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A Look at Voters' Attitudes toward Accepting Federal Funds to Broaden Access to Health Coverage Through Medicaid

Results from Surveys of Registered Voters in Seven States

Conducted for
The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

By
Lake Research Partners & GS Strategy Group

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Introduction

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) commissioned a study to explore voters' attitudes on whether voters believe their state should accept federal funds to provide thousands of uninsured adults with health coverage through Medicaid. The study includes surveys in Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Texas – a geographic mix of states that have been wrestling with the decision to accept federal funds to cover more people through their Medicaid programs.

Beginning in 2014, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) makes federal funding available to provide adults earning up to 133% of the federal poverty level (\$14,856 for an individual; \$30,657 for a family of four in 2012) with health coverage through Medicaid. Under the new law, the federal government will fund 100% of the costs for states to cover newly-eligible adults from 2014 to 2016, and 90% of the costs by 2020¹.

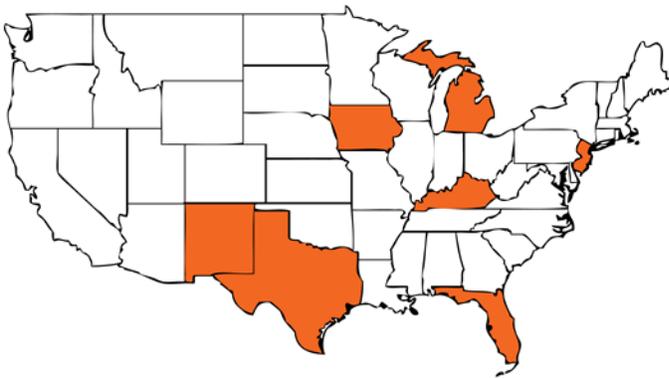
Lake Research Partners and GS Strategy Group conducted surveys in each of the seven states among registered voters December 13-22, 2012. The surveys were conducted by telephone using both landline and cell phone RDD sample. The margin of sampling error for each state's total results is about ± 3.5 percentage points.

¹ http://www.kff.org/medicaid/quicktake_aca_medicaid.cfm

Key findings are:

- By large margins, voters in all seven states favor accepting federal funds to provide more uninsured adults with health coverage through Medicaid.
- After hearing balanced arguments from both sides, voters are more likely to agree with reasons to accept federal funds than reasons to turn down the funds.
- While most voters in these states are insured, many have a personal connection to this issue, by having close friends or family members who are uninsured, or having a personal connection with Medicaid coverage.

Following are detailed findings.



Sample Size by State

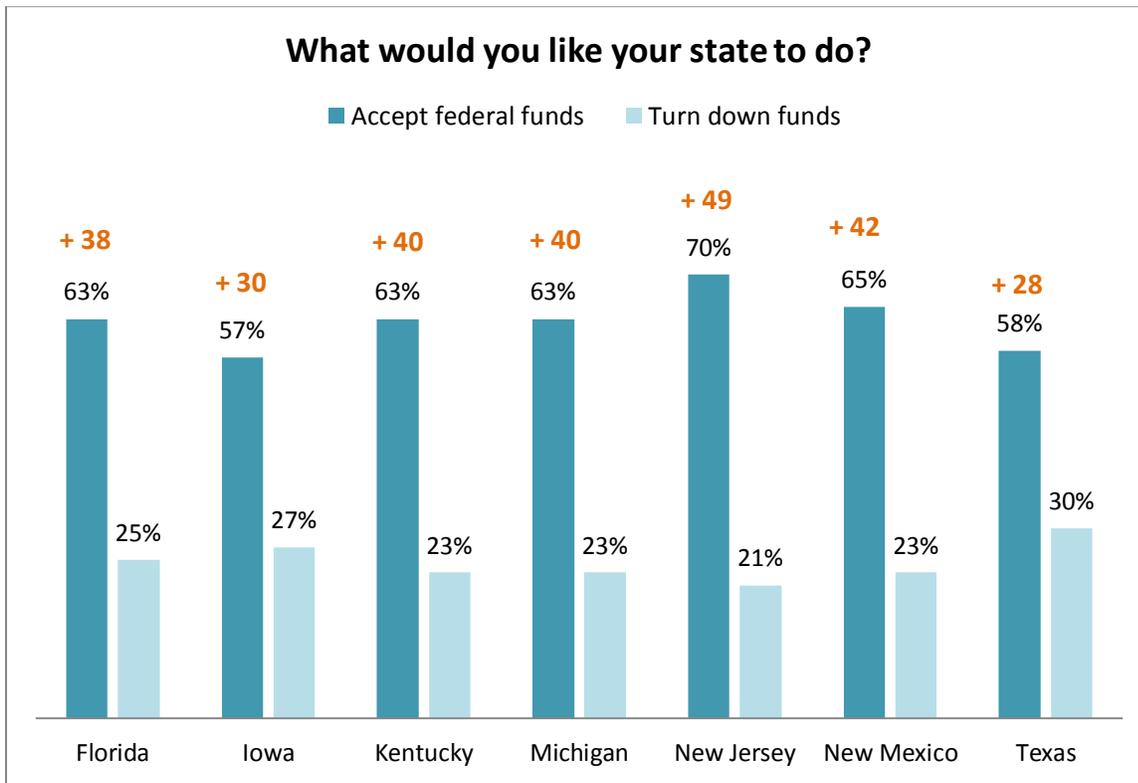
	Number of interviews
Total	<i>n = 5,968</i>
Florida	n = 982
Iowa	n = 808
Kentucky	n = 812
Michigan	n = 808
New Jersey	n = 812
New Mexico	n = 802
Texas	n = 944

