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Substantial Majority of Americans Report Family Budget Worries Outweigh Federal Budget Concerns in Health Reform *Families Cutting Back Spending Because of High Health Care Costs, Poll Finds*

(Washington, D.C.) – A new survey released today by the nonpartisan Georgetown University Center for Children and Families (CCF) reveals Americans—by a two-to-one margin—are more concerned about making health coverage more affordable to families than keeping down the federal cost of health care reform. The survey also revealed a sizable gap between what most families consider “affordable” health care coverage and the estimated premium costs of various proposals being considered by Congress.

“In today’s fragile economy, we found that more than four out of ten families have cut back on their household spending as a result of their health care costs,” said Joan Alker, co-executive director of CCF. “Having affordable coverage options was voters’ top priority for health reform.” Following are key findings from the study:

- **American’s priority for reform is making health care more affordable.** When asked about various goals for health care reform, including ending discrimination against preexisting conditions and controlling the costs of our health care system, the top response is “bringing down the cost of premiums and co-payments so more people can find affordable coverage” (31%).
- **Paying for health care creates financial insecurity for many families.** In the last two years, many voters report that paying for health care has caused them to cut back on household spending (44%); build up credit card and medical debt (23%); use up all or most of their savings (21%); and have someone in their household who has gone without health insurance (21%).
- **Voters respond to options for affordable coverage.** Poll respondents were presented with costs proposed in the House bill and the Senate bill currently under consideration.

Two-thirds of voters said a \$362 premium was too expensive for a family of three earning \$45,000 a year. That is the estimated premium cost under the proposal passed by the Senate Finance Committee for families at 250% of the federal poverty line. A significantly smaller majority said \$305 a month, the premium level in the bill that passed the House last month, was too expensive for a family of three earning \$45,000 a year. While a majority of voters felt the House premium levels were still too high, more Americans felt the House levels were “about right” across income levels than those proposed by the Senate.

About the Survey

Results for this survey are based on interviews conducted by Lake Research Partners with 1,034 registered voters between October 28-November 8, 2009. A summary of findings and survey questions are available on the CCF website: <http://ccf.georgetown.edu>.

About CCF

The Georgetown University Center for Children and Families (CCF) is an independent, nonpartisan policy and research center whose mission is to expand and improve health coverage for America's children and families. CCF is based at [Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute](#).