North Carolina Statewide Survey Key Findings

August 26-27, 2020
Sample size: 612 registered voters
Methodology

The sample size for the survey is 612 registered voters in North Carolina and the margin of error is +/-3.96% at a 95% confidence interval, meaning that if this survey were repeated, results would not vary from the population by more than 3.96 percentage points 19 times out of 20. Responses were gathered via landline and mobile telephone interviews conducted by live callers at a professional call center. Demographics were adjusted to reflect the population from which the sample was drawn. The survey was conducted August 26-27, 2020 by Harper Polling. The total percentages of responses may not equal 100% due to rounding.
Q: What do you feel is the most important issue or problem facing North Carolina that the Governor and state legislature should make a top priority?

Coronavirus/COVID-19 is the top issue for voters, followed by a second tier of unemployment/jobs, education, and civil unrest & social justice issues.

- Republicans (23% COVID-19, 18% jobs) and unaffiliated voters (20%, 18%) are divided between COVID-19 and jobs. Democrats are more focused on COVID-19 (37%), followed by civil unrest/social justice (15%).

- African-American respondents (40% COVID-19) are more likely to prioritize COVID-19. Concern about Coronavirus varies slightly by community type: urban (30%), suburban (29%) voters, rural voters (25%).
Q: Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you more concerned about you and your family’s access to quality, affordable health care?

Voters report a lower level of concern about their personal ability to access quality, affordable health care. Still, a third are more concerned about this due to COVID-19.
Q: Do you know someone -- a friend, neighbor, relative etc. -- struggling with being unable to afford health care?

Forty-four percent of voters say they know someone struggling with affording health care.

- Substantial portions of Democrats (54%), unaffiliated voters (41%), Republicans (35%) know someone struggling to afford health care.
- A majority of healthcare industry workers know someone struggling to afford health care (53%).
- Low income respondents are more likely to know someone in this situation (<$60K: 50%, $60-100K: 39%, $100-$150K: 37%, $150K+: 42%).
Q: North Carolina has reported about 157,000 cases of COVID-19 and more than 2,500 deaths. More than 1.2 million North Carolinians have filed for unemployment with many losing their job-sponsored health insurance. Do you believe the impacts of COVID-19 will be long lasting?

The vast majority of North Carolinians agree that the impacts of COVID-19 will be long lasting.

- Voter sentiment holds across partisan and ideological divides.
**Medicaid Opinion**

Q: Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Medicaid?

Six-in-ten respondents have a favorable opinion of Medicaid. Favorable opinion towards Medicaid is held by Republicans and Conservatives as well as voters young and old alike.

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Close the Coverage Gap

Q: The healthcare “coverage gap” refers to people -- front-line workers, farmers, childcare and nursing home workers, small business owners -- who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to purchase their own insurance plans. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, more North Carolinians fall into the coverage gap, for a total of more than 600,000. Do you favor or oppose the Legislature creating a solution to close the coverage gap?

Three-in-four voters in North Carolina support the Legislature creating a solution to close the coverage gap.

Total Favor: 75%
Total Oppose: 16%

- Strongly favor: 56%
- Somewhat favor: 19%
- Somewhat oppose: 9%
- Strongly oppose: 7%
- Unsure/Refused: 10%

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Coverage Gap – Key Demos

- Support for closing the coverage gap remains strong across key demographics.
- Support is high in the major media markets of the state.
COVID-19 Impact & Coverage Gap

Q: Before COVID-19, experts estimated that if North Carolina closed its coverage gap, more than 400,000 North Carolinians would gain health insurance. Since the pandemic hit, that number has risen to over 600,000. An estimated 178,000 additional North Carolinians now fall in the healthcare coverage gap. Knowing this, are you more likely or less likely to favor solutions to close the coverage gap?

Voters across key demographics are more likely to support solutions to close the coverage gap after hearing of the COVID-19 impact.
Q: Medicaid is a federal health insurance program for low-income adults, seniors, children, and people with disabilities. Would you favor or oppose the state of North Carolina expanding Medicaid so that more people can qualify—helping to close the coverage gap?

Nearly 80% of registered North Carolina voters support expanding Medicaid, including a majority who strongly favor.
Q: Medicaid is a federal health insurance program for low-income adults, seniors, children, and people with disabilities. Would you favor or oppose the state of North Carolina expanding Medicaid so that more people can qualify—helping to close the coverage gap?

