Results from the 2007 New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll

Do we need to worry about wireless substitution in public opinion polls about health reform?

Research and Evaluation Conference
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
September 28, 2007
Project Team

Rutgers
- Joel Cantor
- Susan Brownlee
- Cliff Zukin
- Margaret Koller

Schulman, Ronca, & Bucuvalas, Inc.
- Al Ronca
- Jamie Munjack
- John Boyle
Acknowledgements

The New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll was supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. We thank Brian Quinn of the Foundation staff for his encouragement and support. The professional survey research firm Schulman, Ronca, & Bucuvalas, Inc. (SRBI) conducted poll interviews. This project was reviewed and approved by the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board. The content and conclusions of the analyses presented in this data book are solely the responsibility of the authors.
Potential for Sample Frame Coverage Bias in Health Opinion Polls

• Opinion polls are traditionally based on Random Digit Dial (RDD) samples using landlines.
• A growing number of households rely on wireless phones and do not have landlines.
• Potential for sample frame coverage bias varies by:
  – Prevalence of wireless substitution
  – Magnitude of wireless - landline differences
Percentage of Adults Living in Wireless-Only Households

Characteristics of Wireless-Only Users
Adults, Jan-June 2006

- Age Group
  - 22.6% - 18-24
  - 12.5% - 25-44
  - 5.3% - 45-64
  - 1.3% - 65+
- 32.9% - Current smoker (Jan-June 2005)
- 31.1% - Currently uninsured (Jan-June 2005)
- 44.2% - Living with unrelated roommate
- 22.5% - Renters

Question for Today

Is there a wireless substitution bias in polls about health care and support for reform?
nj health care opinion poll

• Designed to gauge concerns about health care issues and support for reform in NJ (release date Oct. 3)
• 22 minute interview, June 1 to July 9, 2007
• English and Spanish
• 1,104 adults total…
  – 804 by traditional RDD landline sample
  – 300 by wireless phone – wireless only (197) and wireless “mainly” (103)
• Response rate 32%
• Weighted
  – Adjust for probability of selection
  – Post-hoc adjustment to Census distributions (age, sex, education)
Age Distribution by Sub-Sample

Source: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007
Coverage Status by Sub-Sample

Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007
Analysis Strategy

- For selected poll responses compare…
  - Landline and wireless groups (only & mainly)
  - Landline-only and total populations

- Unadjusted estimates and estimates adjusted for…
  - Age (18-29, 30-49, 50-64, 65+)
  - Self-assessed health (fair/poor v. other)
  - Coverage (public, private, none)
  - Number adults (1, 2, 3+)
  - Region of state (5 areas)
  - Marital status (4 categories)
  - Employment status (5 categories)
  - Income (<$35k, $35k-$70k, >70k)
Is there a wireless substitution bias?
Differences between Total & Landline-Only Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Significant Differences</th>
<th>Significant Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Need for reform</td>
<td>• Willingness to pay more taxes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gov’t action on cost</td>
<td>• Read or heard about reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gov’t action on uninsured</td>
<td>• Individual mandate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employer mandate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expand public programs covering low-income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Almost significant (p=0.11)
Willingness to Pay Higher Taxes
Would you be willing or not willing to pay higher taxes so that everyone in New Jersey has health insurance they can’t lose, no matter what?

![Graph showing willingness to pay higher taxes]

- **Willing**:
  - 47.9%
  - Over $500 per year

- **Not willing**:
  - 38.7%

Note: “Don’t Know” and refused responses not shown
Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007
Willingness to Pay Higher Taxes

Would you be willing or not willing to pay higher taxes so that everyone in New Jersey has health insurance they can’t lose, no matter what?

Note: Not Willing, “Don’t Know”, and refused responses not shown
Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007
New Jerseyans Following Health Reform

How much have you heard or read about health care reform proposals currently being discussed in New Jersey?

- Only a Little: 30.1%
- Nothing at all: 43.3%
- A Great Deal: 5.4%
- Some: 20.9%

* “Don’t Know” and refused responses

Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007
New Jerseyans Following Health Reform

How much have you heard or read about health care reform proposals currently being discussed in New Jersey?

Percent Great Deal or Some

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Landline</th>
<th>Total Wireless</th>
<th>Wireless Only</th>
<th>Wireless Mainly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bias: +1.6% points</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference: 7.1% points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: “Only a little”, “Nothing At All”, “Don’t Know”, and refused responses not shown
Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007
Individual Mandate

To achieve universal coverage, one proposal would require everyone to have health insurance, the way all drivers are required to have automobile insurance. People with higher incomes who do not have coverage would be required to buy insurance, and the government would help pay for those who can’t afford it.

* “Don’t Know” and refused responses
Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007
Individual Mandate

To achieve universal coverage, one proposal would require everyone to have health insurance, the way all drivers are required to have automobile insurance. People with higher incomes who do not have coverage would be required to buy insurance, and the government would help pay for those who can’t afford it.

Note: “Somewhat Favor”, “Somewhat Oppose”, “Strongly Oppose”, “Don’t Know”, and refused responses not shown
Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007
Is there a wireless substitution bias in polls about health care and support for reform?

- Not in most variables we examined
- Small bias in:
  - Willingness to pay for taxes (almost significant)
  - Heard/read about reform
  - Support for individual mandate
- Accounted for by other variables in multivariable regressions (e.g., age, coverage, etc.)
Do we need to worry about wireless substitution in public opinion polls about health reform?

• Not quite yet
  – Bias limited
  – Accounted for by other factors
  – But…

• Polls rarely adjust for other factors (other than demographics)

• Individual mandate is key policy question
  – Large wireless-land difference: near 12% points
  – Near 3% point bias
  – As wireless grows, bias becomes more pronounced

• Should wireless-mainly population be included?
  – Mainly population responses similar to landline sample
  – Is mainly population excluded from RDD samples?
  – Further exploration important