

FIELD

RESEARCH

CORPORATION

FOUNDED IN 1945 by MERVIN FIELD

601 CALIFORNIA STREET, SUITE 900 • SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94108-2814

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 6, 2007

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MOST CALIFORNIANS BELIEVE THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT NUMBERS OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN PREDOMINANTLY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES.

**High Importance Attached to Increasing Their Numbers. Support for More State
Funding to Address the Problem.**

Woodland Hills — There is widespread agreement among California voters that the numbers of health professionals are insufficient to meet patient needs, especially in predominantly ethnic communities of the state. Two in three voters believe there are not enough nurses either statewide or in California's ethnic communities to meet patient needs. Large majorities also feel there are shortages of family practice doctors as well as specialists in predominantly ethnic areas of the state.

Six in ten voters (60%) maintain that it is important for California to have enough health professionals who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the patients they are serving. In addition, large majorities believe that doing so would result in greater patient satisfaction, better management of patient's health conditions, improved health outcomes and more effective control of diseases.

To increase the number of health professionals from the state's racial and ethnic populations, two in three voters (67%) support the idea of increasing state government funding of the state's public medical schools, universities and community colleges to help bring this about. Another 69% favor having the state provide more scholarships to racial and ethnic minority students to encourage them to pursue careers in the health professions.

These are the main findings come from a survey of 1,029 registered voters in California completed in August 2007 by Field Research Corporation with grant funding by The California Wellness Foundation.

Insufficient numbers of health professionals in California, especially in its predominantly ethnic communities

There is widespread agreement that there are insufficient numbers of health professionals in California, especially in its predominantly ethnic communities. Two in three California voters (67%) believe that the state does not have enough registered nurses overall to meet the state's needs. Somewhat smaller proportions say this with regard to the number of family practice doctors (47%) available statewide, and the number of doctors who are specialists (38%). (*see graphics packet table 1*)

However, when asked about the number of health professionals available in predominantly ethnic communities of the state, large majorities see shortages not only in nurses, but also in family practice doctors and specialists. Statewide 67% of voters believe these communities have an insufficient number of nurses, while 60% also say this with regard to the number of its doctors as well as the number of its specialists. (*see graphics packet table 2*)

Health professionals should reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the state

Six in ten voters (60%) feel it is important that California have enough health professionals who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the patients they are serving. This compares to 38% who feel this is unimportant. Democrats, women, and voters who are themselves members of a racial or ethnic minority are more likely to feel this way than other voter subgroups. (*see graphics packet table 3*)

Large majorities of voters feel it is likely that having more health professionals with similar racial and ethnic backgrounds as their patients will result in greater patient satisfaction, better management of patient's health conditions, improved health outcomes and more effective control of diseases. Democrats, women, Latinos and other racial and

ethnic subgroups are again more apt to feel this way than others. (*see graphics packet tables 4a and 4b*)

Expand state government programs aimed at increasing the number of health professionals from the state's racial and ethnic populations

Voters were asked their opinions of two proposals that would expand state government programs aimed at increasing the number of health professionals from the state's racial and ethnic populations. The first examined whether voters favored or opposed having state government provide more funding to the state's public medical schools, universities and community colleges to increase the numbers of racial and ethnic minorities, while the second asked whether the state should make more scholarships available to students from the state's racial and ethnic populations to pursue careers in the health professions.

Both proposals are supported by greater than two to one majorities, with the former backed by a 67% to 28% margin, and the latter proposal receiving a 69% to 28% margin of support. Democrats and non-partisans and voters who are themselves members of a racial and ethnic minority report higher levels of support for each of these proposals than other voter subgroups. (*see graphics packet tables 5 and 6*)

Notice to Editors: Graphics summarizing the findings to each survey question accompany this press release, along with a copy of the questions asked.

About The Survey

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 1,029 registered voters in California conducted by Field Research Corporation. The survey was conducted under a grant from The California Wellness Foundation. Interviewing was completed by telephone in English and Spanish August 3-12, 2007. Up to eight attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depend on sample size. According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from findings based on the overall sample of 1,029 registered voters are subject to a sampling error of +/- 3.2 percentage points.

About The California Wellness Foundation

The California Wellness Foundation is an independent, private foundation created in 1992, with a mission to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education and disease prevention. The Foundation prioritizes eight issues for funding: diversity in the health professions, environmental health, healthy aging, mental health, teenage pregnancy prevention, violence prevention, women's health, and work and health. It also responds to timely issues or special projects outside these funding priorities. For more information, visit the Foundation's website, www.tcwf.org.

