



CBS NEWS POLL
 For release: September 11th, 2009
 10:00 AM (EDT)

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S HEALTH CARE SPEECH

September 10th, 2009

President Barack Obama made some progress explaining his health care reform proposals to Americans with his speech Wednesday night, though most are not convinced they would personally benefit from them. The president boosted his rating on handling the issue - a majority now approves, up from last week.

After President Obama's Congressional address on health care reform, CBS re-interviewed 648 adults who were first interviewed in a CBS News Poll conducted August 27-31. 53% of them say they tuned in to watch the speech.

Among those who watched, 60% say they mostly agree with the health care plans the president presented; 33% mostly disagree.

PRES. OBAMA'S HEALTH CARE PROPOSALS

(Among speech watchers)

Mostly agree	60%
Mostly disagree	33

But many Americans still aren't sure he has met one important goal -- clarifying what reforms would mean - although there has been major improvement. Before the speech, just 33% said President Obama had clearly explained his plans for reform. That rose to 42% afterwards, but 43% still say he has NOT clearly explained his plans.

He was more successful with those who watched the speech: 58% of them now say the president has explained his plans, up from 40% before the speech. But among those who didn't watch, only one in four now say he has explained his plans, the same percentage as before the speech.

HAS PRES. OBAMA CLEARLY EXPLAINED HIS PLANS FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM?

	Now	Last week	Speech watchers
Yes	42%	33%	58%
No	43	61	39

52% now approve of how the president is handling health care, up from 40% last week. Speech watchers (58%) are even more likely to approve.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S HANDLING OF HEALTH CARE

	Now	Last week	Speech watchers
Approve	52%	40%	58%
Disapprove	38	47	36

While President Bill Clinton's approval rating on health care rose in the weeks following his September 1993 health care speech, by January 1994, it was back down to pre-speech levels.

The president's speech was particularly successful in unifying Democrats. 85% of them now approve of the president's handling of health care. And even though approval also rose among independents and Republicans, independents are still divided, and only 17% of Republicans approve the president's handling of health care.

As is often the case in Presidential addresses, Americans who watched the speech were more likely to be from the president's own political party. 42% of speech watchers identified themselves as Democrats, 27% were Republicans and 31% were independents.

In addition, 53% of speech watchers think health care in the U.S. would get better if the plans Mr. Obama laid out in his speech are adopted. In September 1993, President Bill Clinton received slightly more positive reviews for his proposals after his speech on health care reform.

**IF THE PRESIDENT'S HEALTH CARE PLANS ARE ADOPTED,
HEALTH CARE IN THE U.S. WILL GET...**

(Among speech watchers)

	Obama	Clinton (9/1993)
Better	53%	60%
Worse	27	14
No impact	16	18

Still, most Americans remain skeptical about how reforms currently under consideration in Congress would affect them personally. Only 22% think these plans would help them. A sizeable number thinks these reforms would either have no effect (42%) or would hurt them personally (27%). These numbers are virtually the same as last week.

WOULD CONGRESS' CURRENT HEALTH REFORMS HELP OR HURT YOU PERSONALLY?

	Now	Last week	Speech watchers
Help	22%	19%	31%
Hurt	27	30	27
Have no effect	42	45	39

POLICY OPTIONS

In his speech, President Obama offered support for the so-called "public option" -- a government-administered health insurance plan -- but said it was only one part of his plan. Support for the public option has risen since last week.

SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC OPTION

	Now	Last week	Speech watchers
Favor	68%	57%	70%
Oppose	27	35	25

The president also discussed reforms, such as requiring health insurance companies to cover people with pre-existing conditions and mandating coverage for everyone.

Most Americans support such increased regulation of insurance companies (including a limit on the ability of companies to deny people coverage).

The public is more divided on the issue of requiring all Americans to buy health insurance, but more than half still favors that.

VIEWS ON POLICY REFORMS

	Favor	Oppose
Increased regulation of insurance companies	73%	21
Requiring all Americans to buy health insurance	54%	41

In his speech, the president argued that a public health option, health exchanges, and other reforms would increase competition in the health insurance marketplace. By two to one, Americans agree.

IMPACT OF PRES. OBAMA'S PROPOSALS ON INSURANCE MARKETPLACE

	Total	Speech watchers
Increase competition	46%	49%
Decrease competition	19	18
No impact	26	28

PAYING FOR REFORM

There are still some doubts about whether health care coverage can be expanded to more Americans without increasing the deficit. 52% say that is not possible, while 42% think it is.

