

Insure TN plan has support

But most in state don't know much about it, according to MTSU poll

By Nate Rau
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While the vast majority of Tennesseans don't know much about Gov. Bill Haslam's Insure Tennessee plan, support for the measure outpaces opposition, according to poll results released Saturday by Middle Tennessee State University.

The legislature will begin a special session on Monday to consider Haslam's plan to extend health care coverage to about 200,000 people who make too much to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to buy coverage on their own. The expansion is possible through federal funds

designated by the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.

According to the poll, two-thirds of Tennesseans have heard a little or nothing about Insure Tennessee. On the other hand, 10 percent have heard a lot and 23 percent have heard some about the plan.

Among the 33 percent who are aware of Insure Tennessee, 49 percent favor it while 11 percent oppose it and another 40 percent have not made up their minds.

The poll randomly surveyed 600 adults from across Tennessee by phone in the week leading up to the special session. The results have a margin of error of 4 percentage points.

"Gov. Haslam has gotten a notable head start in promoting the measure among Tennesseans," said Ken Blake, director of the poll at Middle Tennessee State University. "But his opponents have a lot of maneuvering room left among the two in three Tennesseans who

are still largely unaware of the measure."

MTSU acknowledged that it typically doesn't release poll results on topics about which most of the public is not aware. But the university made an exception in this case because of the General Assembly's upcoming consideration of the proposal.

"For obvious reasons, we try to avoid estimating public opinion about an issue before most of the public has become aware of it," said Jason Reineke, associate director of the poll. "But when the issue is the focus of a weeklong special legislative session, a public affairs poll like ours can't simply ignore it. So we measured awareness first, then did our best to estimate support within high- and low-awareness groups."

Reach Nate Rau at 615-259-8094 and on Twitter @tinnaterau.



POLL ON INSURE TENNESSEE

10% have heard a lot about the plan	49% of those who heard some or a lot support Insure Tennessee
23% have heard some	11% oppose the plan
31% have heard a little	40% have not made up their minds
36% have heard nothing at all	

Source: MTSU



PHOTOS BY SAMUEL M. SIMPKINS / THE TENNESSEAN



Antiques & Garden Show

ABOVE: The Rev. Sherry Harrison, left, and the Rev. Rosemary Brown look at a statue at the Antiques & Garden Show of Nashville at the Music City Center on Saturday.

LEFT: Saturday was a packed day at the show, which will close on Sunday at 4 p.m.

Dr. Wang danced to save his life



inside nashville
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Say the name Dr. Ming Wang, and lots of folks scoff. Why is an eye surgeon doing ballroom dancing in those commercials, the ones that air over and over and over again?

It all kinda feels showy, right? Ballroom dancers never perform eye surgeries in their commercials.

Wang says he's just looking for a way to stand out in a competitive Lasik eye surgery market.

But that's not why he started ballroom dancing. Wang says he learned to dance to save his life.

Wang, 55, grew up in China during the repressive Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976. By order of Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong, most youth from his city were banned from school and deported to rural farms to do hard labor. The labor proved to be too much for some kids, and many died.

But there was a way out: Children and teens who could dance, sing or play instruments well were chosen to be part of Communist propaganda squads.

So a young Wang learned to play

» WANG, 13A



SUBMITTED
Ming Wang dances a tango in a 2007 competition. Wang first learned to dance from his father, a physician, and then he took private lessons.

Neighborhood training to begin

Free classes to encourage building communities, working with Metro

By Tony Gonzalez
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Some of Nashville's most vocal neighborhood activists will soon get even more face time than usual with Metro government officials.

And if grievances or demands for city services come up, officials and Mayor Karl Dean won't be able to complain.

In fact they're asking for it. The mayor's new Neighborhood Leadership Training program — beginning

Feb. 7 — will provide a series of classes to encourage grassroots community-building while providing tips on how local leaders can work effectively with Metro government.

The free sessions will also connect neighborhood leaders with one another.

The intended result, officials said, is to create well-trained advocates who know how to speak up for their areas.

"We can't control what the neighbors want. We're used to hearing those desires," Dean told The Tennessean. "Obviously, we can't do everything all at once and always keep all people happy. The idea is to work together and see what we can do."

» TRAINING, 11A

ATTEND NEIGHBORHOOD TRAINING

Free registration has opened for Nashville's first of four Neighborhood Leadership Trainings, to be hosted with instructors from the Lipscomb University Andrews Institute for Civic Leadership and Metro employees.

When: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Feb. 7

Where: Midtown Hills Police Precinct, 1443 12th Ave. S.