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Questions Asked and Marginal Results from a Statewide Survey of California Voters About Diversity in the Health Professions

(n = 1,029 CA registered voters)

- Q1. Do you think that California currently has or does not have enough (ITEM) to meet the state's needs?
(READ ITEMS IN RANDOM ORDER)
- | | YES
HAS | NO, DOESN'T
HAVE | NO
OPIN |
|--|------------|---------------------|------------|
| () a. registered nurses | 17% | 67 | 16 |
| () b. family practice doctors | 33% | 47 | 20 |
| () c. doctors who are specialists, such as surgeons, pediatricians and gynecologists .. | 39% | 38 | 23 |
- Q2. Next, thinking only about communities in the state where most of the people come from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, such as areas that are predominantly African-American or Latino. (READ ITEMS IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) Do you think these areas currently have or do not have enough (ITEM) to meet their needs?
- | | YES
HAS | NO, DOESN'T
HAVE | NO
OPIN |
|--|------------|---------------------|------------|
| () a. registered nurses | 11% | 67 | 22 |
| () b. family practice doctors | 16% | 60 | 24 |
| () c. doctors who are specialists, such as surgeons, pediatricians and gynecologists .. | 16% | 60 | 24 |
- Q3. Currently, African-Americans and Latinos make up about 40% of the state's population but only 7% of its doctors and only 8% of its nurses. How important do you feel it is for California to have enough doctors, nurses and other health professionals who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the patients they are serving? Is this very important, somewhat important, not too important or not at all important?
- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| VERY IMPORTANT | 35% |
| SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT | 25 |
| NOT TOO IMPORTANT | 16 |
| NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT | 22 |
| NO OPINION | 2 |
- Q4. If the racial and ethnic composition of doctors, nurses and other health professionals were more like those of their patients, how likely is it that this would contribute to (ITEM) – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely? (READ ITEMS IN RANDOM ORDER)
- | | VERY
LIKELY | SOMEWHAT
LIKELY | NOT TOO
LIKELY | NOT AT ALL
LIKELY | NO
OPIN |
|---|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------|
| () a. improved health outcomes for patients | 29% | 31 | 14 | 19 | 7 |
| () b. greater patient satisfaction | 39% | 34 | 8 | 13 | 7 |
| () c. more effective control of diseases | 32% | 28 | 14 | 20 | 7 |
| () d. better management of patients' health conditions | 33% | 27 | 16 | 17 | 8 |
- Q5. Do you favor or oppose the state government providing more funding to the state's public medical schools, universities and community colleges to increase the number of health care professionals from the state's racial and ethnic populations?
- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| FAVOR | 67% |
| OPPOSE | 28 |
| NO OPINION | 5 |
- Q6. Do you favor or oppose the state government providing qualified students from the state's racial and ethnic populations with more scholarships to encourage them to pursue a career in health-related professions?
- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| FAVOR | 69% |
| OPPOSE | 28 |
| NO OPINION | 3 |

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A Survey of California Voters About Diversity in the Health Professions

-Conducted for-
The California Wellness Foundation

(September 6, 2007)

-Graphics Packet-

Table 1

Does California Have Enough of Three Types of Health Professionals to Meet the State's Needs? (among registered voters)