By Large Margins, Voters Want their State to Accept Federal Funds

Survey respondents were presented with the following facts about their state accepting federal funds and then asked what they want their state to do:

Next 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, [number of] people in [state] who are uninsured right now 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 [state], or to turn the money down and not cover these people. The federal dollars cover 100% of the costs in the first few years, and 90% of the costs after that.

A majority of voters across the seven states say they want their state to accept federal funds to cover more people.



Voters across demographic groups, such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, income, and across regions of the state, favor accepting federal funds. Republicans in five of the seven states (FL, IA, MI, NJ, and TX) support their state turning down the funds.

Table: Percent Favor Accepting Federal Funds by State

	Florida	Iowa	Kentucky	Michigan	New Jersey	New Mexico	Texas
Total	63%	57%	63%	63%	70%	65%	58%
Men	61%	53%	57%	59%	68%	64%	54%
Women	66%	61%	69%	67%	72%	66%	62%
Under 30	70%	60%	62%	64%	76%	72%	71%
30-39	61%	59%	61%	57%	72%	71%	61%
40-49	68%	55%	60%	64%	66%	67%	54%
50-64	62%	52%	72%	66%	70%	60%	57%
65 and over	59%	62%	57%	59%	69%	60%	52%
White	57%	56%	61%	60%	64%	58%	47%
African American	88%	n/a	88%	80%	93%	n/a	85%
Latino	66%	n/a	n/a	n/a	82%	78%	73%
Native American	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	74%	n/a
College	58%	55%	60%	61%	68%	62%	51%
Non-college	66%	59%	64%	64%	72%	67%	62%
Less than \$30K	78%	69%	73%	75%	83%	77%	77%
\$30K-\$50K	59%	67%	62%	62%	77%	68%	64%
\$50K-\$90K	60%	52%	59%	56%	70%	65%	55%
\$90K or more	61%	52%	64%	63%	64%	62%	49%
Democrats	86%	86%	80%	87%	92%	86%	87%
Independents	67%	58%	63%	63%	68%	54%	56%
Republicans	37%	33%	45%	38%	40%	44%	32%

After Hearing Arguments from Both Sides of the Debate, Voters Across States Agree More with Reasons to Accept versus Turn Down the Funds

Respondents were presented with common arguments from both sides of the debate:

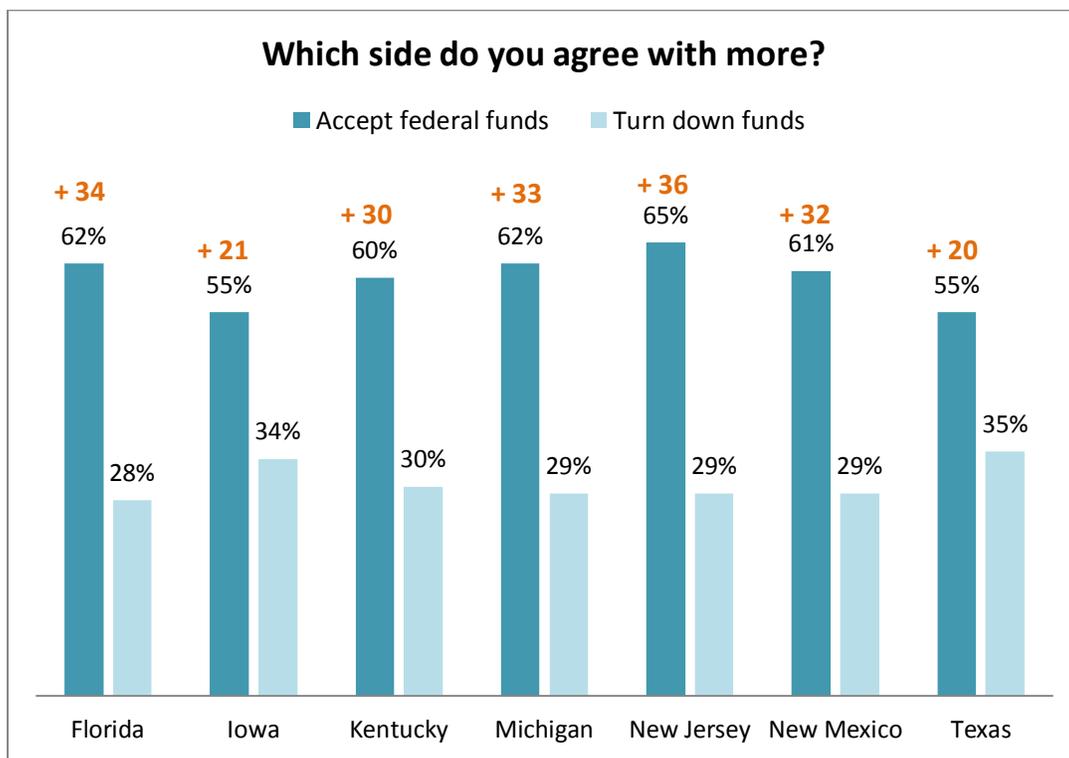
Here are two sides to the issue. (ROTATE)

