



# What Ohioans Think about *Ways to Increase the Number of Insured Americans*

October 2009



Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati



Healthcare reform is in the national news. However, the real opinions of the public are not always heard among the noise. To find out what Ohioans think, The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati conducted a Fall 2009 *Ohio Health Issues Poll* focused entirely on healthcare reform.

One of the stated goals of healthcare reform is to increase the number of Americans covered by health insurance. There are many ways to do that. The *Poll* asked Ohio adults if they favored or opposed specific strategies to increase the number of insured Americans, including individual mandates, employer mandates, and tax breaks.

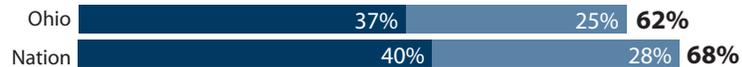
## Ohioans Favor an Individual Mandate

All healthcare reform proposals currently being reviewed in Congress include an individual mandate. This would require that every American have some form of health insurance, either from their employer, from a public program like Medicare or Medicaid, or another source. All the proposals also provide financial assistance or exemptions for individuals and families with lower incomes.

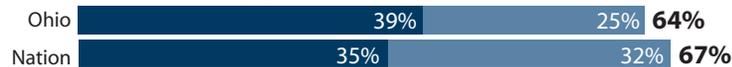
Over 6 in 10 Ohioans (62%) favored requiring all Americans

**Do you favor or oppose the following strategies to help increase the number of Americans with health insurance?** (Graph presents only those who said they strongly or somewhat favor each strategy.)

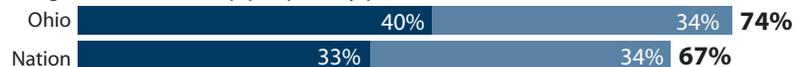
Requiring all Americans to have health insurance, either from their employer or from another source, with financial help for those who can't afford it



Requiring employers to offer health insurance to their workers or pay money into a government fund that will pay to cover those without insurance



Offering tax breaks to help people buy private insurance



■ Strongly favor      ■ Somewhat favor

Sources: Ohio data are from the Fall 2009 Ohio Health Issues Poll, available at [www.healthfoundation.org/ohip.html](http://www.healthfoundation.org/ohip.html). National data are from the September 2009 Kaiser Health Tracking Poll, available at [www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/posr092909pkg.cfm](http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/posr092909pkg.cfm).

to have health insurance. This is slightly lower than the percentage of respondents nationally (68%) who favor the individual mandate.<sup>1</sup>

## Ohioans Favor an Employer Mandate

Many healthcare reform proposals currently being reviewed in Congress include an employer mandate. This would that require every employer, with some

subsidies and exceptions for small businesses, offer health insurance or pay a fine. The money would go into a government fund that will help low-income people pay their premiums.

Over 6 in 10 Ohioans (64%) favored requiring all employers to offer health insurance to their workers or pay the fine. This is slightly lower than the percentage of respondents nationally (67%) who favor the employer mandate.

<sup>1</sup> National data are from the September 2009 Kaiser Health Tracking Poll, available at [www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/posr092909pkg.cfm](http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/posr092909pkg.cfm)

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## **Ohioans Favor Offering Tax Breaks to Buy Private Health Insurance**

None of the healthcare reform proposals currently being reviewed in Congress include tax breaks for people buying health insurance on their own. These tax breaks would offset the higher rates these people pay compared to those who get their health insurance through their employer.

Almost 3 out of 4 Ohioans (74%) favored offering tax breaks for purchasing private health insurance. This is slightly higher than the percentage of respondents nationally (67%) who favor this.