

2013

Rural Nebraskans' Perceptions About Health Care Reform

Rebecca J. Vogt

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, rvogt2@unl.edu

Cheryl A. Burkhardt-Kriesel

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, cburkhardt-kriesel1@unl.edu

Randolph L. Cantrell

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, rcantrell1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/agecon_cornhusker

Vogt, Rebecca J.; Burkhardt-Kriesel, Cheryl A.; and Cantrell, Randolph L., "Rural Nebraskans' Perceptions About Health Care Reform" (2013). *Cornhusker Economics*. 646.

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/agecon_cornhusker/646

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Agricultural Economics Department at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Cornhusker Economics by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

CORNHUSKER ECONOMICS

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension

Rural Nebraskans' Perceptions About Health Care Reform

Market Report	Yr Ago	4 Wks Ago	7/5/13
<u>Livestock and Products,</u>			
<u>Weekly Average</u>			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.....	\$116.91	\$124.00	\$120.23
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.....	160.31	160.32	159.00
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.....	149.04	138.33	135.25
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.....	193.52	204.21	196.95
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated.....	98.58	95.63	100.61
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass, 51-52% Lean.....	92.32	94.50	106.26
Slaughter Lambs, Ch. & Pr., Heavy, Woolled, South Dakota, Direct.....	122.50	114.38	*
National Carcass Lamb Cutout, FOB.....	340.16	277.22	281.37
<u>Crops,</u>			
<u>Daily Spot Prices</u>			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu.....	7.39	7.02	6.58
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.....	7.15	7.16	6.61
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.....	15.37	15.13	15.42
Grain Sorghum, No. 2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt.....	11.46	12.34	11.13
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, MN, bu.....	3.84	4.32	3.93
<u>Feed</u>			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.....	207.50	*	*
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.....	155.00	225.00	*
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton.....	125.00	217.50	*
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture, Nebraska Average.....	282.50	231.00	210.00
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture, Nebraska Average.....	96.12	89.50	79.50
*No Market			

The Affordable Care Act (also known as the health care reform law) includes provisions that are intended to expand access to insurance, increase consumer insurance protections, improve quality and system performance and curb rising health care costs. Though some of the reforms were effective in 2010, many provisions will be effective January 1, 2014. To find out rural Nebraskans' opinions about this new law, the 2013 Nebraska Rural Poll asked how they think the law will affect various groups, and if they think it will be successful at accomplishing its objectives.

The self-administered survey was mailed in March and April to 6,320 randomly selected households in the non-metropolitan counties in Nebraska.¹ Metropolitan counties not included in the sample were Cass, Dakota, Dixon, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, Saunders, Seward and Washington. The following analyses are based on 2,317 responses (37% response rate).

Most rural Nebraskans (just over one-half, 54%) think the country as a whole will be worse off under the new health care reform law. Only nine percent think it will be better off under the new law, and over one-quarter (26%) are unsure of the impacts of the reform on the country. Similarly, the majority of rural Nebraskans (52%) think self-employed individuals will be worse off under the new health care reform law. Only eight percent think self-employed individuals will be better off under the new health care law, and over one-quarter (28%) are unsure of the impacts on self-employed individuals.

Rural Nebraskans are also more negative than positive about the perceived impact of the new health care law on

¹ In the spring of 2013 the Grand Island area (Hall, Hamilton, Howard and Merrick Counties) were designated a metropolitan area. The mailing list for this survey had already been purchased prior to this designation, so those four counties were included in our sample and in the data presented here.

the following groups: middle-class Americans, people age 65 and older, their family, people with pre-existing health issues and children. As an example, almost one-half (46%) of rural Nebraskans think they and their families will be worse off under the new law, compared to only five percent who think they will be better off. Only one group (people currently without health insurance), had a higher percentage of rural Nebraskans saying they would be better off under the new health care reform law than worse off. Over one-third (35%) of rural Nebraskans think people currently without health insurance will be better off under the new law, compared to 27 percent who think they will be worse off. Almost the same proportion of rural Nebraskans think lower income Americans would be better off under the new law (31%), as compared to those saying they would be worse off (30%).

