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## Marketplace Keeps Insured Rate High

A record 5.8 million people have enrolled in health coverage through NY State of Health, the State's official health plan Marketplace. This has helped keep the State's insured rate at around 95%

The Department of Health [announced](#) enrollment through the health exchange increased by nearly 885,000 people since the end of the 2020 Open Enrollment Period in February of last year. This increase includes a concentration of people enrolling in Medicaid and the Essential Plan, which is primarily associated with individuals who may have experienced reduced earnings or job loss as a result of COVID-19.

Supporters of the New York Health Act claim the pandemic caused a big increase in the number of uninsured. However, Governor Cuomo in his Budget Address earlier this year stated that the State's insured rate has remained stable at 95% despite the pandemic. As we have seen, this is due to the safety nets in place under the current public-private system.

## National Polling on Public Option

The Public Option may become the dominating topic when it comes to health care proposals. The concept is garnering more support among voters and lawmakers on both the state and the federal level - and from both sides of the aisle.

About seven in 10 voters favor a Public Option, according to the latest national

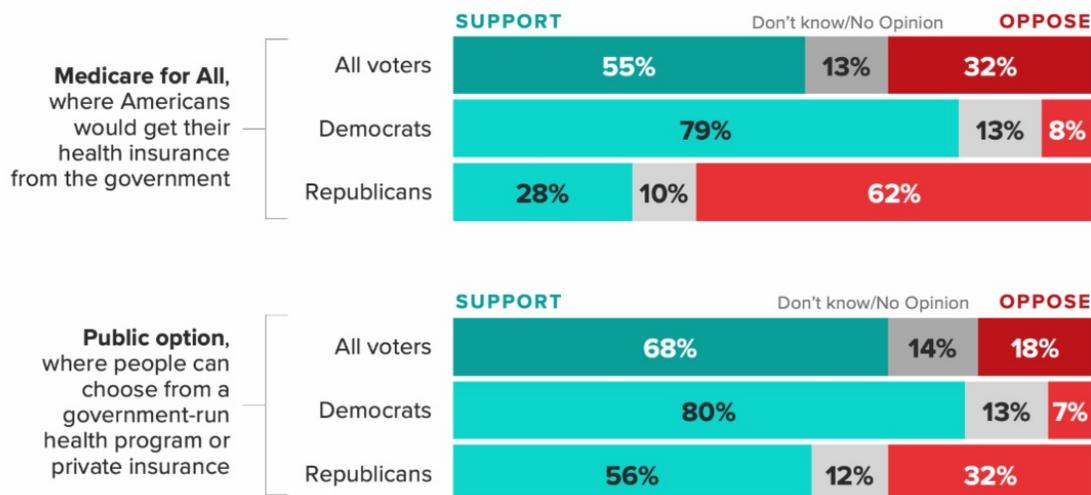
[polling](#) from Morning Consult and Politico.

Overall, 68 percent of voters say they support a public option, up from 63 percent in February 2020, while 18 percent oppose it. Support from both Democrats and Republicans has increased in the past year.

Support for Medicare for All has stayed the same since the start of the pandemic, with 55 percent of voters saying they favor the proposal.

## While 2 in 3 Voters Support a Public Option, Partisan Divides Remain on Medicare for All

Voters were asked whether they support or oppose the following proposals:



MORNING CONSULT | POLITICO

Poll conducted March 19-22, 2021, among 1,994 registered voters, with a margin of error of +/-2%. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Importantly, the pollster noted that support could shift for either proposal once people learn more about the plans. We have seen in past polls that most people have very limited knowledge of what Single Payer or a Public Option would actually mean.

The Public Option proposal in Congress is the "Medicare-X Choice Act." It would phase in a public health insurance option in areas with a shortage of plans on the individual market exchanges before becoming available nationwide by 2025.

President Biden has said he wants to build on the Affordable Care Act by adding a Public Option that is similar to Medicare.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi last week reiterated [support](#) for a public option while commemorating the 11th anniversary of the Affordable Care Act.

## A Look at Other States

Connecticut and Colorado are two states that are currently debating Public Option plans in their respective legislatures.

## Connecticut

As we mentioned in a previous newsletter, the "Connecticut Option" would create a new state government-run health insurance plan that is available for purchase by residents and small businesses and is subsidized by taxes. Connecticut State Comptroller Kevin Lembo, a key supporter of the bill, said he views the plan as "transitional" toward a single payer system.

A few days ago, Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont was asked where he stands on the Public Option and he remains non-committal:

*"I'm pretty reluctant to have taxpayers underwrite any of the risk here," Lamont said. "And what I'm really trying to focus on is the underlying cost of health care."*

## Colorado

Colorado lawmakers have a Public Option proposal that would be introduced in two phases.

In Phase 1, the state commissioner of insurance would create a standard design for a health insurance plan. Health insurance companies would be encouraged to offer the standardized plan in every ZIP code where they offer plans in the individual and small-group markets. In the 2023 plan year, insurance companies will be told to set a goal of offering the standardized plan at a price at least 10% less than the premium rate they offered on the individual market in 2021. By the 2024 plan year, that reduction must jump to 20% less than 2021 prices.

If the health care industry can't meet the 20% reduction goal, then the bill would move into Phase 2.

Phase 2 would introduce a government-run nonprofit called the Colorado Option Authority. That nonprofit would then offer its own insurance plan called the Colorado Health Insurance Option. This plan would be at least 20% cheaper in each county than the average premium rates offered by private insurers. It would be set up similar to Medicaid.

