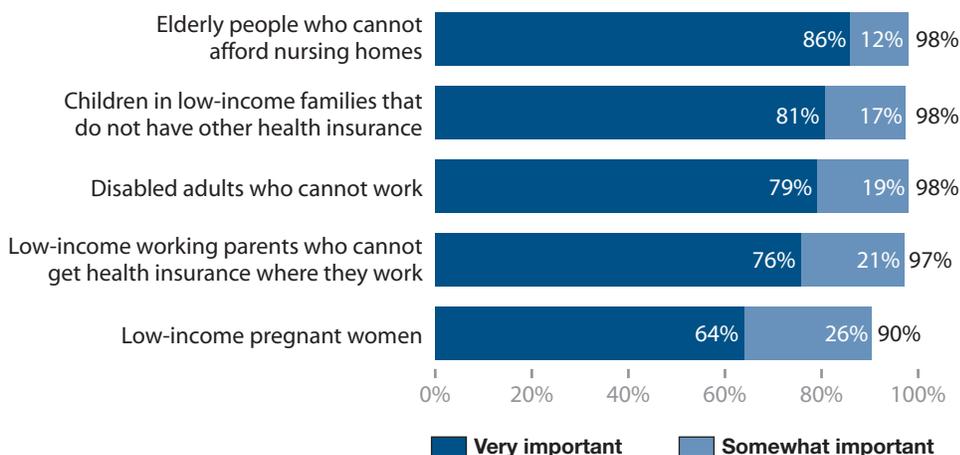
- **Family Choices** covers most children, including those eligible for the state Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- **Optimum Choices** covers Kentuckians with mental retardation who need long-term care
- **Comprehensive Choices** covers elderly Kentuckians who live in nursing facilities and Kentuckians with acquired brain injuries
- **Global Choices** covers the general Medicaid population, including low-income adults and certain people with Medicare

For more information on the specific eligibility requirements for each of the *KyHealth Choices* plans, please visit the Kentucky Department of Medicaid Service's web site at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dms/>.

## The Importance of Medicaid

The 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* found that the majority of

How important is it to you that Kentucky Medicaid provide healthcare coverage to the following groups of people?



Kentuckians think that Kentucky Medicaid is very important for eligible Kentuckians who otherwise wouldn't have health insurance, including elderly people who cannot afford nursing homes, children in low-income families, disabled adults, low-income working parents, and low-income pregnant women.

## Ways to Pay for the Medicaid Program

Like most states, Kentucky is facing budget cuts to its state programs, including Medicaid. The 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* gave Kentuckians a choice of options they would most like to see Kentucky lawmakers choose if the Commonwealth is unable to afford healthcare coverage for everyone who is eligible for the Kentucky Medicaid Program.

Kentuckians preferred to find ways to raise money to pay for Medicaid rather than reducing services or the number of people eligible for the program. In order from the most popular choice to the least, Kentuckians preferred:

- Increasing the tax on cigarettes (50%)
- Cutting other state-funded programs (16%)
- Increasing the state sales tax (11%)
- Increasing the state income tax (10%)
- Reducing the number of adults who receive health coverage through Medicaid (6%)
- Reducing the number of health care services covered by Medicaid (5%)

These findings are from the *Kentucky Health Issues Poll*, funded by The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky. The *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* was conducted January 16–February 11, 2008, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A random sample of 1,632 adults from throughout Kentucky was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to ±2.4%. In addition to sampling error, there are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects that can introduce error or bias. For more information about the *Kentucky Health Issues Poll*, please visit [www.healthky.org](http://www.healthky.org) or [www.healthfoundation.org/khip.html](http://www.healthfoundation.org/khip.html).