Even people currently without health insurance are more negative than positive about the perceived impact of the health care reform law on themselves and their family. Over four in ten (43%) of the uninsured think they will be worse off under the new law, compared to only seven percent who think they will be better off. Almost three in ten (29%) of the uninsured are unsure of the new law's impact on themselves and their family. (See Table 1)

In addition to having negative perceptions on how the new health care reform law will impact most groups, many rural Nebraskans do not think the law will accomplish many of its goals (Table 2). Most rural Nebraskans (58%) think the new health care reform law will not be successful at decreasing health care costs overall, and 44 percent think it will not be successful at increasing the quality of health care. However, over one-third (36%) of rural Nebraskans

Table 1. In general, do you think the following groups will be better or worse off under the health care reform law, or don't you think it will make much difference?

	Worse Off	Not Much Difference	Better Off	Unsure
The Country as a Whole	54%	11%	9%	26%
Self-employed Individuals	52%	12%	8%	28%
Middle-class Americans	48%	21%	8%	24%
People Age 65 and Older	47%	20%	7%	26%
You and Your Family	46%	27%	5%	22%
People with Pre-existing Health Issues	33%	12%	29%	26%
Lower Income Americans	30%	15%	31%	25%
People Currently without Health Insurance	27%	13%	35%	26%
Children	26%	24%	19%	31%

Table 2. Based on what you know or have heard about the health care reform law, how successful is the health care reform law likely to be at accomplishing the following in Nebraska?

	Not at All Successful	Somewhat Successful	Completely Successful	Unsure
Decreasing health care costs overall	58%	10%	3%	29%
Increasing quality of health care	44%	20%	4%	32%
Motivating and supporting people to improve their health	41%	24%	5%	30%
Health care professionals and organizations, such as hospitals, working together to better manage care for patients	38%	25%	5%	32%
Ensuring access to the latest and newest innovations in treatment, services and medical technology	38%	24%	5%	33%
Increasing access to medical health care services	33%	30%	4%	33%
Increasing use of the most up-to-date information technology in hospitals and doctors' offices	33%	27%	5%	35%
Increasing access to health insurance coverage	27%	36%	4%	33%

think the new law will be somewhat successful at increasing access to health insurance coverage. Approximately one-third of rural Nebraskans are unsure if the new law will be successful at accomplishing the various items.

When asked about the impact on health care costs, persons with health insurance are more likely than persons without health insurance to say the new law will not be successful at decreasing the costs. Almost six in ten persons with health insurance (59%) believe the new law will not be successful at decreasing health care costs, compared to 47 percent of persons without health insurance. Persons without health insurance are more likely to be unsure of the impacts on health care costs. Persons with health insurance are more likely than persons without health insurance to say the law will be somewhat successful at increasing access to health insurance coverage (37 and 20%, respectively). The persons without health insurance are more likely to be unsure of the effects on access to health insurance coverage (42% compared to 33%). (See Table 3)

Table 3. Based on what you know or have heard about the health care reform law, how successful is the health care reform law likely to be at accomplishing the following in Nebraska?

	Not at All Successful	Somewhat Successful	Completely Successful	Unsure
<i>Decreasing Health Care Costs Overall</i>				
Uninsured	47%	7%	4%	42%
Insured	59%	10%	3%	29%
<i>Increasing Access to Health Insurance Coverage</i>				
Uninsured	30%	20%	7%	42%
Insured	26%	37%	4%	33%

Though many rural Nebraskans have negative opinions about the new law, most admit that they don't understand it well. Only five percent say they understand the law "very well." More than 40 percent say they don't understand it at all, and almost one-third say not too well. Thus, there is a need for education about the Affordable Care Act for rural residents.

Rebecca Vogt, (402) 329-6251
 Survey Research Manager
 Center for Applied Rural Innovation
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln
rvogt2@unl.edu

Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, (308) 632-1234
 Extension Specialist – Entrepreneur/Business Development
 Panhandle Research and Extension Center
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln
cburkhartkriesel1@unl.edu

Randy Cantrell, (402) 472-0919
 Rural Sociologist
 Rural Futures Institute
 University of Nebraska
rcantrell1@unl.edu