Support for expanding Medicaid in North Carolina has grown a net +9% since last year.
Medicaid Expansion – Key Demos

- Majorities of voters across demographic divisions in the electorate support Medicaid Expansion.
- Support wanes slightly among Republicans, Conservatives, and men, but remains at solid majority levels.
- Democrats, Liberals, and African-Americans are almost universally supportive. Support also increases among low income respondents and women.
Q: Do you think closing the coverage gap will be an important issue in the upcoming election?

Most voters view closing the coverage gap as an important issue in the upcoming election.

- Majorities of Republicans (50%) and Somewhat Conservatives (53%) agree; Very Conservatives (49% agree)
- Agreement increases among Unaffiliated voters (60%) and suburban white women (67%).
Q: Now I am going to read you a series of statements about expanding Medicaid in North Carolina. Please tell me whether each statement makes you more likely or less likely to support expanding Medicaid in North Carolina.
In 38 states, where both Republican and Democratic leaders have expanded Medicaid, private health insurance rates have been reduced on average by 11%.

Because of the coverage gap, 1 in 4 veterans who served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan are w/o health insurance coverage, and are not eligible for VA coverage. Expanding Medicaid would mean that at least 12,000 veterans would gain access to health insurance.

The impact on veterans and beneficial impact for private health insurance rates are both very persuasive for voters.
Positive Message Testing - Key Demos

- The table on this slide shows the percentage of likely voters who are **much more likely** to support the Medicaid Expansion after hearing each message among key demographics. Focusing on intensity illustrates the variation in effectiveness. Green highlight is the top message for that column demographic.

- The veterans message finds the most widespread appeal; making majorities of voters across key demographic breaks much more likely to support Medicaid Expansion.

- The private insurance impact message is particularly effective with respondents who have employer-based private insurance (78% more likely, 58% much more).

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If North Carolina expands Medicaid, the state will be forced to run the program according to Washington mandates. The last thing we need is politicians and bureaucrats from DC dictating how we provide healthcare in our state.

While the Federal Government is paying for 90% of the program, the US has a nearly 27 trillion dollar debt and Congress could decide to stop paying at any point in time, leaving North Carolina taxpayers to foot the entire bill.

Both of the negative messages still register as net-positives, however they make substantial minorities less likely to support a Medicaid Expansion.
**Negative Message Testing - Key Demos**

- The table on this slide shows the percentage of likely voters who are **total less likely** to support the Medicaid Expansion after hearing each message among key demographics. This is used in lieu of intensity due to the lower overall intensity levels.

- Overall, the negative messages have the most impact with Republicans, Conservatives, men, and in the Greensboro media market.

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Q: Now that you have heard additional arguments from both sides on the issue of expanding Medicaid in North Carolina, do you favor or oppose the state of North Carolina expanding Medicaid so that more people can qualify—helping to close the coverage gap?

After the message testing, the margin in favor of Medicaid Expansion narrows slightly from +60% to +53%.
The chart below compares the net-favor on the initial opinion test to the informed across key demographics.

Voters across key demographics continue to net-favor expanding Medicaid in North Carolina.
North Carolina
Senate Districts 1, 11, 24 & 31
Survey Key Findings
August 26-27, 2020
Sample size: 300 registered voters per district
Methodology

The sample size for each survey is 300 registered voters in each Senate District and the margin of error is +/-5.64% at a 95% confidence interval, meaning that if this survey were repeated, results would not vary from the population by more than 5.64 percentage points 19 times out of 20. Responses were gathered via landline interviews conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology and cell phone interviews conducted via text message solicitation. Demographics were adjusted to reflect the population from which the sample was drawn. The survey was conducted August 26–27, 2020 by Harper Polling. The total percentages of responses may not equal 100% due to rounding.

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Closing the Coverage Gap

Q: The healthcare “coverage gap” refers to people -- front-line workers, farmers, childcare and nursing home workers, small business owners -- who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to purchase their own insurance plans. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, more North Carolinians fall into the coverage gap, for a total of more than 600,000. Do you favor or oppose the legislature creating a solution to close the coverage gap?

Substantial majorities of voters in each Senate District support a legislative solution to close the coverage gap.
Q: Medicaid is a federal health insurance program for low-income adults, seniors, children, and people with disabilities. Would you favor or oppose the state of North Carolina expanding Medicaid so that more people can qualify—helping to close the coverage gap?

Voters in the four Senate Districts tested are even stronger in their support for expanding Medicaid in order to help close the coverage gap.
Contact Harper Polling

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