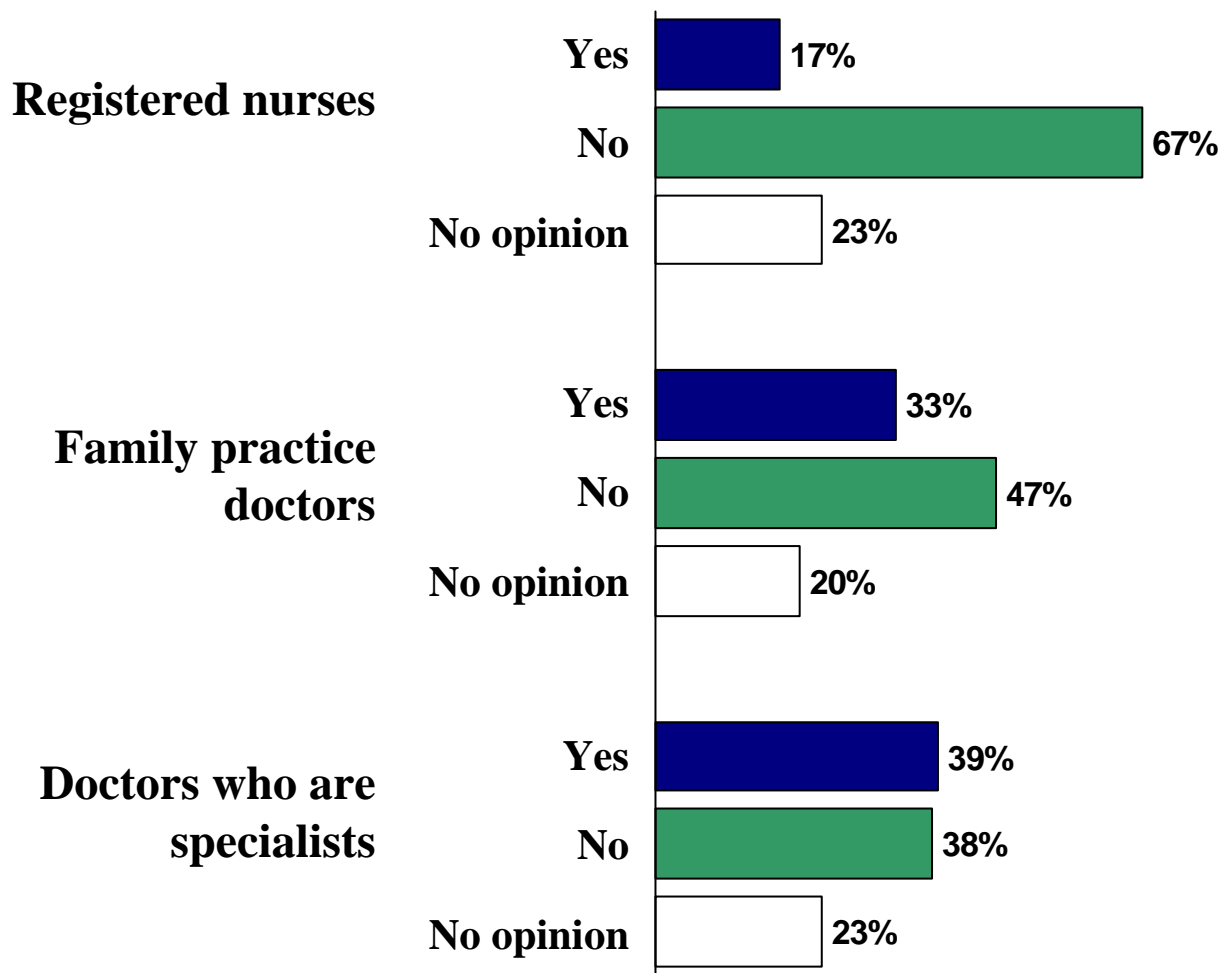


Table 2

Does California Have Enough of Three Types of Health Professionals “in Areas of the State Where Most of the People Come From Diverse Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds” (among registered voters)