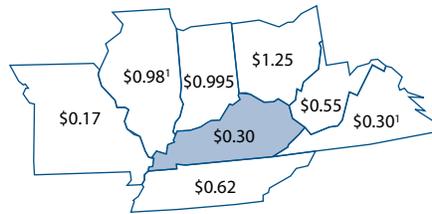
# What Kentuckians Think About *Increasing the State Tax on Cigarettes*

Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky



Like many states, Kentucky is facing a current and future state budget deficit. Concerns about the state deficit, the high rate of adult smokers in the state, and the negative health affects of smoking have renewed Kentucky's interest in an increase in the state cigarette tax. The 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* asked Kentuckians if they would support an increase in the state tax on cigarettes.

also has a lower cigarette tax rate than most of its neighbors.



Source: Federation of Tax Administrators

<sup>1</sup> According to state laws, counties and cities in Illinois and Virginia may impose additional taxes on cigarettes of up to \$0.15.

## Smokers in Kentucky

Kentucky ranks first in the nation for the rate of adult smokers. The *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* found that 31% of Kentucky adults were current smokers, compared to the national average of 21%.

In general, as age, income, or education level increased, the percentage of Kentucky adults who smoke decreased. Smoking rates were highest in the Appalachian Area Development Districts (ADDs) at 36% and lowest in the Louisville Area at 26%.

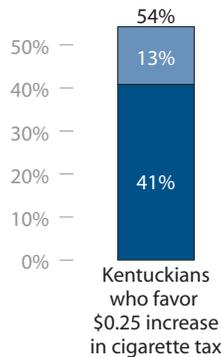
## State Cigarette Taxes

As of January 1, 2008, state cigarette taxes range from \$2.575 in New Jersey to \$.07 in South Carolina, according to the Federation of Tax Administrators. The median tax rate for the nation is \$1.00 per pack.

At \$0.30 per pack, Kentucky has the third lowest state tax rate on cigarettes in the country. Kentucky

## Support for Higher State Cigarette Tax

Just over half of Kentuckians surveyed (54%) said they would favor a \$0.25 increase in the state cigarette tax.



■ Strongly favor    ■ Favor somewhat

Of just those who favor the \$0.25 increase, 74% would favor a \$0.75 increase. (Note: respondents who did not support the \$0.25 increase were not asked if they supported the \$0.75 increase.)

(over)

Kentuckians *more and less* likely to favor a 25-cent increase in the state tobacco tax

Demographic	% who favor a 25-cent increase
<b>Kentucky</b>	54%
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	57%
Female	51%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	55%
African American	50%
<b>Age</b>	
30 to 45	57%
18 to 29	48%
<b>Education</b>	
College graduate	81%
Less than high school	44%
<b>Family Income</b>	
Above 200% FPG <sup>1</sup>	66%
Between 100–200% FPG	46%
Below 100% FPG	46%
<b>Health Insurance</b>	
Insured	58%
Uninsured	39%
<b>Smoking Status</b>	
Never smoked	73%
Current smoker	20%

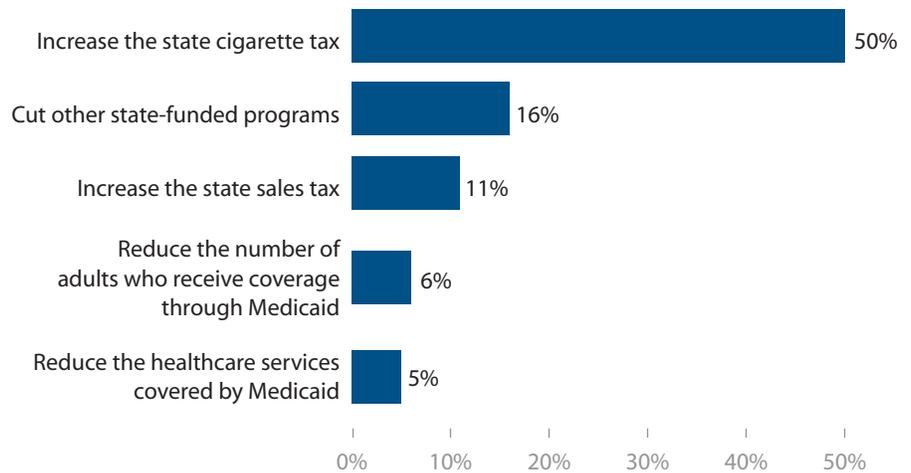
<sup>1</sup> 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2007 was an annual income of \$20,650 for a family of 4.

