

## Herndon Alliance Polling: Medicaid June 2011

**Background:** Recent polling done by the Herndon Alliance has shown that the public cares about the Medicaid program as much as Medicare. Our best testing push-back on the Ryan budget was objecting to Medicaid cuts in the context of seniors in nursing homes. Medicare cuts are very concerning to the American voters. When specific about cuts to Medicaid, American voters are more concerned about these cuts than Medicare.

### Findings:

1. When asked whether to “cut funding that helps uninsured people” versus “It's more important than ever to help working families afford insurance. We should keep funding that helps uninsured people get health insurance,” we found that by a margin 57 to 33 people supported the latter. (See Q11 on next page)
2. Our strongest push back on the Ryan budget was: “The budget would cut seven hundred and fifty billion dollars from Medicaid, including funding for eighty percent of nursing home residents, forcing many seniors to be kicked out of their nursing homes.” (Q15 a. 63% very concerned and 19% concerned). This was a stronger response than “The budget will turn Medicare into a voucher program, ending Medicare as we know it.” (Q15 d. 59 very concerned and 18% concerned)

### Summary:

1. Medicaid is a potent issue when we talk about it as helping the middle class and working people in addition to seniors, children and the disabled.
2. Medicaid is a potent issue when we are specific about its impacts (e.g. nursing home residents)
3. Medicaid and its funding is supported by the public if characterized as a support for seniors in nursing homes, for children seeing the doctor when they need to, and for people with disabilities so they can live independently.
4. Herndon Alliance’s findings are consistent with other recent Medicaid related research including a Kaiser Family Foundation poll showing that 85% of Americans are opposed to major cuts to Medicaid as a way to reduce the deficit and that half of all Americans have had experience with Medicaid because they or a family member required nursing home care.

## Highlights of Poll

May 18-24, 2011 N= 800 Likely 2012 Voters (N= 720 Landline Sample/ N= 80 Cell Sample) 11ALR1051

Q11. Please tell me which of the following two statements comes closer to your view:

With the federal deficit at records levels, we just can't afford to spend so much on health insurance for the uninsured.  
 We should cut funding that helps uninsured people get health insurance ..... 33%

With middle-class families struggling and fewer jobs offering good benefits it's more important than ever to help working families afford insurance.  
 We should keep funding that helps uninsured people get health insurance. .... 57%

[vol] Don't Know .....10%

Q15. Next, I'm going to read you some statements that opponents of the budget proposed by Republicans in Congress might make. For each one, please tell me whether it makes you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not that concerned, or not at all concerned about the budget proposed by Republicans in Congress.

Very Concerned    Somewhat Concerned    Not that Concerned    Not at all Concerned    [vol] Don't Know

a. The budget would cut seven hundred and fifty billion dollars from Medicaid, including funding for eighty percent of nursing home residents, forcing many seniors to be kicked out of their nursing homes. [Split D]  
 . [Split D]  
 63%    9%    5%    10%    2%

b. The budget would allow insurance companies to continue to deny coverage to the fifty million people with pre-existing conditions and also allow them to drop coverage for those who got sick. [Split D]  
 62%    23%    5%    10%    1%

c. The budget would allow insurance companies to continue to deny coverage to people with preexisting conditions and also allow them to drop coverage for those who get sick. [Split C]  
 61%    24%    3%    10%    1%

d. The budget cuts billions from Medicare and ends the program as we know it, while protecting forty billion dollars in tax breaks for big oil companies. [Split D]  
 59%    18%    5%    15%    3%

e. The budget would cut seven hundred and fifty billion dollars from Medicaid, including funding for seniors' long-term care, eighty percent of nursing home residents, children with illnesses and the disabled. [Split C]  
 56%    24%    8%    10%    2%

f. Because the value of the vouchers would not keep up with rising healthcare costs, the budget would cause seniors' out-of-pocket healthcare costs to double in ten years. [Split C]  
 55%    24%    9%    10%    2%

g. Because the value of the vouchers would not keep up with rising healthcare costs, the budget would increase the average senior's out-of-pocket healthcare costs by six thousand dollars in ten years. [Split D]  
 55%    23%    8%    13%    1%

Q15. (Cont.) Next, I'm going to read you some statements that opponents of the budget proposed by Republicans in Congress might make. For each one, please tell me whether it makes you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not that concerned, or not at all concerned about the budget proposed by Republicans in Congress.

Very Concerned    Somewhat Concerned    Not that Concerned    Not at all Concerned    [vol] Don't Know

h. The budget will privatize Medicare, ending Medicare as we know it. [Split C]

55%    20%    7%    16%    3%

i. The budget will turn Medicare into a voucher program, ending Medicare as we know it. [Split D]

53%    21%    8%    17%    1%

j. The budget would make healthcare even more confusing for seniors by forcing them to deal with the fine print of insurance companies and to negotiate with them on their own. [Split C]

52%    22%    10%    15%    1%

k. The budget would re-open the Medicare prescription drug coverage gap known as the donut hole, raising prescription drug costs for millions of seniors. [Split D]

49%    33%    5%    11%    1%

l. The budget helps insurance companies but hurts seniors by forcing them to buy their healthcare coverage from private insurance companies. [Split D]

49%    28%    8%    14%    1%

m. The budget would increase the financial burden on states by shifting the responsibility for funding Medicaid onto them, making it harder for states to deal with another recession or natural disaster. [Split C]

46%    30%    9%    13%    3%

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