



Tuesday, November 18, 2008

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## Reform can't wait, officials say

Does health care reform stop in its tracks because of the recession? New York state health officials and their federal counterparts say the answer is no.

A majority of voters says the economy and jobs were the most important issues for them in deciding whom to vote for in the presidential race, according to a poll taken during election week by the Community Service Society of New York. But 42% of those surveyed cited health care reform as the best way to help themselves economically. That poll bolsters the argument that the economic crisis makes reform even more pressing.

Gov. David Paterson's top administrators have come to that conclusion, and the state Department of Health is determined to move ahead with overhauling the state's costly health system. Officials say New York's reform plan, which includes shifting spending to primary care, will save money.

"Health coverage and reform is part of the issue in a recession," state Medicaid Director Deborah Bachrach said Sunday at an event sponsored by the New York State Health Foundation. "I would suggest if we don't come to terms with reform in an economic recession, shame on us," she added. "We can't stop because we have a crisis. That's the reason we have to move forward."