



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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**ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION**  
**HEALTH CARE CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX:**

**CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN HEALTH CARE RISES**  
**SLIGHTLY IN SEPTEMBER**

*Concern over losing health care coverage continues to grow*

*Three-fourths of Americans believe that health reform would improve access to care*

Princeton, N.J. – As the White House stepped up efforts to communicate its vision for health reform following the August recess, Americans’ confidence in their health insurance coverage – and ability to access health care – rose slightly in September. The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Care Consumer Confidence Index* (RWJF Index) rose in September to 96.6, up from 96.1 in August.

Despite the small uptick in overall confidence, the September survey saw continued growth in the number of Americans who are worried about losing health coverage. In September, 33.4 percent of Americans reported that they are worried about losing their health insurance at some point in the next 12 months, up from 29.0 percent in August. When the survey began in April, 21.6 percent of Americans reported worries about losing insurance.

The survey also found that people believe that access to care will increase or stay the same if the health system is reformed. More than two-thirds (67.4%) of Americans believe that access to health care for the nation will improve or stay the same under health reform. Additionally, three-fourths (74.5%) believe that their personal access to care will improve or stay the same.

“Even though overall consumer confidence in the economy has grown in recent months, confidence in health care has remained flat,” said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Despite rising faith in the strength of our economy, people still feel financially pinched and increasingly concerned that they could lose their health care coverage and access to care. They view enacting health reform as a positive step toward ensuring that they have access to affordable and high quality health care.”

The RWJF Index is created from data collected by the *Surveys of Consumers*, with analysis of the data provided by the University of Minnesota’s State Health Access Data Assistance Center (SHADAC). The survey evaluates consumer confidence along a spectrum of economic issues including American health care.

The RWJF Index ranges from 0 to 200. Baseline was established at 100 in spring 2009. In September of 2009, questions were added to track respondents' knowledge of and attitudes toward health reform. September highlights show:

- **An overwhelming majority of Americans view health reform as key to reviving the economy.** More than four in five Americans (81.4%) believe it is important that President Obama includes health reform in plans to address the economy.
- **People believe that health reform will improve their finances.** More than three-fourths of Americans (76.1%) report that they believe health reform will improve their personal finances. Additionally 62.2 percent believe that health reform will improve the country's finances.
- **People are worried about being able to afford future care.** More than half of all Americans (53.2%) are worried that they will not be able to pay for their future health care needs in the event of a serious illness. Additionally, nearly half (48.2%) are worried that they will not be able to afford all of the routine health care services they need.

“Too many Americans are spending sleepless nights worried about whether they will be able to afford basic health care,” said Lavizzo-Mourey. “It’s clear that Americans see health reform as both an important step toward shoring up our nation’s finances, as well as a critical part of guaranteeing that they and their families can access needed care. If Washington does not enact reforms that ensure timely access to care, fears about access and affordability will continue to increase.”

The RWJF Index is comprised of two sub-indices compiled by SHADAC. The *Recent Health Cost Barriers Index* gauges consumers' recent experiences accessing health care because of cost concerns and increased from 100.0 in August to 101.9 in September. The *Future Health Cost Concerns Index* measures consumers' worries about accessing health care or health insurance in the future because of cost and dropped a point in September from 92.2 in August to 91.2.

The survey data for the indices are collected from questions added to the *Surveys of Consumers*, written to construct the RWJF Index. The survey items measure access to health care, health insurance and future concerns regarding health care. For over 50 years, the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan has conducted the *Surveys of Consumers* which has been an accurate indicator for understanding and forecasting changes in the national economy. The survey's Index of Consumer Expectations is an official component of the U.S. Dept. of Commerce's Index of Leading Economic Indicators.

The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Care Consumer Confidence Index* is released the third Tuesday of every month. More information about the survey and the latest results are available at [www.rwjf.org/confidence](http://www.rwjf.org/confidence).

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*The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime.*