HEALTH CARE: THE PUBLIC REACTS

Polls taken after the president's speech purported to show approval for the plan. In fact, people know little about it as the questions below show. "Approval" may have come from the desire to get something done in the area and from positive reactions to a strong speech. Not surprisingly, Americans are uncertain and have big concerns about major new government initiatives. Some are listed below.

Question: As of now, do you think you have a good understanding of what the Clinton health care plan will mean, or is it too early to know that yet? (CBS/NYT) How much do you know about the details of President Clinton's health care proposals—a great deal, a good amount, some, or not much? (LA Times) How well do you understand the way your own health care would change under the Clinton plan? (Times Mirror) How much do you feel you know about President Clinton's health care plan—a lot, a little, or do you feel you know almost nothing about it? (ABC/WP)

How much we know about the Clinton health care plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too early to know what it will mean (CBS/NYT)</td>
<td>75% (Sep. 22), 75% (Oct. 6-7), 79% (Oct. 18-19)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Know some/not too much about president's health care proposals (LA Times)</td>
<td>78% (Sep. 25-28)</td>
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<td>Understand not too well/not well at all the way your own health care would change under plan (Times Mirror)</td>
<td>44% (Sep. 24-27)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Know a little/almost nothing about plan (ABC/WP)</td>
<td>83% (Oct. 7-10)</td>
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Question: Now I am going to read some arguments that have been made as reasons why the Clinton health care plan should be passed. For each one, please tell me whether you strongly agree, moderately agree, moderately disagree, or strongly disagree.

It's better to pass the plan than to do nothing

- Disagree: 28%
- Agree: 69%
- No opinion: 3%

Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, September 24-26, 1993.

Question: What do you think Congress should do with Clinton's health care plan?

Congress should...

- Pass Clinton's health care plan without any changes: 11% (Sep. 19), 11% (Oct. 7-10)
- Pass it but with major changes: 27% (Sep. 19), 28% (Oct. 7-10)
- Not pass any of it: 36% (Sep. 19), 47% (Oct. 7-10)
- Pass with minor changes: 2% (Sep. 19), 4% (Oct. 7-10)
- No opinion: 2% (Sep. 19), 5% (Oct. 7-10)


Question: Now I'm going to mention things that might concern some people but not others about the Clinton health care plan. And, for each, please tell me if it's a big concern, a small concern, or not at all a concern of yours?

Big concern about the Clinton plan

- You might not have a doctor or a hospital to go to: 72%
- The cost of your medical care will increase: 70%
- Some people's medical care will be reduced: 69%
- You will be forced to pay for prescription drugs: 68%
- There will be a shortage of doctors and nurses: 67%
- The plan will cost too much: 66%
- Employees would lose their existing health care plans: 64%
- Quality of your medical care will become more secure: 64%
- The plan would increase the size of government and bureaucracy: 59%
- People who need it most won't get adequate care: 56%
- The plan would create an inefficient single-payer system: 56%
- The plan would increase taxes: 53%
- More people would work: 56%


Note: Not all categories shown.
The basic outline of opinion is what it has been for months: satisfaction with personal care, anxieties about the future and about costs, fundamental concerns about the system. In an area of great uncertainty, specific questions produce wildly varying responses depending on wording. The tax questions illustrate the point.

Question: **How satisfied are you with the health care services which are available to you now—very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not satisfied at all?**

- Not sure 4%
- Very satisfied with the health care services available to you now 16%
- Somewhat satisfied 34%
- Not satisfied 46%

**Source:** Survey by Yankelovich Partners, Inc., for Time and CNN, September 23, 1993.

Question: **If a major illness were to occur in your family, could you handle the costs easily, with great difficulty, or probably not at all?**

- Not sure 1%
- Could handle the costs easily 34%
- With Difficulty 45%
- Probably not at all 16%


Question: **Would you be willing or not willing to pay higher taxes so that all Americans have health insurance that they can’t lose, no matter what?**

- Don’t know/no answer 6%
- Willing to pay higher taxes so that all Americans have health insurance that they can’t lose, no matter what 61%
- Not willing 33%


Question: **Would you support or oppose an increase in taxes to help pay for Clinton’s health care plan?**

- Would support an increase in taxes to help pay for Clinton’s health care plan 39%
- Oppose it 58%
- No opinion 3%

**Source:** Survey by ABC News/Washington Post, latest that of October 7-10, 1993.

Question: **Do you think the health care system in this country works pretty well and requires only minor changes, do you think it needs fundamental changes, or do you think it needs to be completely rebuilt?**

- Don’t know 5%
- Works pretty well and requires only minor changes 16%
- Needs fundamental changes 32%
- Needs to be completely rebuilt 41%


Question: **If more money is needed to pay for Clinton’s health care plan, please tell me whether you would favor or oppose each of the following solutions?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favor if needed to pay for Clinton’s health care plan</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cutting back the plan to reduce its overall costs</td>
<td>53% 41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raising additional money from taxes</td>
<td>34% 65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing the deficit</td>
<td>12% 85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making cuts in Medicaid spending</td>
<td>24% 74%</td>
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**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, September 24-26, 1993.