

January 28, 2021

To: Interested Parties

Fr: ALG Research

Re: Voters Support a Public Health Insurance Option in Colorado

The results of our recent survey in Colorado make it clear that there is strong support for a public health insurance option in the state, and the COVID-19 pandemic has elevated voters' desire to make changes to the current health care system. More than 60% of voters support the concept of a public health insurance option and its implementation in Colorado through a two-stage plan that first asks private insurers to lower costs before a public option is added.

- Overall, and in the rural Western counties we oversampled, **as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 80% believe it is more important that we make changes to the current health care system.** This is also true across the ideological spectrum with 94% of Democrats who believe it is important, 78% of Independents, and even 64% of Republicans. Just 11% of Colorado voters want to keep the current system as-is.
- **More than 60% of voters support the concept of a public health insurance option (69%) and the two-stage proposal currently being considered in Colorado (62%).** Support for the proposal being considered in Colorado is exceptionally high among voters under 50 (71%), BIPOC (72%), and in both the City of Aurora (74%) and the rural Western counties (72%). Just 14% would oppose any type of public health insurance option in Colorado and only 25% of voters would specifically oppose the two-stage proposal being considered.
- **There is a divide in Colorado when it comes to the ability to access affordable health care** – 46% think access to affordable health care is good, 44% do not. Along with voters overall (+2), older (+10), white (+7), higher income (+15), and voters in cities (+10) rate access to affordable health care positively. However, their counterparts – voters under 50 (-4), BIPOC (-17), those with lower incomes (-5), and voters in rural communities (-9) – currently rate it negatively.
- **A plurality (33%) of voters place blame for the high costs specifically on health insurance companies,** and a majority (58%) blame the health care industry generally. As a result, health care industry players like insurance companies (-3 net popularity) and hospital CEOs (-9) are largely unpopular across the state.
- **A majority (58%) of voters see the main benefit of adding a public health insurance option as bringing down costs.** This is especially true for groups that struggle the most with access to affordable care like younger voters under 50 (62%), BIPOC (60%), those with lower incomes (64%) and voters in rural areas (58%).

These findings are from a multimodal survey, conducted by ALG Research in Colorado between December 11-16, 2020 among N=601 registered voters online, plus N=100 phone oversamples in the metropolitan city of Aurora and N=100 in the rural western counties of Eagle, Montrose, and Summit.

Voters in rural Western counties also see increased quality care as a larger potential benefit of a public health insurance option (28%) than voters overall (17%).

Western Slope Findings

- **Voters in the Western Counties of Eagle, Montrose, and Summit are among the groups that rate the current access to affordable health care in Colorado the most negatively** – 58% current believe it is either not so good or poor, compared to just 26% who believe it is good or excellent.
- **By a 17-point margin, voters in these Western Counties believe the State of Colorado should create a public health insurance option regardless of whether the industry can lower costs** (45% compared to 28% who believe they should let the industry try to lower prices first before implementing a public option. This is significantly higher than the +3 margin for voters overall in the state. Western County voters are also more open to large scale changes in the health care system (33%) than voters overall (22%).
- **Western Slope voters' motivations for supporting a public health insurance proposal are nearly equally focused on lowering health care costs (38%) and expanding access (35%).** They are less motivated than voters overall by moral arguments like health care being a right (4%).