



*Toplines*

## *January/February 2000 Health News Index*

February 2000

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### **Methodology**

The Kaiser/Harvard School of Public Health's Health News Index is product of the Kaiser/Harvard School of Public Health Program on the Public and Health Policy. It was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation and staff of the Harvard School of Public Health (under the direction of Professor Robert J. Blendon, Sc.D.). Fieldwork was conducted by telephone by Princeton Survey Research Associates with 1,006 national adults (age 18 or older) nationwide between February 4-8, 2000. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percent. The margin of sampling error may be higher for some of the sub-groups noted in the analysis. Note that in addition to sampling error there are other possible sources of measurement error.

NOTE: Some results will not add to 100% because of rounding  
VOL. = Respondents volunteered the response

1. To begin... What do you think is the most important problem in health or health care for the government to address? Is there another health problem you think is almost as important? (open-ended question)

Total Mention	
16	Health care costs
11	Medicare/Medicaid
11	Seniors health issues
10	Universal coverage/for everyone /and uninsured
8	Cost of prescription drugs/ medicines
5	HMO/Managed care concerns
5	Health availability (general)

**NOTE: “Don’t know” and responses mentioned by less than 5 percent are not shown**

2. Now I have a few questions about some news stories you might have seen or heard over the past month or so ... You might recall news reports about trends in the number of abortions in the United States. From what you may have seen or heard in the news, are abortion rates...

35	The HIGHEST they’ve been in over 20 years
17	The LOWEST they’ve been in over 20 years, OR...
21	Have abortion rates stayed about the SAME over the past 20 years?
27	Don’t know/Refused

3. In the past month or so, you might have seen or heard news from a National Cancer Institute study about the relationship between hormone replacement drug therapy and breast cancer. From what you've seen or heard in the news, did this study find that hormone replacement therapy increases, decreases, or has no effect on a woman's risk of developing breast cancer?

- 34 Increases
- 14 Decreases
- 11 No effect
- 41 Don't know/Refused

4. On another topic, Can you tell me the names of any sexually transmitted diseases or STDs. "What other STDs can you name?"

Total  
Mention

- 85 AIDS/HIV
- 64 Gonorrhea (clap, drip)
- 57 Syphilis
- 49 Herpes/Genital herpes/herpes simplex virus or HSV
- 26 Chlamydia
- 12 Hepatitis B virus or HBV
- 11 Genital warts/Warts
- 8 Crabs
- 2 HPV or human papilloma virus (specific mention)
- 1 Other
  
- 2 None/Can't name any
- 4 Don't know/Refused

***NOTE: total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses***

5. Have you ever heard of the sexually transmitted disease H-P-V, or human papilloma virus? This is different from H-I-V, the virus that causes AIDS.

- 28 Yes
- 70 No
- 2 Don't know/Refused

6. Now I'm going to read you a list of some stories covered by news organizations in the last month or so. As I read each one, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. (First,) how closely did you follow this story...?

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not Too Closely</u>	<u>Not At All Closely</u>	<u>Don't Know/ Refused</u>
a. Heavy winter storms that hit the East Coast	40	34	15	10	1
b. The flu outbreak affecting most of the country and new methods to diagnose and fight the flu	30	37	19	12	2
c. Republican and Democratic presidential candidates discussing their stands on abortion	15	25	22	35	2
d. President Clinton's State of the Union address	19	17	18	46	2
e. Cuban refugee Elian Gonzalez and negotiations about which country he will reside in	37	34	13	14	2
f. A government report about a decline in abortion rates	8	16	26	47	3
g. A medical study revealing a link between hormone replacement therapy and increased risk of breast cancer	11	24	25	36	3
h. New DNA tests for HPV, the human papilloma virus	4	6	16	68	7

7. In his recent State of the Union address, President Clinton made some proposals affecting health care. From what you've seen or heard in the news, please tell me whether or not the president proposed doing each of the following. (First,) did he propose...

	<u>Yes, Proposed</u>	<u>No, Not Proposed</u>	<u>Don't Know/ Refused</u>
a. Extending Medicare, the federal program that provides health insurance to the elderly and some disabled people, by allowing some individuals between the ages of 55 and 65 buy into it	35	11	54
b. Asking seniors with higher incomes to pay more for Medicare	24	24	52
c. Extending Medicare to provide prescription drug benefits	50	7	43
d. Expanding current government programs that provide health coverage for uninsured children to cover their parents as well.	36	13	50
e. Offering a \$3,000 tax credit to help people pay for long-term health care for the elderly	29	15	56

8. Now I'd like your views on HMOs and other managed care plans in general, regardless of whether you are personally in managed care. During the past few years, do you think HMOs and other managed care plans have done a better job, worse job, or about the same job serving their health care consumers?