Side A says we can cover more people in [state] and save taxpayer dollars that are currently spent on treating uninsured people in emergency rooms. Covering more people gives hard-working families the security of knowing they can get preventive care and see a doctor when they need to. The alternative is people showing up in the emergency room when they are sicker. By accepting the money, we could cover more people and save taxpayer dollars.

Side B says [state] will eventually have to pay 10% of the costs of covering these people, and even more if the federal government fails to follow through on its promises. We cannot afford to spend even more on health care coverage, which is already a big part of the state budget. We have too many other priorities in the state that need attention, like education and roads. By turning down the money, we could avoid future increases in state health care spending.

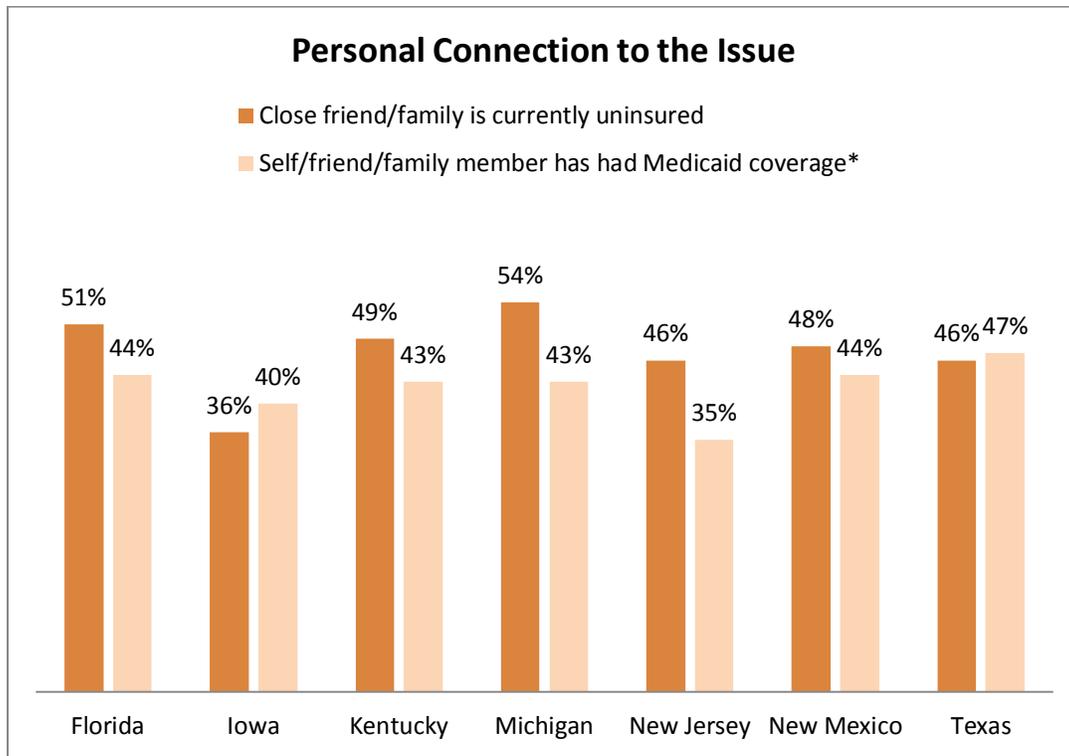
Which side do you agree with more?

After hearing these arguments, voters are more likely to agree with the arguments in favor of accepting federal funds.



While Most Voters Are Insured, Many Have Close Connections to the Uninsured and Those with Medicaid Coverage

Close to half of voters across states have close friends or family members who are currently uninsured. About the same proportion of voters not currently receiving coverage through Medicaid say they or someone close to them has received Medicaid coverage.



* Asked among respondents not currently receiving coverage through Medicaid

Methodology

Lake Research Partners and GS Strategy Group conducted this survey among a total 5,968 registered voters December 13 through 22, 2012. The survey was conducted by telephone using both landline and cell phone RDD sample. Respondents were screened for whether or not they were registered to vote at their current address. The survey was administered in English and Spanish. The margin of sampling error for each state is about ± 3.5 percentage points.