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Wisconsin doctors support health reform

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Wisconsin physicians support reform of the health care system, but primary care doctors and specialists differ on health reform priorities, according to the authors of a new study published in the Wisconsin Medical Journal.

Researchers at the **University of Wisconsin-Madison** and the **Wisconsin Medical Society** surveyed 2,500 randomly selected Wisconsin physicians in summer 2008 to determine their opinions on health care reform. Sixty percent of the physicians that returned a completed survey said they think the government should be responsible for ensuring that all state residents have access to high-quality, affordable health care, according to a press release from the Wisconsin Medical Society.

But a closer look at the data indicated differences of opinion depended on the physicians' status as primary care doctors or specialists. Primary care physicians tended to support more government involvement in the health care system through measures such as universal coverage and the creation of a single-payer health care system.

Specialists were more likely to support health savings accounts and high-deductible insurance plans and opposed universal coverage and single-payer proposals.

However, both groups agreed that issues that should be addressed by state and federal health reforms should include medical malpractice insurance costs; health system administrative costs; unhealthy lifestyle choices; the cost of health care services; drug company advertising and the waning supply of primary care doctors.

"These results indicate a need for more dialogue and education among physicians to identify common ground, forge shared goals and promote reforms to best benefit patients," the study's authors said in the press release.

The Wisconsin Medical Journal is the official publication of the Wisconsin Medical Society.

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