Physician Leaders Split Over Candidates' Plans

(PRNewswire) An on-line poll of physicians who lead hospitals, health systems and large group practices across the U.S. conducted after the first presidential debate found more preferred Republican challenger Mitt Romney's plan to reform Medicare than President Barack Obama's, with many still undecided.

The unscientific poll, which was sent via email to about 10,000 physician leaders who are members of the American College of Physician Executives (ACPE), drew 422 responses. Of those, 47.2 percent said they believed Romney's plan would be more effective in shoring up Medicare financial processes and serving the Medicare population, while 33.2 percent supported Obama's plan. An additional 10.2 percent didn't support either plan and 8.2 percent didn't watch the debate.

President Obama favors keeping Medicare as a government-run program while reforming the current payment system and reducing fraud. Romney embraced running-mate Paul Ryan's plan to overhaul the entitlement program and convert it to a voucher-based system that would require seniors to buy private health insurance with government subsidies. Participants in the ACPE poll were allowed to post comments anonymously. One participant, who posted under the initials BW, summed up the feelings of many by praising Romney and Ryan for being willing to discuss a new approach to Medicare.

"The road to long-term national fiscal stability will require major changes in both the health care delivery and reimbursement systems, and must entail serious reform of Medicare ... Romney and Ryan are honest enough to discuss this issue, and will be flexible enough to find a workable solution."

But many of the posters disagreed and expressed skepticism at the idea of privatizing Medicare. "At least we know Obama's plan and it is partially executed. We need time to see this out and then make adjustments as needed, not start all over to reform health care," wrote another respondent. Many of the doctors said both plans were insufficient and expressed frustration over the lack of progress in reforming Medicare.

"We spend an inordinate amount of time criticizing one side or another," wrote one respondent. "We have a lot of bright people. We need to come up with a plan, not a Democratic or Republican plan. A workable plan."

To see complete poll results, go to acpe.org [1].

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