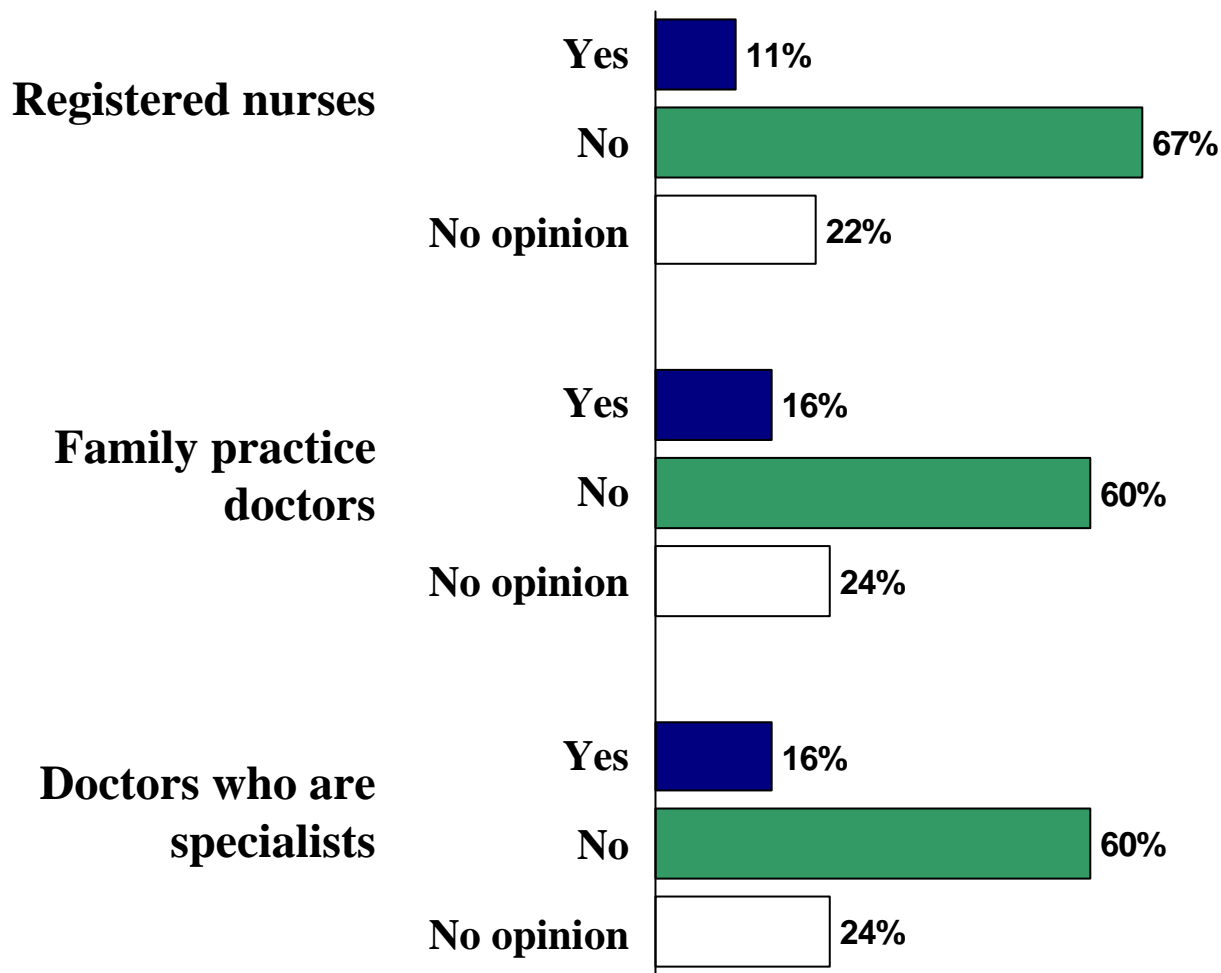


Table 3

How Important is it That California Have Enough Health Professionals Who Reflect the Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the Patients They Are Serving (among registered voters)

