

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Patrick Toomey, Benenson Strategy Group
RE: Recent Polling on Mental Health Care
DATE: July 22, 2020

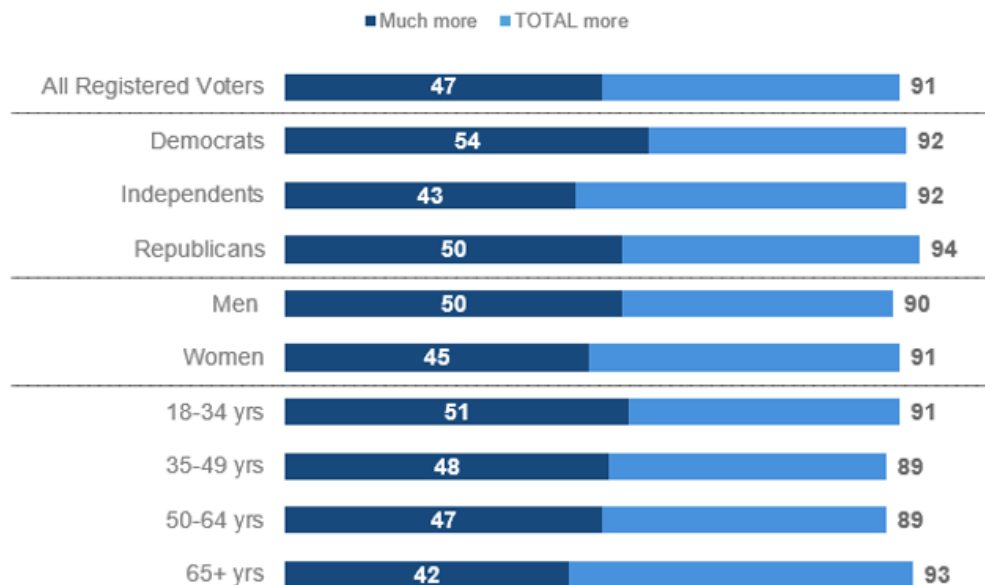
Methodology

Benenson Strategy Group conducted an online survey of n=1,701 Americans ages 13+ from June 24-30, 2020 to understand attitudes towards mental health care. The survey included n=1,317 registered voters ages 18+, and all results in this memo are among these registered voters, unless otherwise noted. The margin of sampling error among registered voters is +/- 2.61%; it is higher among subgroups. This survey was conducted on behalf of Well Being Trust and ViacomCBS Entertainment & Youth Group.

Key Findings

- ✓ It's clear that **voters across party lines want their representatives in Congress to come together to make mental health care more available and affordable for all Americans as a key part of addressing this pandemic** which has led to a whole host of consequences that harm mental health.
- ✓ **In general, American voters overwhelmingly want their elected officials to do more to support mental health care.** This is the rare issue on which Americans across party lines and from all walks of life agree.
 - When asked whether elected officials should be focusing more or less on mental health, more than 9 in 10 voters in both parties said "more."

In your opinion, should elected officials be focusing on mental health...?



- ✓ **Voters are also very clear: The situation with coronavirus is affecting their mental health.** A whopping 79% of all registered voters say the situation with coronavirus has affected their mental health, including 39% who say it has affected it "a lot."
 - 36% of Democrats say coronavirus has affected their mental health "a lot."
 - 42% of Independents say it has affected their mental health "a lot."
 - 37% of Republicans say it has affected their mental health "a lot."



- ✓ **As a result, over two thirds of American voters want elected officials to focus “more” on policies that provide affordable and accessible mental health care as a part of the government’s response to COVID-19.** 68% of registered voters say elected officials should be “paying more attention” to “policies that provide affordable, accessible mental health care” because of “the current situation with coronavirus,” including 41% who say “much more attention.”
- ✓ **Republicans and Independents feel especially strongly about the need for elected officials to make mental health care more affordable and accessible because of the pandemic.**
 - 44% of Republicans say elected officials should be “paying much more attention” to mental health care policies.
 - 42% of Independents say “paying much more attention.”
 - 36% of Democrats say “paying much more attention.”
- ✓ **As Members of Congress head into election season, they should know that voters will reward them for acting on mental health care now.** Majorities of voters say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate that supports specific policies that will make mental health care more accessible and affordable to all.

**% “Much more likely” / % TOTAL “more likely” to vote
for a candidate that supports the following policies**

Parity: Require health insurers to provide equal coverage for mental and physical health conditions	43/73
Primary care integration: Better integrate mental health care treatment into existing primary care treatment systems by ensuring that primary care providers are trained to deliver this kind of care and that health insurers cover mental health services as a part of primary care	37/72
Funding for campuses: Increase funding in schools and universities to expand the availability of mental health resources on campuses, including counseling, peer discussion groups, and online classes that teach ways to counter anxiety	40/69
Remote resources: Expand access to remote mental health resources so that individuals can connect with mental health resources online, by text, or by phone	36/69
Expand access to professionals: Offer mental health professionals financial incentives and other loan repayment programs to encourage them to move to communities that lack access to in-person mental health professionals	30/66
Neighborhood support: Establish neighborhood support systems that will help to promote understanding, connection, and empathy within communities, and reduce social isolation	33/64

- ✓ **As elected officials in Washington consider what to do next, they would be wise to listen to their voters and take this opportunity to demonstrate that they can work across the aisle to deliver results for their constituents on the issues on which we can all agree.**