Info: neighborhoodleadership.nashville.gov

NEIGHBORHOODS SURVEY

See the results of a citywide survey about leading local issues. **11A**

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WANG

»CONTINUED FROM 3A

the ancient Chinese violin, the erhu, and he later learned to dance.

"The reason for my learning music and dance was not for love of music but for the sheer need to survive," he said.

Making something out of nothing

Wang grew up the oldest son of a couple of physicians in Hangzhou, a city of 2.5 million in eastern China.

Still, the family was poor: Mom and dad, combined, made only the equivalent of \$15 a month. They all shared a one-room apartment in a crowded building, where 12 families shared one bathroom.

The coal-fueled stove was out in the hallway, also shared by other families on the floor.

Growing up in a crowded apartment in a crowded city, Wang still found himself lonely. He often was left with neighbor families who had lots of their own kids. And those neighbors usually put him in a high chair alone in a corner for most of the day.

Eventually, the boy learned to entertain himself by making his own toys out of cardboard and fabric scraps he found in dumpsters. He got good at sewing and gluing and creating. When Wang was 8, his brother, Ming-yu, was born, and the older brother made toys for him as well.

Ming Wang started putting on puppet shows for his brother and neighborhood kids.

"I'm not surprised he became a surgeon. He always had nimble hands," Ming-yu Wang said in a phone interview from his home in Chicago.

"He made clothes for different roles. He put on original plays. And he put on these old Chinese operas by himself."



A 14-year-old Ming Wang dances in a park near his family's one-room apartment in China.

Of all the characters Wang created, his favorite was the Monkey King, who went on adventures to seek out Buddhist teachers for guidance.

The Monkey King was tenacious, single-minded and creative, all the things the young Wang wanted to be.

"So I was the Monkey King in my mind," he said, smiling slowly.

Wang's mother, Alian, and father, Zhensheng, always stressed education, telling their sons that math, physics and chemistry will take them anywhere they want to go in life.

But his father had a

hobby: ballroom dancing. And that fascinated his oldest son, who would stare at his dad when he danced at hospital functions.

"He was very handsome. He was the tallest one there," Wang said.

Wang was mesmerized by the music, the beauty of the dance — and the attention his father received when he performed.

"I always wanted to have some attention," he said. "Ever since I was 1, the only way for me to get attention was to be creative and to make something out of nothing."

'You get in or you get deported'

During the Cultural Revolution, he saw older teen boys deported to lives of hard labor in rural areas. If those boys tried to come back to the city, they were killed, he said.

"I was distraught. It was particularly hard because I was a good student. I was in the wrong country at the wrong time."

So Wang — with his parents' help — tried to get into the performance propaganda squads.

First, he started taking private Chinese violin lessons from a man who



Ming Wang, at 16, is top and center in this family photo. Left to right are his mother, Alian; his younger brother, Ming-yu; and his father, Zhensheng.

taught them in exchange for free health care from Wang's parents.

Wang made it to music school, but that school suddenly was shut down.

So that's when he started to learn how to dance, first from his father, then private lessons, given, again, in exchange for free health care from his parents.

"I was practicing all the time. Either you get in or you get deported," he said.

Wang had no recorded music, so he would accompany himself by singing songs, leaving him breathless as he danced.

Wang got pretty good, but the government stopped recruiting new members for propaganda squads, leaving him hopeless, scared, destined to go to the labor camps.

Turns out Wang staved off deportation for just long enough: The dictator died in 1976, and schools were reopened to teens in China after that.

Fearful that the government would restart deportation, Wang, through intense studying, said he jumped three grades to get into the high school graduating class.

In just three months, Wang took the college entrance exam and passed, opening the door for him to attend University of Science and Technology

of China, the MIT of the Far East.

From there, Wang met a professor visiting from America, and, with \$50, he moved to the States and launched the career that would launch all those ballroom-dancing commercials.

Wang is grateful for the opportunities: He gives back by spending thousands of hours and dollars doing surgeries that help restore sight for blind children overseas.

'He likes attention'

His younger brother greatly admires what Wang has accomplished, and he's grateful that Wang eventually moved him and his parents to America.

Ming-yu Wang concedes that Ming Wang is a bit of an attention seeker.

"The older brother, he played the role of the parents, they tend to be more aggressive and dominant," Ming-yu Wang said. "He likes attention."

Ming Wang has a slightly different explanation of those ballroom-dancing commercials.

"In my ads, I combine medicine with art," he said. "It is more fun, and it works better. You remember it!"

Reach Brad Schmitt at 615-613-4815 or on Twitter @bradschmitt.

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