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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 21, 2017

Majorities Oppose All Key Provisions of House-Passed Healthcare Bill, Including in Very Red Districts

WASHINGTON – While Senate Republicans move toward finalizing their healthcare plan, a new in-depth survey finds that all of the key provisions of the House-passed American Health Care Act (AHCA) are opposed by clear majorities. Overall, 67 percent oppose the legislation.

The study, conducted by the University of Maryland’s Program for Public Consultation (PPC), includes a six-way breakdown of voters by their congressional districts ranging from very red (Republican) to very blue (Democratic) districts and finds that even in very red districts majorities oppose nearly all of the key provisions and 63 percent oppose it overall.

Seven-in-ten independents oppose the AHCA, as well as a near-unanimous 94 percent of Democrats. Among Republicans, 64 percent favor the AHCA overall, but majorities oppose several of its major provisions.

“Senate Republicans face an uphill climb in crafting a version of the AHCA that will get majority public support, even in red states,” said PPC Director Steven Kull. “While the Senate is talking about adjusting the House bill, it is still largely working with the same components which are quite unpopular.”

Allowing Consideration of Pre-existing Conditions: Allowing states to get waivers that would allow insurance companies to not cover or to charge higher rates to individuals with pre-existing conditions is another AHCA provision that encounters overwhelming and bipartisan opposition. More than three-quarters are opposed, as are six-in-ten Republicans. Three-quarters are also opposed in very red districts, as well as more than eight-in-ten in very blue districts.

Allowing Higher Premium Rates for Older Individuals: AHCA allows insurance companies to charge older individuals five times more than younger people, as compared to three times more under the Affordable Care Act (ACA or Obamacare). This provision was the least popular provision with eight-in-ten opposing it. This was strikingly unanimous with two-thirds of Republicans opposed, as well as eight-in-ten in very red districts.

Repealing Requirement for Covering Essential Benefits: The AHCA gives states the ability to allow insurance companies to offer plans that do not include certain benefits required under the ACA, thus enabling lower-cost plans. This provision is opposed by two-thirds, with six-in-ten are opposed in very red districts as compared to three-quarters in very blue ones. Six in ten independents and more than eight-in-ten Democrats oppose it. But a majority of Republicans are in favor.

Replacing Individual Mandate With Renewal Penalty: The highest level of support of all the AHCA provisions was for its proposal to replace the ACA’s mandate for individuals to have

health insurance with a renewal penalty for those who let it lapse. However, support is still less than half (44 percent) and a majority (55 percent) is opposed. In very red districts views were evenly divided, while in very blue districts two-thirds are opposed. A modest majority of independents (53 percent) are opposed, as are 79 percent of Democrats. Seventy-one percent of Republicans favor it.

Healthcare for Low-Income Populations: Six-in-ten oppose the general AHCA plan for low-income populations, including 53 percent in very red districts. Evaluating each of its components, majorities find unacceptable its general reduction in spending on Medicaid (55 percent), its repealing of the expansion of Medicaid (53 percent), its plan for premium support (56 percent) and out of pocket expenses (59 percent), and its repeal of the taxes, primarily on higher incomes, that support the current plan (53 percent).

In contrast, evaluating the plan for low-income populations in the ACA, 62 percent find it acceptable overall, including 57 percent in very red districts. Also majorities find acceptable its plan for Medicaid expansion (53 percent), premium support (61 percent), and out of pocket expenses (57 percent) and its tax plan (57 percent).

Interestingly, half of Republicans find the ACA plan acceptable and two-thirds find it at least tolerable. Also, most components are found acceptable to majorities of Republicans, with larger majorities finding acceptable the ACA's plan for premium support (62 percent) and out of pocket expenses (57 percent) than that of AHCA (55 percent and 54 percent respectively). The exception is the ACA's tax plan, which is found acceptable by just 45 percent, but at least tolerable by six-in-ten.

Repealing Employer Mandate: Two-thirds oppose the AHCA's repeal of the requirement that employers with more than 50 employees provide healthcare insurance, with opposition ranging from six-in-ten in very red districts to three-in-four in very blue districts. Sixty-two percent of independents are opposed, as are 86 percent of Democrats. However, 59 percent of Republicans favor it.

Disallowing Access to Planned Parenthood: Sixty-seven percent oppose the AHCA provision not allowing Medicaid benefits to be used at Planned Parenthood clinics, including 61 percent in very red districts. Sixty-nine percent of independents are opposed as are 92 percent of Democrats. However, 63 percent of Republicans favor it.

The survey was conducted online between June 8 – 13, 2017 with a national probability-based sample of 2,430 registered voters, provided by Nielsen Scarborough from Nielsen Scarborough's sample of respondents, recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of households. The margin of error was (+/-) 2 percent.

The survey's report can be found at:

http://vop.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Healthcare_Report.pdf

The questionnaire can be found at:

http://vop.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Healthcare_Quaire.pdf

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