



NEWS RELEASE

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## **Security Gap Growing Between Haves, Have Nots**

*National Health Security Index reveals big jump in affordability concerns;  
Surprising areas of agreement on reform across political parties*

**San Francisco, CA** – March 31, 2008 – The gap in health security is widening between low and high income Americans and between those covered by health insurance and those who are uninsured, according to findings from the second annual *Health Security Index* released today by Catholic Healthcare West (CHW), the eighth largest healthcare system in the nation.

The *Health Security Index*, based on a survey of more than 1,150 U.S. adults, also found that:

- There was a 50 percent jump in the number of respondents that cited affordable healthcare for all as the single most important healthcare challenge facing the nation today (from 22% in 2007 to 33% in 2008).
- Democrats (34%), Republicans (32%) and Independents (39%) similarly recognize affordability as the most important healthcare challenge.
- The uninsured are more than three times as likely to have to choose between basic necessities and healthcare.
- One-fifth of U.S. adults (18%) report they are likely to stay at home for a non-urgent health condition (up from 7% in 2007).
- Across all political parties, respondents showed surprising agreement on reform measures that support health insurance choice and tax credits for the poor.

CHW pioneered the *Health Security Index* in 2007 to gauge Americans' perceptions and beliefs about their ability to access the care they need and maintain their health. The survey provides important insights into the state of the nation's health and highlights key differences between subgroups of the population.

In 2007, the average *Health Security Index* score was 66 out of a possible 100, and today it remains at 66. After one year's time – despite the increased attention and public awareness of healthcare reform – Americans are no more secure.

The 2008 *Health Security Index* reveals a 16 point gap in health security between those earning under \$35,000 (HSI of 59) and those earning over \$75,000 (HSI of 72), compared to a gap of 14 points in 2007. The gap is even wider, at 22 points, between the privately insured (HSI of 70) and those living without health insurance (HSI of 49), compared to a 20 point gap in 2007.

Other evidence for the growing divide:

- Fewer of the uninsured say they feel secure about their healthcare (27% down from 32% in 2007), while the privately insured have experienced no change (62%).
- Only 36 percent of those earning under \$35,000 agree they will be “okay” financially if they come down with a serious illness (39% in 2007), while 74 percent of those earning over \$75,000 are in agreement (up from 69% in 2007).

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“The Health Security Index shows us the security divide is growing between the haves and the have nots,” says Lloyd H. Dean, Catholic Healthcare West president/chief executive officer. “However, it also shows us Americans are united in their willingness to do their part for meaningful health reform. They are telling us it is time for this country to come together, look for areas of common ground, and provide everyone healthcare they can afford.”

“Catholic Healthcare West commissioned the *Health Security Index* because we believe this nation holds healthcare as a value for all and we are committed to being part of the solution,” Dean continued. “We hope the information provided in the *Health Security Index* will be helpful to the public and to the nation’s leaders and policymakers who are seeking to understand how secure people feel about their health, their ability to access the care they need, and the urgent need for healthcare reform.”

### **Affordable Healthcare an Increasing Factor for Peace of Mind**

As established last year, healthcare affordability is directly linked to employment status, and this year there is more anxiety surrounding job loss (48% are worried about losing their job, up from 44% in 2007). Seven out of ten (70%) of those employed are unsure if they could afford health insurance if they lost their job. Additionally, the employed are becoming more reliant on insurance coverage for peace of mind (76%, up from 71%).

The findings also show that those without health insurance are more than three times as likely as those with insurance to have had to choose between paying for basic necessities and healthcare (58% of the uninsured have had to make this choice in the past year compared to 17% of those with insurance). The plight of those under the age of 25 (41%), Hispanics/Latinos (41%), African Americans (36%), and those in poor health (47%) who have had to make this choice is equally alarming.

