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## Voters: Congress should keep health care coverage tax-free, work to reduce health care costs

A recent poll by the Winston Group on behalf of the [Alliance to Fight for Health Care](#) shows voters want to keep their employer-provided health care coverage tax-free.

By a 3 to 1 margin, voters oppose proposals to impose taxes on employer-provided health plans. Opposition was also bipartisan, with 61% of Republicans, 62% of Independents, and 52% of Democrats opposing the proposal.

“In recent months, we have heard again a call to eliminate or ‘cap’ the employee tax exclusion on health coverage, said [James A. Klein](#), president of the [American Benefits Council](#). “This isn’t just bad policy – the Winston Group [poll](#) shows that this would be a serious political liability.”

While voters are generally satisfied with their health insurance (79%), the poll also underscores deep concerns about health care costs. The economy/inflation is the top issue for 38% of voters, and they believe that over the next year, health care costs will continue to rise (66%). Voters want Congress to focus on policies that will reduce health care costs, including site-neutral payment reform, hospital billing transparency, and allowing treatment for chronic conditions below the deductible.

- Currently, the cost of health care services and procedures differ based on where the service or procedure is administered, with services at hospitals or hospital-owned doctor’s offices costing more than the same services at independent doctor’s offices or at ambulatory surgical centers. The poll found that 72% of voters with employer-sponsored coverage believe health care could be more affordable by having services performed at less expensive settings when they can be done so safely – for instance performing minor outpatient surgery in a clinic rather than a hospital to lower the cost of the procedure. Paying for the same treatment or care regardless of location is referred to as site-neutral payment reform and the Alliance is very supportive of bipartisan provisions of the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act that take an important step in addressing this problem.
- Voters also believe Congress should require health care providers to accurately report where a service actually occurred so that hospitals can’t charge extra fees for

services performed via telehealth or at clinics or doctors' offices, which costs taxpayers billions of dollars in extra fees. The poll findings show 82% of voters oppose hospital facility fees for care received via telemedicine appointments.

- In addition, 81% of voters indicate that a top priority for Congress should be allowing more preventive care for chronic diseases to be covered by health insurance even before patients meet their annual out-of-pocket deductible. The Alliance strongly supports legislation that would allow employers and health plans to offer more chronic disease prevention pre-deductible, and urges enactment of H.R. 3800, the Chronic Disease Flexible Coverage Act.

"As we celebrate ERISA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it is vital that policymakers recognize that the law makes possible affordable, high-quality employer-provided coverage enjoyed by more than half of all Americans. Two-thirds of voters believe health care is one of the highest priorities before Congress. It is imperative that lawmakers work within ERISA's framework to lower health care costs for working families," **Klein** concluded.

[Key findings memo](#)  
[Polling deck](#)

The **Alliance to Fight for Health Care** is a broad-based coalition comprised of businesses, patient advocates, employer organizations, unions, health care companies, consumer groups and other stakeholders that support employer-provided health coverage. Together, we are working to ensure that employer-provided coverage remains an available and affordable option for working Americans and their families.

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