



PRESS RELEASE

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Critical Insights: Two-Thirds of Mainers Support Expanding Access to Health Care

PORTLAND – A new statewide poll released today shows that Maine voters overwhelmingly support accepting federal dollars to expand access to health care for nearly 69,500 Mainers who are currently uninsured.

The poll, which was conducted May 1-7 by Critical Insights, found that 67 percent of respondents support accepting federal funds to expand health care, while 23 percent don't. The results are similar to a March 31-April 3 poll conducted by the [Maine People's Resource Center](#) that found 68.1 percent of respondents support accepting federal dollars to expand health care.

"Expanding access to affordable health care to thousands of people in our communities makes sense for Maine," said Sara Gagné-Holmes, executive director of Maine Equal Justice Partners. "Accepting federal funds will enable thousands of Maine people to be healthier and more secure knowing that they have access to care when they need it. It is an opportunity Maine cannot afford to pass up."

The poll question was commissioned by Maine Equal Justice Partners and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. Critical Insights conducted 600 interviews with a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

The survey question asked: "I'd like to ask you about an issue being talked about by the governor and the state legislature. Under the new federal health care law, 69,500 people in Maine who are uninsured or at risk of losing their insurance could get health care coverage through Medicaid starting in 2014. The

governor and state elected officials can choose to accept federal dollars that have been allocated to cover these people in Maine, or to turn the money down and not cover these people. The federal dollars cover 100 percent of the costs for newly eligible individuals in the first few years and 90 percent of the costs after that. Based on what you know right now, what would you like Maine to do: Accept the money or turn the money down?”

According to Critical Insights, 87 percent of Democrats and 69 percent of unenrolled voters support expansion. Republicans are split on the issue, with 43 percent supporting expansion and 47 percent who would opt to reject the federal dollars, a difference that falls within the poll’s margin of error.

The expansion of access to health care is made possible by the Affordable Care Act, which makes federal funds available to expand access to health insurance to 69,500 Mainers, a majority of whom have jobs but either can’t afford health insurance or could soon lose it.

The Maine poll’s results are similar to [national polling](#), which has found that 62 percent say states should accept federal funding to expand access to health care while only 19 percent say their state should turn the money down.

The Cover Maine Now! Coalition, which includes more than 85 organizations, was formed to support accepting federal funds to expand access to quality, affordable health care.

For a full list of Cover Maine Now! Coalition members, visit: <http://www.covermainenow.com>

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