

Results are in! AMWA Members Overwhelmingly Support a Public Option.

As part of AMWA's ongoing commitment to be the vision and voice of women in medicine, AMWA recently fielded a membership survey on access to healthcare. The survey was designed to update information gathered from previous assessments to better inform our policy efforts at this critical juncture in US history.

Of the survey respondents, the majority are physicians (69%) and physicians in training (26%); 3% are residents and 1% non-physician providers. The age of responders mirrors that of AMWA's membership with 40% 55 years or older, 31% 34 to 54 years, and 29% 18 through 33 years. Although physicians from over 20 specialties responded, the top specialties represented are Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, OB/GYN, Pediatrics and Psychiatry. Forty percent of respondents works at an academic institution and 29% is in private practice. Others are retired or employed at HMOs or public institutions.

The overwhelming majority of AMWA members who responded, 98%, favors AMWA taking a leadership role in improving access to healthcare. Ninety-two percent supports universal access with 79% favoring administration at the Federal level and 21% at the state level. When asked which services should be covered in the "basket of services" over 80% of responders selected the following:

- Preventive care/screening
- Primary care
- Chronic disease management
- Immunizations
- Emergency care
- Addiction/substance abuse treatment
- Vision and hearing services
- Mental health services
- Prescription drugs
- Family planning
- Rehabilitation medicine

Ambulance services, health education, dental services, home care, nursing home/long term care, dental services, and abortion services are included by 60% of responders.

Most important to the current debate about how to structure healthcare reform, 89% believes a public option should be included in healthcare reform legislation. AMWA member's support for a public option is consistent with findings from recent surveys of both the American public and other healthcare practitioners. AMWA encourages legislators to heed the opinions of patients and providers rather than serve the interests of the insurance industry by ensuring that a robust public option is included in any healthcare legislation that is passed.

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