15 Better job  
 40 Worse job  
 34 About the same job  
 11 Don't know/Refused

9. A law has been debated in Congress that would require HMOs, other managed care plans, and health insurance companies to provide people with more information about their health plan, make it easier for people to see medical specialists, allow appeals to independent reviewers when someone is denied coverage for a particular medical treatment, and give people the right to sue their health plan. Do you favor or oppose such a law?

80 Favor  
 12 Oppose  
 8 Don't Know/Refused

10. How important is it to you that this law includes the right to sue a health plan? Is it...

- 43 Very important
- 23 Somewhat important
- 9 Not too important, or
- 4 Not at all important
- 12 Oppose patients Bill of Rights
- 9 Don't know/Refused

11. Congress has debated this Patients' Bill of Rights for more than two years but has not enacted any laws. Would you say that passing a law guaranteeing these protections is more urgent now, less urgent now, or about as urgent as when Congress started debating this issue?

*Based on one-half of sample; n=501*

- 48 More urgent now
- 5 Less urgent now
- 40 About as urgent
- 8 Don't know/Refused

12. As you may know, Congress has debated each of the following three health care issues in the past year but did not pass legislation on any of them. For each of these health care issues, would you say it is urgent for Congress to immediately pass legislation or that it is an issue that can wait?

*Based on one-half of sample; n=505*

	<u>Is Urgent</u>	<u>Can Wait</u>	<u>Don't Know/Refused</u>
a. Protecting consumer rights in HMOs and managed care plans	72	19	9
b. Providing coverage for prescription medicines for the elderly	88	8	4
c. Helping the uninsured get health insurance coverage	83	13	4

13. I just have a few more questions about the sexually transmitted disease, HPV, or human papilloma virus. Please try to answer them as best you can, even if you're not sure you've heard about it.

Please tell me if you think each of the following health consequences is associated with HPV – or if you don't know enough about it to say. (First,) what about

Is this associated with HPV, or don't you know enough about it to say?

	<u>Yes, Associated</u>	<u>No, Not Associated</u>	<u>Don't Know Enough to Say</u>	<u>Refused</u>
a. Genital warts	22	7	70	2
b. Yeast infections	12	17	69	2
c. Cervical cancer	19	11	69	2
d. Cold sores on the mouth	14	16	68	2
e. Urinary tract infections	15	13	70	2

14. As far as you know, is there a CURE for HPV, or not?

4 Yes  
34 No  
61 Don't know/Refused

15. Have you ever discussed HPV with a doctor or other health care provider?

5 Yes  
89 No  
6 Don't know/Refused

16. On another subject... As far as you know, which ONE of the following is the test to detect signs of cervical cancer? Is it a ...

11 Blood test  
3 Urine test  
70 Pap test, OR  
3 An X-ray?  
14 Don't know/Refused



**DEMOGRAPHICS:**

**D1. RECORD RESPONDENT'S SEX:**

48 Male  
52 Female

**D2. Finally, I have just a few questions we will use to describe the people who took part in our survey... In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?**

26 Republican  
33 Democrat  
33 Independent  
4 No preference/Not interested in politics (**VOL.**)  
\*<sup>1</sup> Other party (**VOL.**)  
1 Don't know  
1 Refused

**D3. What is the LAST grade or class that you COMPLETED in school?**

4 None, or grade 1-8  
12 High school incomplete (grades 9-11)  
34 High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)  
2 Business, technical, or vocational school AFTER high school  
23 Some college, no 4-year degree  
15 College graduate (B.S., B.A. or other 4-year degree)  
9 Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a master's degree or Ph.D; law or medical school)  
\* Don't Know  
\* Refused

**D4. What is your age?**

22 18 – 29  
41 30 – 49  
19 50 – 64  
16 65+  
0 Don't know  
2 Refused

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<sup>1</sup> An asterisk indicates a value of less than 0.5%

D5. Last year -- that is, in 1999 -- what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

8	Less than \$10,000
12	\$10,000 to under \$20,000
13	\$20,000 to under \$30,000
22	\$30,000 to under \$50,000
13	\$50,000 to under \$75,000
6	\$75,000 to under \$100,000
5	\$100,000 to under \$200,000
1	\$200,000 or more
6	Don't know
15	Refused

D6. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?

6	Yes
93	No
*	Don't know
1	Refused

D7. What is your race? Are you white, black, Asian or some other race?

83	White
11	Black or African-American
1	Asian
2	Other or mixed race
*	Don't know
2	Refused



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