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Lesbians and Gay Men Show Broad Support for Health Care Reform

***8 of 10 Support New Health Care Law; 9 of 10 Also Favor Health Carriers
that Include Employer-Offered Domestic Partner Coverage***

New York, N.Y. and Washington, DC – May 10, 2010 – In a national survey following President Obama’s signature on the final health care reform legislation, 46% of all Americans expressed support for the plan (with 54% opposed).

That measure of support, however, escalates sharply among gay men and lesbians, 79% of whom say they either strongly support or somewhat support President Obama’s plan for health care reform. 60% of all LGBT adults also express support for the new reforms.

When asked about their own health benefits coverage, 85% of all heterosexuals report they are insured, while three-quarters (77%) of LGBT adults also report they have health insurance today. Among gay men and lesbians specifically, 8 out of 10 (81%) state they currently have health insurance coverage although this statistic drops markedly for lesbians (73%) and bisexual adults (68%). [Please note that the smaller number of transgender adults taking part in the survey regrettably were insufficient to draw valid conclusions.]

Nearly half of all Americans (47%) say their insurance coverage is through their employer including 51% of LGBT adults. One out of ten heterosexual respondents (10%) and LGBT adults (9%) alike report they are covered through their spouse or partner’s health insurance policy.

The national survey of 2,918 U.S. adults, (ages 18 and over), of whom 325 self identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender, was conducted online between April 12 and 19, 2010, by Harris Interactive, a global market research and consulting firm, in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the LGBT market.

When asked about factors to consider when choosing among private health care carriers, unsurprisingly 92% of gay men and lesbians (82% of LGBT adults) say that it is important that their health insurance carrier provide domestic partner coverage products in employer-offered plans. Similar proportions – 92% of gay men and lesbians, and 80% of LGBT adults – also agree that it is important that health insurance carriers offer their own employees access to domestic partner health benefits for same-sex couples.

However, only 12% of LGBT adults (and 8% of gay men and lesbians) report that they are “aware” of any health insurance provider that currently markets (or has marketed) products to the LGBT community specifically—something gay men and lesbians would like to see more of. Over 8 in 10 (81%) of gays and lesbians feel that it is important to see print advertisements for health care carriers with information specifically intended for them as customers, including same-sex couple imagery and tailored messages.

Bob Witeck, CEO of Witeck-Combs Communications, noted, “We have long seen evidence of health disparities across the entire LGBT population, particularly among lesbians, bisexual women and transgender adults. These findings appear to underscore the priority that many LGBT Americans give to affordable access to quality health care – and may help explain, in part, why support for national health care reform is unusually deep.”

Witeck added that the survey outcomes contain equally important data for health insurance companies and employers too: “LGBT consumers, including same-sex couples and families, are eager for meaningful information, along with relevant products, services and opportunities that speak to them directly, respectfully and consistently. They wonder also why more companies including health carriers seem reticent to reach out to them in more direct and inclusive ways.”

TABLE 1
SUPPORT OR OPPOSE OBAMA’S REFORM PROPOSALS

“On another subject, even if you don’t know the details of his plan, how do you feel about the health care reform bill that was recently signed into law?”

Base: All Adults

	Total	Heterosexual	GLBT	Gay/Lesbian
	%	%	%	%
Support (NET)	46	44	60	79
Support strongly	16	16	20	30
Support somewhat	29	29	40	49
Oppose (NET)	54	56	40	21
Oppose somewhat	20	20	13	9
Oppose strongly	35	35	27	13

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 2
HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE

“Do you currently have health insurance?”

Base: All Adults

	Total	Heterosexual	GLBT	Gay/Lesbian	Lesbian	Bisexual
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	84	85	77	81	73	68
No	16	15	23	19	27	32

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 3
HEALTH INSURANCE PROVIDER

“Is your health insurance through your...?”

Base: All Adults

	Total	Heterosexual	GLBT	Gay/Lesbian	Lesbian	Bisexual
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employer	47	47	51	53	40	40
Medicare	19	19	17	17	17	14
Partner	10	10	9	5	7	16
Purchased as an individual	7	7	5	6	12	7
Medicaid	5	5	7	6	16	11

Self-employment plan	2	2	5	*	*	4
Medi-Gap	1	1	2	4	-	-
Other	24	24	21	20	26	28

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding; * indicates less than 0.5%

**TABLE 4
MARKETING TO GLBT COMMUNITY**

“Are you aware of any health insurance provider who is either in the past or currently marketing its insurance products specifically to the GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) community?”

Base: All Adults

	Total	Heterosexual	GLBT	Gay/Lesbian	Lesbian	Bisexual
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	4	4	12	8	1	9
No	81	81	80	81	87	84
Not sure	15	16	8	11	12	7

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 5
FACTORS IN CONSIDERING A HEALTH INSURANCE PROVIDER**

“Please indicate how important each of the following factors are in influencing your likelihood to consider a specific company’s health insurance products.”

Summary of those saying “Important”

Base: All Adults

	Total	Heterosexual	GLBT	Gay/Lesbian	Lesbian	Bisexual
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The health insurance company provides domestic partner coverage products in plans offered by major corporations to their own employees	45	42	82	92	93	73
The health insurance company provides domestic partner benefits for its own employees.	45	42	80	92	89	70
Seeing a print advertisement for the health insurance company that provides general information about its insurance products but does not include nor speak specifically to gays or lesbians.	34	33	52	54	47	42
Seeing a print advertisement for the health insurance company that provides general information about its insurance products and speaks to gay persons with images of gay and lesbian people and/or tailored wording.	29	26	75	81	94	67

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted the study online within the United States between April 12 and 19, 2010, among 2,918 adults (ages 18 and over), of whom 325 self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. We over-sampled gay men and lesbians in order to allow for more detailed analysis of these groups.

Figures for age, sex, race, education, region and income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. In addition, the results for the gay and lesbian sample were weighted separately based on profiles of the gay and lesbian population that Harris Interactive has compiled through many different online surveys. Propensity score weighting also was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is one of the world's leading custom market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for the Harris Poll and for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers expertise in a wide range of industries including healthcare, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Serving clients in over 215 countries and territories through our North American, European, and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us – and our clients – stay ahead of what's next. For more information, please visit www.harrisinteractive.com.

About Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.

Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. is the nation's premier marketing communications and consulting firm, specializing in developing and implementing effective strategies reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With over 16 years experience in this unique market, Witeck-Combs Communications not only serves as a bridge between corporate America and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender consumers (LGBT), but also provides counsel to countless non-profit organizations that aim to educate the public on gay and lesbian issues or to better reach their LGBT membership.

In April 2003, American Demographics magazine identified Bob Witeck and Wes Combs as two of 25 experts over the last 25 years who have made significant contributions to the fields of demographics, market research, media and trendspotting for their path breaking work on the gay and lesbian market, and in 2006 Bob Witeck and Wes Combs co-authored **Business Inside Out: Capturing Millions of Brand Loyal Gay Consumers** (Kaplan Publishing), considered the first-ever book on marketing insights, practical tips and strategies targeting the LGBT

market. They have appeared in worldwide media outlets including Fortune, CNBC, CNN, Reuters, Associated Press, Ad Age, New York Times and Washington Post. For more information visit www.witeckcombs.com.