



The Daily Dish

A Look Back at Pressing Health Policy Issues

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Eakinomics: A Look Back at Pressing Health Policy Issues

On the eve of the pandemic, AAF commissioned [polling research](#) by OnMessage Inc. to better understand voters' attitudes toward various policy proposals regarding prescription drug pricing. The results are a useful guide to what concerned citizens before the focus became coronavirus, social distancing, and what the dress code should be in the living room.

While it is important to check in with the ultimate consumers of policy, polling can be difficult to interpret. In this case, however, a clean story emerged. First, the top health care financing concern was insurance premiums, followed by surprise medical bills. Despite the furor in policy circles, drug prices ran third.

Still, there has been a lot of discussion of drug pricing reform. It turns out that voters have good sense in such reforms. The preferred approach is [re-designing Medicare Part D](#) to make it more affordable and put downward pressure on prices. The basic idea in the many variations on this theme is to combine an absolute maximum out-of-pocket cap with financial incentives for insurers and manufacturers to keep prices lower so beneficiaries do not cross this cap.

Finally, respondents were quick to shake the siren song of price-fixing, whether it took the form of a cap based on prices in other countries or a punitive tax on drugs whose prices rise faster than inflation. After some initial support, it substantially eroded when respondents learned more about the details.

Premiums, surprise bills, and drug prices will all be back in the post-pandemic policy debates – along with, most likely, the old favorite of the best way to cover the inflated ranks of the uninsured. With these data, you will be ready.