### **Some Reform Measures Gain Traction, Others Falter**

Support for universal healthcare remains strong, though it hasn’t grown since last year. Today, seven out of ten (69%) Americans believe the time has come for universal healthcare in America (down from 72% in 2007). Democrats are much more supportive than Republicans (84% vs. 45%) of this idea, while 67 percent of Independents support it.

#### *Surprising Support across Party Lines for Tax Credits, Insurance Choice*

“The growing divide between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’ in our country is not insurmountable,” said Steve Bodhaine president of The Segmentation Company, the division of Yankelovich, Inc. that conducted the survey. “The *Health Security Index* also reveals broad public consensus between Democrats and Republicans, women and men, the young and old, in support of healthcare reform proposals that respect the American value of choice and provide tax credits for low-income families to help them purchase health insurance.”

- The *Health Security Index* revealed that 81% of Republicans and 80% of Democrats agree that America's health insurance system should allow each individual to select the health insurance plan that meets his/her needs. This initiative also draws support from Independents (86%) and those who are undecided (82%).
- Additionally, 82% of Democrats, 78% of Republicans and 80% of Independents agree that low income families should get tax credits so they can better afford healthcare.

“Voters are looking for a uniquely American solution to the healthcare crisis,” Mr. Bodhaine continued. “Americans are making it clear that they value security, peace of mind and coverage they can count on and have control over.”

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### *Support for Raising Taxes Still Strong, but Waning; Support Mixed by Party Affiliation*

The notion of raising taxes to achieve universal healthcare has lost some favorability.

- Today 57 percent of Americans agree we need universal healthcare in America, even if it means increasing taxes, down from 63 percent in 2007.
- Republicans are the least supportive of this statement (only 38% agree), while Democrats are the most supportive (70% agree), with Independents falling in between (59%).

### *Varied Levels of Support for Government Involvement*

There is also less support for those policies that necessitate more government involvement:

- A majority of Americans (69%) agree the government should give employers a mandate to provide healthcare plans to all of their employees (77% of Democrats agree, compared to 57% of Republicans).
- And 59 percent agree that the government should require all individuals to purchase health insurance coverage, but subsidize those who can't afford it (68% Democrats, 48% Republicans).

For the full data presentation and other information about the *Health Security Index* please visit [www.healthsecurityindex.org](http://www.healthsecurityindex.org).

### **Survey Methodology**

CHW commissioned The Segmentation Company, a division of Yankelovich, Inc., to conduct the study, securing responses from 1,151 adults nationwide who participated in a 20-minute telephone interview. Interviewing took place in February 2008. Seventeen key questions form the basis for the Health Security Index ranking. These questions probe attitudes about healthcare affordability and insurance coverage, the ability to access healthcare professionals, quality of care, the ability to access healthcare facilities for routine and emergency health services, the ability of community officials to respond to a healthcare crisis, and the ability to personally manage chronic diseases. Respondents are classified as low, medium, or high on this index. The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points.

### **About Catholic Healthcare West**

Catholic Healthcare West (CHW) is the eighth largest hospital system in the nation and the largest not-for-profit hospital provider in the West. Founded in 1986, the CHW network of more than 9,500 physicians and approximately 53,000 employees serve a population spanning 22 million people at 41 hospitals across California, Arizona, and Nevada. CHW is committed to delivering compassionate, high-quality, affordable healthcare services with special attention to the poor and underserved. In 2007, CHW provided \$922 million in charity care, community benefits, and unreimbursed patient care. For more information, please visit our website at [chwHEALTH.org](http://chwHEALTH.org).

### **About Yankelovich, Inc.**

Yankelovich delivers measurable breakthroughs in marketing productivity for its clients. For more than 30 years, The Yankelovich MONITOR® has tracked and forecasted consumer value and lifestyle trends. Our Insights Integration<sup>SM</sup> solutions directly link our 5 key research findings on why people buy to databases of customers and prospects. The Segmentation Company (TSC) is a full-service custom research and consulting firm that helps clients precisely target their customers through segmentation and brand equity and positioning work. Yankelovich and TSC are headquartered in Chapel Hill, NC.

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