



Toplines

September/October 2002 Health News Index Survey

October 2002

Methodology

The Kaiser Family Foundation *Health News Index Survey* was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health. Fieldwork was conducted by telephone by Princeton Survey Research Associates International between October 10 and October 13, 2002, among a nationally representative random sample of 1,201 adults ages 18 and over.

The margin of sampling error for the survey is plus or minus 3 percentage points for total respondents. For results based on smaller subsets of respondents the margin of sampling error is higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

Values less than 0.5% are indicated by an asterisk (*). "VOL" indicates that a response was volunteered by respondent, not an explicitly offered choice.

Q.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?

COSTS (NET)	35
Cost of health care	17
Cost of prescription drugs/medicines	16
Cost of insurance/affordable insurance	7
Costs – other (incl. doctor and hospital costs)	2
ACCESS (NET)	26
Universal coverage / coverage for uninsured	10
Health insurance (general)	6
Health care availability (general)	5
Health care for the poor	3
Access to health care – other (incl. staff cutbacks and difficulties w/pre-existing conditions)	3
POLICY/SOCIAL ISSUES (NET)	25
Senior citizens' care/ issues (incl. Social Security)	10
Coverage of rx drugs (for elderly and disabled)	6
Medicare	6
Children's care/issues	2
Policy/Social issues – other (incl. abortion, drug abuse, Medicaid, etc.)	4
MEDICAL CONDITIONS/PROCEDURES (NET)	14
Cancer/Cancer Research	7
AIDS/AIDS research/HIV	4
Medical Conditions/ Procedures – other	8
QUALITY OF CARE (NET)	7
HMO/Managed care concerns	4
Quality of care – other	2
OTHER	9
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3

NOTE: "Don't know" and responses mentioned by less than 5 percent are not shown. Percentages add to more than 100% due to multiple responses

Q.2 Now, I'm going to read you some different health care issues. As I read each one, please tell me how important you think it is for the President and Congress to deal with this issue – very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important. (First,) how important is this issue...?

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not too Important</u>	<u>Not at all Important</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. Protecting patients' rights in HMOs and managed care plans	69	23	3	2	3
b. Helping people age 65 and over pay for prescription medicines	81	14	2	2	1
c. Making Medicare more financially sound for future generations	79	16	1	2	2
d. Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance	74	18	3	3	2

Q2.1 Which of the following issues you say are very important do you think is MOST important?

- 10 Protecting patients' rights in HMOs and managed care plans
- 23 Helping people age 65 and over pay for prescription medicines
- 21 Making Medicare more financially sound for future generations
- 35 Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance
- * Other issue is most important (**VOL.**)
- 5 All the same/equally important (**VOL.**)
- 4 None Very Important
- 1 Don't know/Refused

Q.3 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>DK/ Ref.</u>
a. United Nations weapons inspections and possible U.S. military action against Iraq	62	24	8	5	1
b. The U.S. war on terrorism	68	25	4	2	1
c. Reports of an economic slowdown in the U.S.	47	29	12	11	1
d. The West Nile virus spreading in the United States	43	36	13	7	1
e. Smallpox vaccination plan issued by the Centers for Disease Control	20	33	26	20	1
f. FDA concerns about the drug acetaminophen (the active ingredient in Tylenol)	10	17	27	44	2
g. A report from the U.S. Census on the number of Americans without health insurance	21	29	24	25	1
h. New research findings about surgery for prostate cancer	15	19	24	39	1
i. A recently released study finding that many small businesses are reducing employee health benefits	20	25	24	30	1

Q.4 Now, I have a few more questions about some of the news stories that I mentioned earlier. If you're not sure of an answer, that's okay. Just tell me and I'll go to the next question.

Thinking about what you have heard or seen in the news about the recent cases of West Nile virus in the U.S., in which of the following ways do people most often contract the West Nile virus?

- 91 From mosquitoes (*Correct answer*)
- 2 From blood transfusions
- 1 From everyday person-to-person contact, such as through coughing and sneezing
- 6 Don't know/Refused

Q.5 Thinking about what you have heard or seen in the news, which of the following statements comes closest to the findings recently presented by the Food and Drug Administration about acetaminophen (the active ingredient in Tylenol)?

- 7 A recent FDA study showed the use of acetaminophen after surgery has been linked to substantial increases in blood pressure
- 37 The FDA recommends placing stronger warnings on products containing acetaminophen because of risks associated with taking more than the recommended dose of the drug (*Correct answer*)
- 55 Don't know/Refused

Q.6 A government report about the number of uninsured Americans was also in the news recently. From what you've seen or heard, did the report say that the number of Americans without health insurance has increased, decreased or stayed about the same?

- 60 Increased (*Correct answer*)
- 14 Decreased
- 6 Stayed about the same
- 20 Don't know/Refused

Q.7 Are you, yourself, now covered by any form of health insurance or health plan or do you not have health insurance at this time? A health plan would include any private insurance plan through your employer or a plan that you purchased yourself, as well as a government program like Medicare or (Medicaid)?

87 Yes, insured
 13 No, not insured
 * Don't know/Refused

Q.8 Thinking about the next six months, please tell me how worried are you that each of the following might happen to you. (First,) how worried are you that...?
 Are you very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?

	<u>Very worried</u>	<u>Somewhat worried</u>	<u>Not too worried</u>	<u>Not at all worried</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
a. You might not be able to get the health care services you think you need	23	21	22	33	1
b. The amount you pay for your health care services or health insurance will increase	34	31	14	20	2
c. You might not be able to get the health care you think you need because you can't afford it	25	21	19	35	1
d. The quality of health care services you receive will get worse	25	28	20	25	1
<i>Items e-g based on those who are insured (n=1,042)</i>					
e. You will have to stay in your current job instead of taking a new job for fear of losing health benefits	14	10	14	56	6
f. You might lose your health insurance coverage	17	14	22	46	1
g. Your HEALTH PLAN would be more concerned about saving money for the plan than about what is the best treatment for you	30	32	17	18	3

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

- 47 Male
- 53 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?

- 29 Republican
- 33 Democrat
- 29 Independent
- 5 No preference/Not interested in politics (**VOL.**)
- * Other party (**VOL.**)
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Refused

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

- 2 None, or grade 1-8
- 6 High school incomplete (grades 9-11)
- 29 High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)
- 5 Business, technical, or vocational school AFTER high school
- 25 Some college, no 4-year degree
- 21 College graduate (B.S., B.A. or other 4-year degree)
- 11 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?

- 20 18-29
- 38 30-49
- 24 50-64
- 16 65+
- 2 Don't know/Refused

D4.1 Is there anyone now living in your household who is between the ages of 15 to 24 years?

- 15 Yes
- 73 No
- 2 Don't know/Refused
- 11 Age 18-24 (not asked this Q)

D5. Last year -- that is, in 2001 -- what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

- 6 Less than \$10,000
- 10 \$10,000 to under \$20,000
- 12 \$20,000 to under \$30,000
- 19 \$30,000 to under \$50,000
- 17 \$50,000 to under \$75,000
- 10 \$75,000 to under \$100,000
- 8 \$100,000 to under \$200,000
- 1 \$200,000 or more
- 6 Don't know
- 10 Refused

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

D7. What is your race? Are you white, black, Asian or some other race? **(IF RESPONDENT SAYS HISPANIC ASK: Do you consider yourself a white Hispanic or a black Hispanic**

- 77 White, Non Hispanic
- 21 Total Non-White
 - 9 Black or African-American
 - 7 Hispanic
 - 1 Asian
 - 0 Native American
 - 3 Other or mixed race
- 2 Don't know/Refused



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