EXPAND HEALTH CARE COVERAGE WITHOUT INCREASING THE DEFICIT

	Now	Last week	Speech watchers
Possible	42%	45%	49%
Not possible	52	49	47

BIPARTISANSHIP

In his speech on Wednesday, the president said, "the time for bickering is over" and "we must bring the best ideas of both parties together." Nearly two in three Americans think the president is trying to work with Republicans in Congress in order to bring about health care reform.

IS PRES. OBAMA TRYING TO WORK WITH REPUBLICANS ON HEALTH CARE?

	All	Speech watchers
Yes	65%	68%
No	29	31

Most (61%) also see the passage of health care reform as likely to happen by the end of this year, but just one in five call it very likely.

WILL HEALTH CARE REFORM HAPPEN IN 2009?

	All	Speech watchers
Very likely	19%	23%
Somewhat likely	42	42
Not likely	36	35

 This poll was conducted by telephone on September 10, 2009 among 648 adults first interviewed by CBS News August 27-31, 2009. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus four percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

CBS NEWS POLL
PRES. OBAMA'S HEALTH CARE SPEECH
September 10, 2009

rq1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling health care?

	Total	Speech Watchers	8/27-31/09
	%	%	%
Approve	52	58	40
Disapprove	38	36	47
DK/NA	10	6	13

rq2 How much have you heard or read about what President Obama said in his speech on health care reform last night -- a lot, some, or have you not heard much about it yet?

A lot	34	62
Some	27	30
Not much	22	7
None (Vol.)	16	2
DK/NA	1	0

rq3 BLANK

rq4 Do you think Barack Obama has clearly explained what his plans for health care reform would mean, or hasn't he clearly explained that?

Has explained	42	58	33
Hasn't explained	43	39	61
DK/NA	15	3	6

rq5 In general, do you mostly agree or mostly disagree with the health care reform proposals Barack Obama laid out in his speech last night?

Mostly agree		60
Mostly disagree		33
Mixed (Vol.)		4
DK/NA		3

rq6 In the next few years, if the proposals for reforming health care that President Obama laid out in his speech last night are adopted, do you think they will make health care in the United States better, make health care worse, or won't they have much impact one way or the other?

Better	43	53
Worse	25	27
Not much impact	18	16
Better some/not others (Vol.)	1	1
DK/NA	13	3

rq7 From what you've heard or read, do you think the health care reforms under consideration in Congress will mostly help you personally, will mostly hurt you personally, or don't you think they will have much of an effect on you personally?

Help	22	31	19
Hurt	27	27	30
No effect	42	39	45
DK/NA	9	3	6

rq8 Do you think it's possible or not possible to expand health care coverage to more Americans without increasing the budget deficit?

	Total	Speech Watchers	8/27-31/09
	%	%	%
Possible	42	49	45
Not possible	52	47	49
DK/NA	6	4	6

rq9 Would you favor or oppose increased regulation on private health insurance companies, such as limiting the amount insurance companies can charge patients for out-of-pocket costs and limiting the ability of insurance companies to deny people coverage?

Favor	73	77
Oppose	21	17
DK/NA	6	6

rq10 As long as the federal government provides subsidies or tax credits to low-income people, would you favor or oppose requiring all Americans to buy health insurance?

Favor	54	56
Oppose	41	39
DK/NA	5	5

rq11 Would you favor or oppose the government offering everyone a government administered health insurance plan -- something like the Medicare coverage that people 65 and older get -- that would compete with private health insurance plans?

Favor	68	70	57
Oppose	27	25	35
DK/NA	5	5	8

rq12 Do you think President Obama's proposals for reform would increase competition in the private insurance market, decrease competition, or would competition mostly stay the same?

Increase	46	49
Decrease	19	18
Stay the same	26	28
DK/NA	9	5

rq13 Do you think Barack Obama is trying to work with Republicans in Congress in order to reform the health care system, or isn't he?

Work with Republicans	65	68
Not work with Republicans	29	31
DK/NA	6	1

rq14 BLANK

rq15 How likely do you think it is that Congress will pass and President Obama will sign into law a health care reform bill by the end of the year--very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

	Total %	Speech Watchers %
Very likely	19	23
Somewhat likely	42	42
Not very likely	25	25
Not at all likely	11	10
DK/NA	3	0

rq16 Did you watch or listen to President Obama's speech on health care reform last night?

Yes	53	100
No	47	0

pty2 Generally speaking, do you usually consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

Republican	24	27
Democrat	37	42
Independent	39	31

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	648	
Speech watchers	388	345