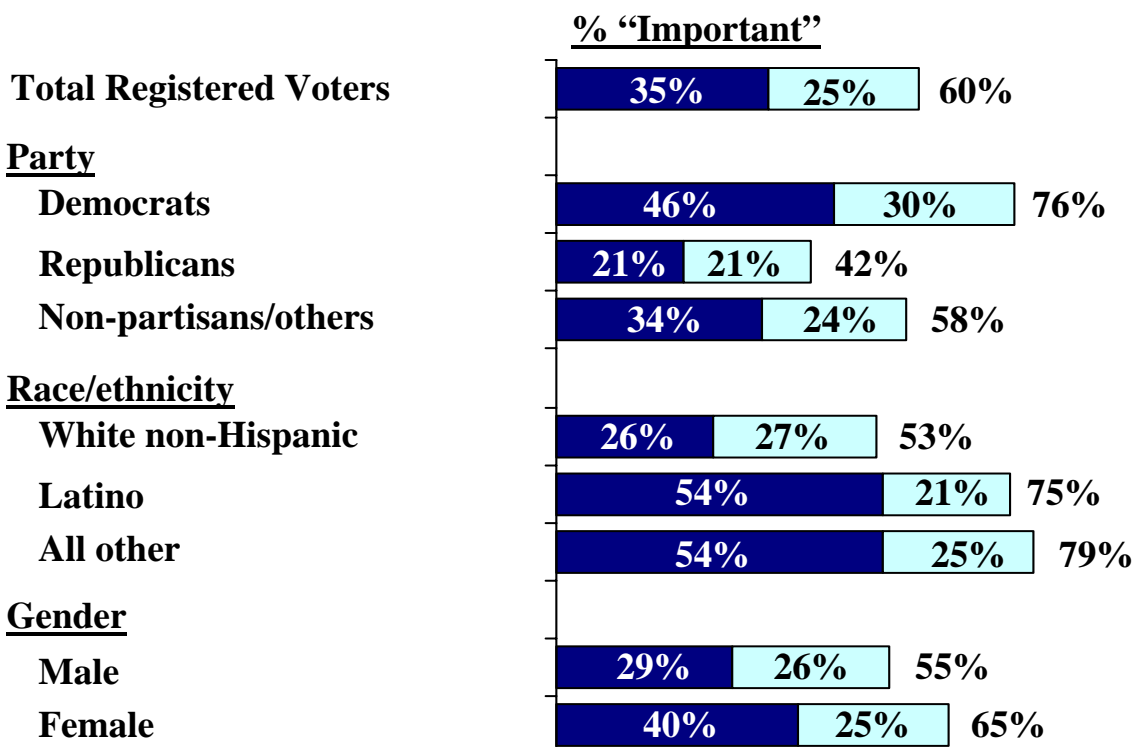
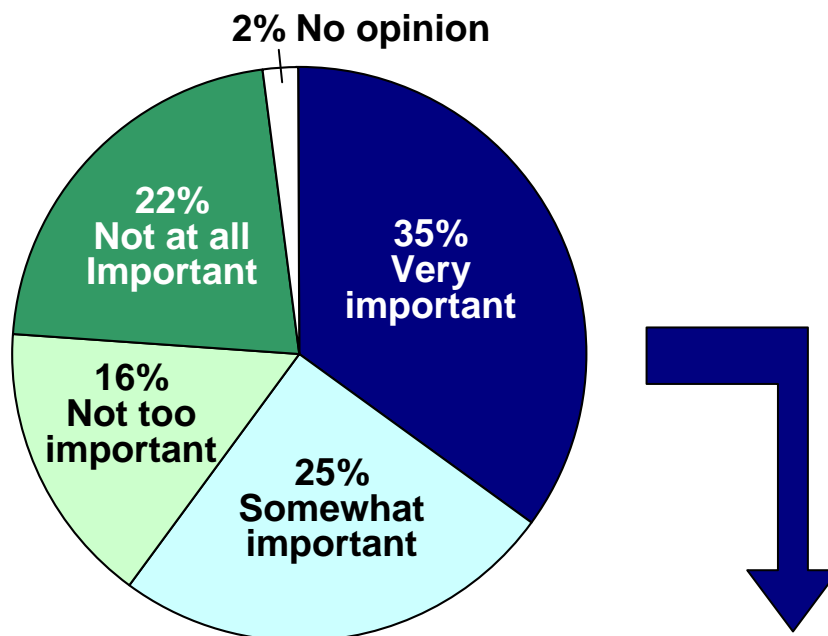
