

# MEDICARE

## ***Confidence in Health Care Once Eligible for Medicare Is Extremely Low***

- Less than 20 percent of nonelderly Americans are extremely or very confident in any aspect of health care once they are eligible for Medicare.
- The most significant concern is cost. Half of all nonelderly Americans are not confident that they will be able to afford health care without suffering financial hardship once they are eligible for the Medicare program.

Aspect of Health Care Once Eligible for Medicare	Extremely or Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Too or Not At All Confident
Afford health care without financial hardship	12%	36%	50%
Freedom to choose provider	14	39	45
Able to get needed treatments	18	43	38

## ***Tradeoffs: Most Americans Choose Premium Support Program and Budget Surplus Over Benefit Cuts***

- When survey participants were told of the financial situation of Medicare, there was strong support for a premium support program, where Medicare beneficiaries are allowed to choose from many private health plans, and the federal government contributes a fixed amount to the cost of the plan.
- Benefit reductions in the form of increasing the Medicare eligibility to age 67 or an increase in co-payments and deductibles did not receive a lot of support.
- Tax increases, such as a direct increase in the payroll tax, did not receive a lot of support.

Tradeoffs	Favor	Oppose
Premium supports with competing health plans	76%	19%
Use budget surplus	73	24
Means test premiums	63	33
Reduce payments to providers	57	38
Increase co-payments and deductibles	36	59
Increase payroll taxes	34	62
Increase eligibility age to 67	29	67

Source: 1999 Health Confidence Survey.