



NEWS RELEASE

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MORE THAN 80% OF NEW YORKERS REJECT NEW TAXES TO SOLVE MEDICAID GAP *Focus Should be on Efficiencies & Reforming the Program According to New Siena Poll*

More than 80 percent of New Yorkers want the state to reform the Medicaid program to control overspending, rejecting increasing insurance taxes to address the current Medicaid shortfall, according to a Siena College poll of registered New York voters released on February 24, 2020. The questions were included in the poll at the request of the New York Health Plan Association (HPA) to understand how state residents want leaders to deal with the issue.

When asked directly, “Do you think the state should address the Medicaid shortfall by increasing taxes and fees on health insurance, or take steps to reform the Medicaid program to control costs,” only nine (9) percent chose to increase taxes, while 82 percent chose to reform the program.

“Health insurance taxes are the third-largest source of state revenue behind sales and income taxes. New Yorkers already pay enough and shouldn’t pay higher health insurance taxes to close the Medicaid gap,” said HPA President and CEO Eric Linzer. “As the results of this poll clearly show, New Yorkers want industry experts to dig in to develop cost-saving solutions rather than imposing higher taxes that makes the cost of health care more expensive for consumers, employers and union benefit funds.”

When asked about the best way for New York to close the \$2.5 billion state budget gap caused by overspending in Medicaid, nearly half (43 percent) of respondents favored having health care industry experts identify cost efficiencies and ways to reduce Medicaid spending, while just seven (7) percent supported increasing taxes and fees on health insurance. One quarter of respondents supported placing more responsibility on cities and counties to control their Medicaid costs and 10 percent wanted to reduce the reimbursement rates that the state pays health care providers.

Linzer continued, “The state already adds more than \$5.2 billion to the cost of New Yorkers’ health insurance each year through a range of taxes, fees and surcharges, and proposals to close the gap by increasing health insurance taxes does nothing to contain the overspending in Medicaid or protect the individuals who rely on the program for coverage. Given the fiscal challenges the Medicaid program faces, we would urge the Medicaid Redesign Team to reject new taxes when it issues its final recommendations and instead focus on measures to reform the program and rein in costs.”

In January, HPA [outlined more than \\$900 million in savings](#) that could be achieved through a series of common-sense reforms. The proposal contained a comprehensive set of measures that would decrease the program’s current structural deficit and still protect the state’s most vulnerable citizens by eliminating programs that are outdated or do not add value to improving the health of New Yorkers.

The poll questions and responses follow.

Q31. Which of the following suggestions do you think is the SINGLE best way for New York State to close the \$2.5 billion state budget gap caused by overspending in Medicaid?	
Look to health care industry experts to identify cost efficiencies and ways to reduce Medicaid spending	43%
Require cities and counties to be more responsible for controlling their Medicaid costs	25%
Reduce the reimbursement rates that the state pays health care providers for delivering services to Medicaid recipients	10%
Increase taxes and fees on health insurance to help fund Medicaid	7%
Don't know/Refused	15%

Q32. Would you still support increasing taxes on health insurance to address the Medicaid shortfall if it meant increasing what you pay for health insurance, or would you prefer a different approach in order to address the Medicaid shortfall?	
Prefer a different approach in order to address the Medicaid shortfall	53%
Still support increasing taxes on health insurance to address the Medicaid shortfall if it meant increasing what you pay for health insurance	46%
Don't know/No Opinion	1%

Q33. If chose increase taxes and fees on Q31 & prefer different approach on Q32, of the following, which approach would you be most likely to choose?	
Look to health care industry experts to identify cost efficiencies and ways to reduce Medicaid spending	48%
Require cities and counties to be more responsible for controlling their Medicaid costs	22%
Reduce the reimbursement rates that the state pays health care providers for delivering services to Medicaid	15%
Don't know/Refused	15%

Q34. Do you think the state should address the Medicaid shortfall by increasing taxes and fees on health insurance, or should the state takes steps to reform the Medicaid program to control costs?	
Take steps to reform the Medicaid program to control costs	82%
Increasing taxes and fees on health insurance	9%
Don't know/No Opinion	9%

The Siena College Poll was conducted February 16-20, 2020 in English with 658 New York registered voters via landline and cell phones and 209 responses drawn from a proprietary panel of New York registered voters for a total of 867 responses. Telephone sampling was initiated by asking for the youngest person in the household. Telephone sampling was conducted via a stratified dual-frame probability sample of landline (ASDE) and cell phone (Dynata) telephone numbers from within New York State. The online panel was provided by Lucid. Data from the telephone and web samples were blended and statistically adjusted by age, party by region, race/ethnicity, and gender to ensure representativeness. SCRI reports this data at a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of + 3.6 points including the design effects resulting from weighting. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information, call Dr. Don Levy, Director Siena College Research Institute, at 518-783-2901.