## Support for Higher State Cigarette Taxes to Cover all Kentuckians Eligible for Medicaid

The majority of Kentuckians agree that the Kentucky Medicaid program is important for elderly people who can not afford nursing homes, low-income working parents, children in low-income families, low-income pregnant women, and disabled adults who can not work.

The 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* gave Kentuckians a choice of options they would most like to see Kentucky lawmakers choose if the Commonwealth is unable to afford healthcare coverage for everyone who is eligible for the Kentucky Medicaid Program. Half of Kentuckians chose an increase in the state cigarette tax as a way to cover all Kentuckians eligible for Medicaid.

Suppose the Commonwealth of Kentucky is unable to afford health coverage for everyone who is eligible for the Kentucky Medicaid Program. Which of the following options would you MOST like to see Kentucky lawmakers choose to address this?





# Kentuckians' Experiences With Health Insurance Coverage

Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati  
and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky



According to the 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll*, 1 in 5 of all Kentucky adults (20%) were uninsured at the time of the *Poll*. The 2006 *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey* (BRFSS) found that 17% of Kentucky adults were uninsured at the time of the *Survey*.

The 2008 *Poll* also found that more than 1 in 4 (28%) had been uninsured at some point in the past year, including currently. In general, the 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* found that as age, income, and education level increased, the percentage who were uninsured either currently or in the past year decreased.

## Types of Insurance Kentuckians Have

Of the Kentuckians with healthcare coverage, about 60% were covered through an employer-based plan, 26% were covered through public insurance, and 14% were covered through other insurance plans, including ones they bought themselves.

Employer-based coverage means respondents have coverage through their or their spouses' employers. Public coverage means respondents have coverage through Medicaid, Medicare, or some combination of coverage with at least one of these two public plans.

Insured Kentuckians more likely to have employer-based coverage included those:

- ages 30–45 (85%)
- with a college degree (80%)
- living above 200% of the federal poverty guidelines<sup>1</sup> (FPG; 79%)

Insured Kentuckians more likely to have public coverage included those:

- ages 65 and over (79%)
- living below 100% FPG (61%)
- with less than a high school education (53%)

## Insurance Status of Kentuckians Ages 18–64

Because 94% of Kentucky adults ages 65 and over are insured, the *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* looked at the insurance status of Kentuckians ages 18–64. Almost 1 in 4 Kentuckians ages 18–64 (23%) were uninsured at the time of the *Poll*, and almost 3 in 10 (31%) had been uninsured at some point in the past 12 months, including currently.

As age, income, and education level increased, the percentage of Kentuckians ages 18–64 who were uninsured either currently or in the past year decreased.

<sup>1</sup> 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2007 was an annual income of \$20,650 for a family of 4.

Kentuckians *more* and *less* likely within demographic groups to be uninsured

Demographic Group	% currently uninsured	
	all adults	ages 18–64
<b>Kentucky</b>	20%	23%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	21%	24%
African American	12%	13%
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 29	36%	36%
46 to 64	16%	16%
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school	32%	39%
College graduate	4%	4%
<b>Family Income</b>		
Below 100% FPG <sup>1</sup>	38%	45%
Above 200% FPG	8%	9%

Demographic Group	% uninsured during the past year	
	all adults	ages 18–64
<b>Kentucky</b>	28%	31%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	28%	32%
African American	17%	18%
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 29	44%	44%
46 to 64	19%	18%
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school	37%	44%
College graduate	6%	7%
<b>Family Income</b>		
Below 100% FPG <sup>1</sup>	47%	55%
Above 200% FPG	13%	14%

<sup>1</sup> 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2007 was an annual income of \$20,650 for a family of 4.