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83 PERCENT OF BAY AREA RESIDENTS SAY GOVERNMENT SHOULD GUARANTEE HEALTH INSURANCE, ACCORDING TO NEW POLL

Prefer Reforms in Existing System Rather Than New "Single-Payer" Structure

SAN FRANCISCO, March 5, 2007 — Eighty-three percent of Bay Area residents agree that government should guarantee healthcare coverage to all citizens, according to results of the 2007 *Bay Area Council Poll* of 600 residents released today. A slightly smaller amount, or 79 percent, agree that all Californians should have healthcare coverage, which would include illegal aliens.

When asked how the current healthcare system in California should be improved, respondents are most in favor (47 percent) of making reforms in the existing health insurance system, but encouraging shared costs between employers, government and individuals. About a third of residents (34 percent) would like to replace the current framework with a new system administered entirely by the government and covering all residents. A final 11 percent would rather rely on free market competition to improve California's health insurance system.

The large majority of Bay Area residents (87 percent) report that they have healthcare coverage. Ninety-one percent of Santa Clara residents have coverage, the most in the region, and 81 percent of North Bay residents of Marin, Sonoma, Napa and Solano have coverage, the least in the region. Ethnicity appears to be a good predictor of coverage rates. Only 75 percent of Latinos report that they have coverage, but 92 percent of whites (non-Hispanic) have some form of healthcare coverage. Not surprisingly, the counties with the lowest rate of coverage – in the North Bay – were the strongest proponents of universal healthcare, with 89 percent agreeing government should guarantee coverage.

“The very high number of respondents who support a government health coverage guarantee indicates that the time for health reform is now,” said Jim Wunderman the president and CEO of the Bay Area Council. “When we ask our member companies the biggest public policy challenges they face, today healthcare is always right near the top. Bay Area residents seem to be as eager as business for change.”

Of those with health insurance coverage, 82 percent say they are satisfied with their current coverage, and only 16 percent say they are dissatisfied.

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About the Bay Area Poll

A total of 600 residents of the nine-county Bay Area were surveyed in English and Spanish by Field Research Corporation during the period of January 8-14, 2007. Survey respondents were selected using a random probability sampling technique that gives all residents with telephones (listed or not) an equal chance of being selected for the survey. The sample was stratified to obtain

representative samples in each of six Bay Area regions: Alameda County, Contra Costa County, San Francisco County, San Mateo County, Santa Clara County and the North Bay counties of Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma. After the completion of interviewing, the sample was weighted to conform to actual population estimates of the nine-county Bay Area. Findings are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

About the Bay Area Council

Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council (www.bayareacouncil.org) develops and drives regional public policy initiatives and researches critical infrastructure issues. Led by CEOs, the Bay Area Council presents a strong, united voice for hundreds of major employers throughout the Bay Area region whom employ more than 501,000 workers, or 1 of every six private sector employees in the Bay Area.