

Louisiana Survey: Small Businesses Need Healthcare Reform

The high cost of health insurance is a financial burden for small businesses.

Small Business Majority carried out a telephone survey of 200 small business owners in Louisiana in May 2009. The survey finds that just 36% offer health insurance coverage for their workers; of the 64% who don't, an overwhelming majority (87%) say they can't afford to. Other findings:

- Of the businesses that offer insurance, 62% say they are struggling to do so.
- 48% describe their access to affordable health insurance as fair or poor.

Employers see financing of affordable coverage as a shared responsibility.

- 63% say it's important for individuals, employers, insurers, the government and healthcare providers to share the responsibility for making healthcare more affordable.
- 39% agree that employers should pay some percentage of their payroll toward their employees' insurance if they don't offer a plan themselves.
- When asked if their company has a responsibility to offer health insurance to workers, 42% said yes, while 51% said no. In most other states surveyed by Small Business Majority, most respondents believe they do have this responsibility.

Small business owners want reform in many parts of the healthcare system.

- 69% agree that healthcare reform is needed now to get the economy back on track.
- 79% of Louisiana small business owners say that people should be able to buy health insurance without regard to any past health problems, and 62% believe more entrepreneurs would start businesses if they didn't face those obstacles to coverage.
- The number one concern for Louisiana's small businesses in healthcare reform is controlling costs.

Respondents are politically varied.

- 44% of the survey respondents identified themselves as Republican, 23% as Democrat and 27% as independent.

About this research: This is a telephone poll of 200 randomly selected small business owners in Louisiana conducted by the national public opinion firm Lake Research in May 2009. The survey included owners of companies with fewer than 100 employees as well as sole proprietors. It has a margin of error of 6.9%.