

# **New Nationwide Poll Shows 82% of Voters Believe Americans Not Doing Enough to Ensure Their Health Through Preventive Steps**

***– Two-thirds Want to Hear More from Presidential Candidates on Topic –***

WASHINGTON, DC (APRIL 2, 2008) – Although health care costs are rising across the board, a full 82% of Americans are not taking the affordable and simple steps to a healthier life, according to a new nationwide survey released today. The poll further reveals that voters are interested in prevention, with some even practicing those lifestyles, but more could be done to raise awareness and promote healthy habits.

“This is a classic case of knowing the right thing to do for one’s health and simply not practicing preventive care,” said Matt Narrett, Chief Medical Officer of Erickson Health – sponsor of the poll and a forum held today entitled, *The Politics of Prevention – Washington’s Role in a More Health Conscious America*. “I’m encouraged by the results, however, because the data shows Americans understand the value and benefits of preventive care and just need that last nudge that Congress and organizations like Erickson Health can offer them.”

“The results of this poll are important. We know that preventative services such as mammograms, colonoscopies and simple dental exams are vital tools in the fight against serious disease. We now have to act on this knowledge; procrastination costs lives and fuels the high cost of health care,” said Senator Benjamin L Cardin (D-MD), who spoke at today’s forum. Senator Cardin has long championed the benefits of preventative care. While a Member of the House, then-Congressman Cardin authored a provision that became law to add coverage for preventative benefits to Medicare.

Today’s event was keynoted by Dr. Ken Thorpe, Executive Director of the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease and a key advocate in the nationwide effort to battle costly chronic ailments such as obesity and diabetes. Dr. Thorpe was joined by congressional staffers from the offices of Sens. Ron Wyden (D-OR), Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), and Ken Salazar (D-CO) as well as House GOP Leader Rep. John Boehner (R-OH). The staff panel discussed current legislation working through Congress aimed at increasing preventive health care awareness and treatment. The poll was conducted by Erickson Health on January 30-February 4, 2008 with a margin of error +/-3.5% (N=800RVs).

Some key Erickson Health survey findings include:

**Positive Environment for Discussion** – 82% of voters say Americans do not do enough to protect their health and prevent disease. Nearly two-thirds of voters, regardless of

party, would like to hear presidential candidates talk more about preventive care and coordinated care.

**Voters Recognize Diet, Exercise Important – Need for Policymakers to Emphasize Screenings** – With only 14% of voters choosing regular physicals and screenings as the most important preventive health care measure, room exists to expand awareness of their benefit, particularly among certain populations.

**Seasons of Prevention: As We Age, We Rely More on Health Professionals** – While a plurality of voters overall would rely on their families for information on preventive health care, voters age 65 and older would tend to rely on medical professionals and health insurance companies.

**Carrots, Sticks Perceived Differently** – Voters overwhelmingly, regardless of party, favor lower health insurance premiums as a reward for those who take steps to prevent disease. However, only a slim margin favors higher health insurance premiums for those who do not take steps to prevent disease, with a majority of Democrat voters opposed.

**Background on Erickson Health:**

Based in Baltimore, MD, Erickson Health focuses on the health care needs of the 65-plus population, principally through their Erickson Retirement Community campuses located throughout 13 states nationwide.

Their combination of health services, programs, and professionals lead them to focus on preventive health care for adults. In order to aid their residents in healthy aging, their campuses allow for residents to make their own financial and health decisions while providing on-campus resources such as groundskeeping, emergency response, and health care options.

For a full copy of the poll, go to [www.politicsofprevention.com](http://www.politicsofprevention.com)

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Dr. Ken Thorpe will be moderating a Market Insights session with members of Erickson Health on the politics of prevention at the World Health Congress, Monday, April 21 at 3:55 P.M.