

**WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL / SHUGOLL RESEARCH CEO PANEL RELEASE**

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**WASHINGTON BUSINESS LEADERS ARE LESS SUPPORTIVE OF HEALTHCARE REFORM TODAY  
VERSUS SEPTEMBER 2009; OVER HALF BELIEVE REPUBLICANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO CREATE AN  
EFFECTIVE HEALTHCARE PLAN THAN DEMOCRATS**

\*\*\* These data are from the *Washington Business Journal*/Shugoll Research poll of area business leaders. A total of 61 business leaders participated in the poll during the weeks of February 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The *Washington Business Journal*/Shugoll Research CEO Panel will regularly poll a select group of business leaders on issues important to the community.\*\*\*

**Business Leaders are Less Supportive of Obama's Healthcare Reform**

Only 15% of Washington business leaders in the *Washington Business Journal*/Shugoll Research CEO Panel currently feel positively about President Obama's healthcare reform legislation, down from 22% in September 2009. With more details now known about the bill, 38% have a less positive opinion of it than before (twice as many as have a more positive opinion-19%), while the view of 43% has not changed.

About one in three (34%) would like to see the bill repealed and 44% would keep the bill, but change certain parts. Only 19% want the bill retained as written. A total of 39% would prefer Americans receive tax credits to help them pay for health insurance than the current plan. Over twice as many business leaders (53%) feel that Republicans will create a healthcare plan that best meets the needs of small businesses than Democrats (24%), with the rest unsure.

In terms of specific plan components, a minority favor the individual mandate (46%) and the public option (33%). Just 7% support allowing young adults to stay on their family's plan until they turn age 26. More panelists support high risk pods allowing those with pre-existing conditions to purchase healthcare (58%) and placing federal limits on medical malpractice suits (84%).

"Clearly the business community has become less supportive of the healthcare reform bill over time, perhaps a result of the bold statements made by incoming Republican Congressmen," said Mark Shugoll, CEO of Shugoll Research.

**Washington Business Leaders Do Not See Significant Advantages in Healthcare Reform**

Although controlling healthcare expenses remains a top priority for most business leaders (75%), few (28% for each) think the current healthcare reform bill will help small businesses stay competitive within a tough job market or will benefit their business by reducing absenteeism and increasing productivity. In addition, a significant number of business leaders today believe that healthcare reform will increase their company's health insurance expenses (64%) and only 35% say healthcare reform will have a positive effect on the nation's economy.

### **Businesses Cutting Back Healthcare Benefits**

Given the challenges of controlling healthcare costs, over two thirds (69%) of business leaders have made some cuts to their plans. The largest number, 52%, have raised the deductible for plan holders, while 31% have switched to a Health Savings Account or other high deductible plan. In addition, 29% have reduced the share of the premium that the business pays and 27% have reduced the number of plan options. Only 19%, however, have reduced benefits coverage.

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### **Panel Managers**

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