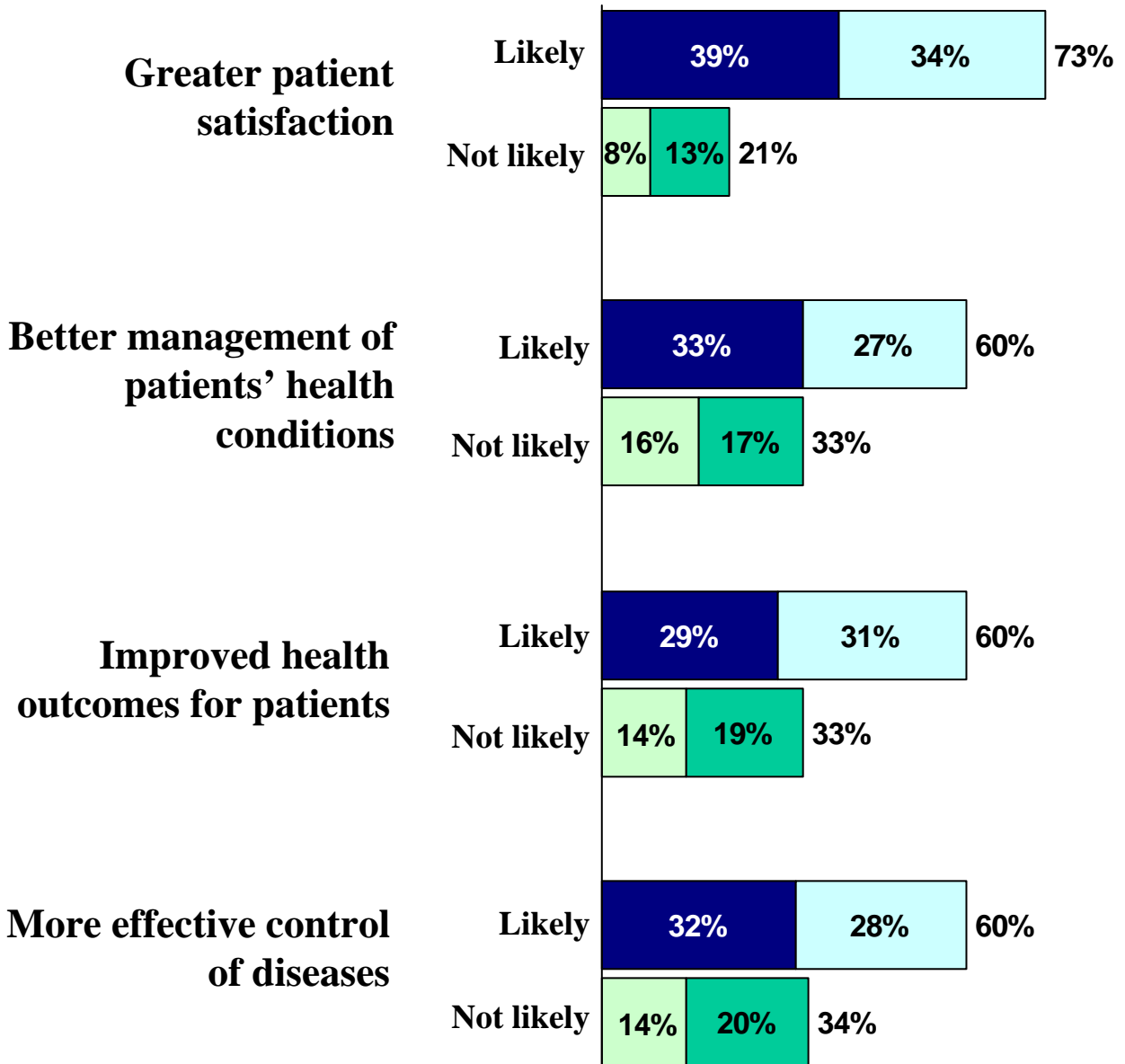
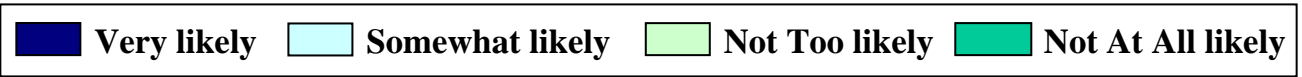