Connecticut and Colorado plans, and similar proposals in other states, would rely on huge tax increases on residents, a staggering amount of federal funding, or both. They would all be unsustainable for private health coverage and would eventually lead to one option: Single Payer.

## New York Health Act Tracker



## [S.5474/A.6058](#)

Nothing new to report this week.

Legislators and the Governor are still focused on the State Budget. We don't anticipate any action on the New York Health Act until post-budget. It's due by April 1.

After the budget, we expect attention surrounding the bill to ramp up. We are preparing to launch an aggressive advocacy campaign, given that both houses now have enough sponsors on the bill to comprise the majority needed for passage. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

## Ways to Get Involved

Reporters have been admitting that they are focused on covering the Governor's scandals and big ticket items like marijuana. So getting coverage for anything is more difficult right now. But that is where formats like Op-Eds are most beneficial. If you are interested in submitting an opinion piece, we can [help](#) with the language or getting it placed with a publication.

Other ways to stay involved:

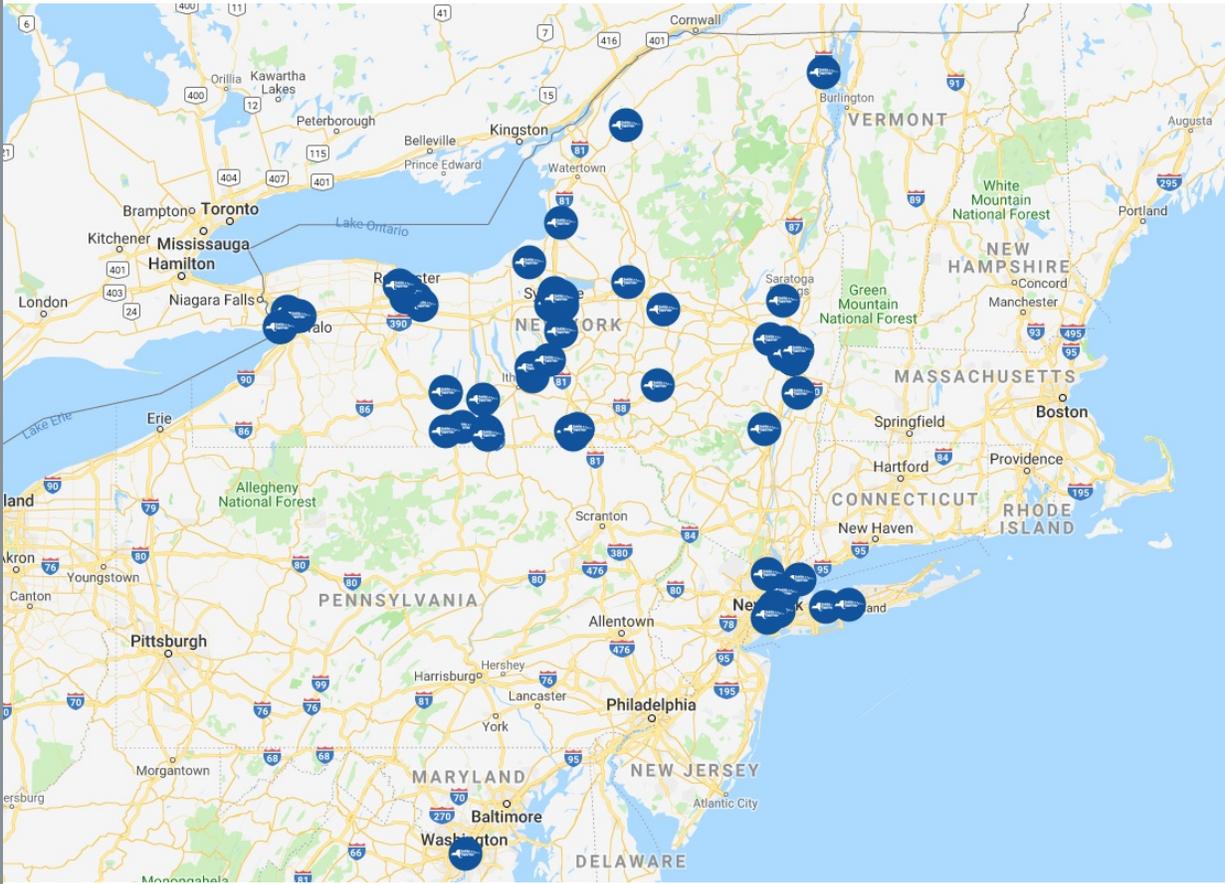
- Issue a memo in opposition to the NYHA
- Issue a press release on the NYHA
- Be active on social media #NoNYHealthAct

## Growing the Coalition

Help us expand our membership in 2021! The coalition is currently 90 members strong. We would like to get to 100 this session.

If you know an organization that also supports allowing a variety of healthcare coverage options rather than forcing all New Yorkers to use a single government-run health insurance program, direct them to the 'Join' section on our website. We are also happy to speak to potential members or provide you with customized materials you can use to recruit potential allies.

Visit our  
website



## Realities Resources

### Useful Links and Information

[New York State 2021 Legislative Session Calendar](#)

[New York Health Act: Cost vs Tax Increase](#)

[What is ERISA? Does it impact the New York Health Act?](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions about the New York Health Act](#)

[Myths and Facts about the New York Health Act](#)

[Single Payer PowerPoint Presentation](#)

[Sample Opposition Memo](#)

[RAND Study on Single Payer](#)

We are happy to bring back The Real Deal, our weekly newsletter prepared by the Realities of Single Payer campaign. It is intended to keep coalition

members informed about single payer, the New York Health Act, and related health care news and legislative developments in the state.

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