Table 4a

Likely Impact on Patients of Having More Health Professionals With Similar Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds

(among registered voters)



Note: Differences between the sum of percentages and 100% for each item equal proportion with no opinion.

Table 4b

Likely Impact on Patients of Having More Health Professionals With Similar Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds – by Subgroups
 (among registered voters)

	- % Likely -			
	<u>Greater patient satisfaction</u>	<u>Better patient outcome management</u>	<u>Improved health outcomes</u>	<u>More effective disease control</u>
Total registered voters	<u>73%</u>	<u>60%</u>	<u>60%</u>	<u>60%</u>
<u>Party</u>				
Democrats	79	71	73	71
Republicans	64	47	45	47
Non-partisans/others	75	57	61	56
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>				
White non-Hispanic	70	54	53	53
Latino	83	75	77	72
All other	81	73	78	75
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	68	56	56	53
Female	78	63	65	65

Table 5

Opinion of State Government Providing More Funding to the State's Public Medical Schools, Universities and Community Colleges to Increase the Number of Health Professionals from the State's Racial and Ethnic Populations (among registered voters)

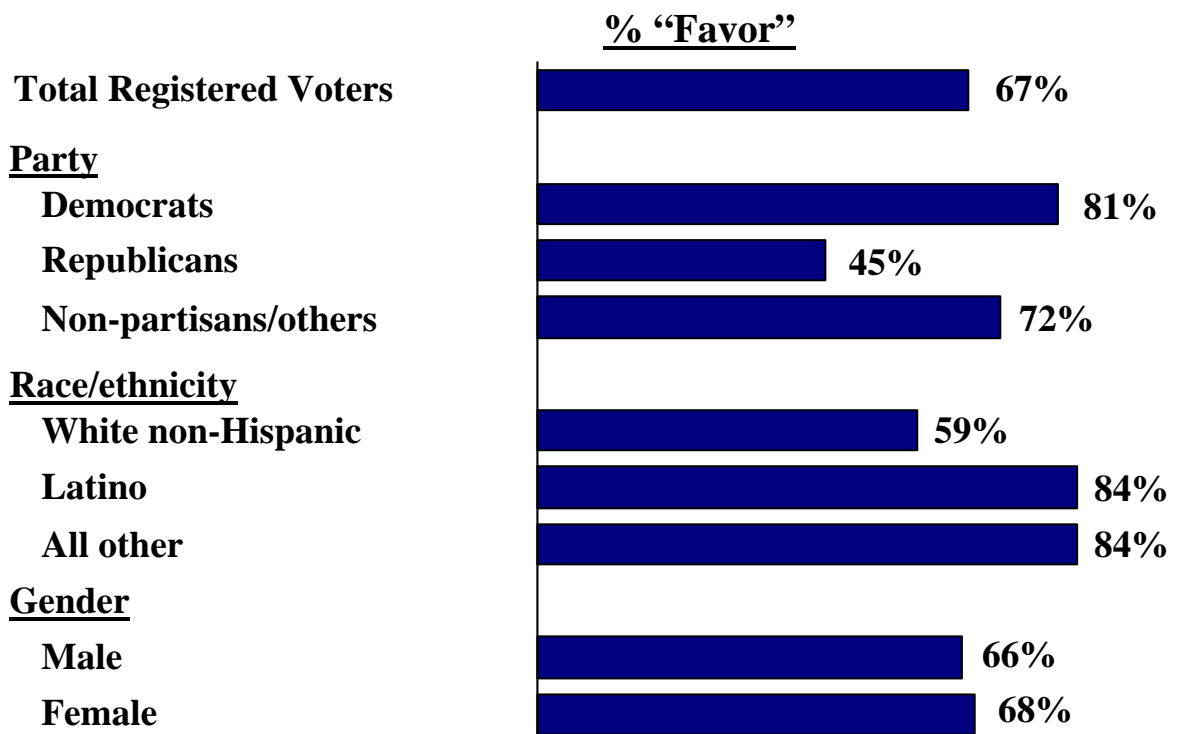
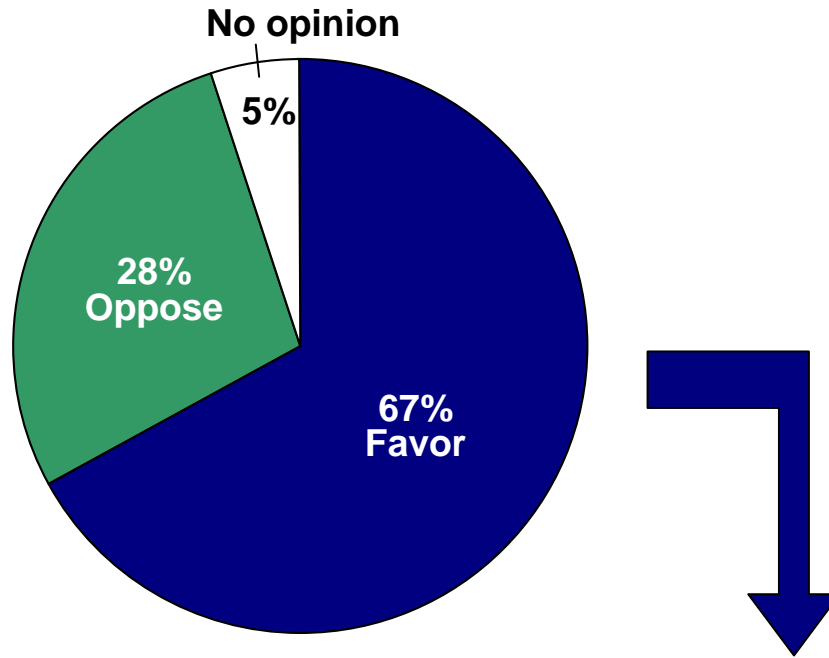


Table 6

Opinion of State Government Providing Qualified Students from the State's Racial and Ethnic Populations with More Scholarships to Encourage Them to Pursue a Career in Health Professions (among registered voters)

