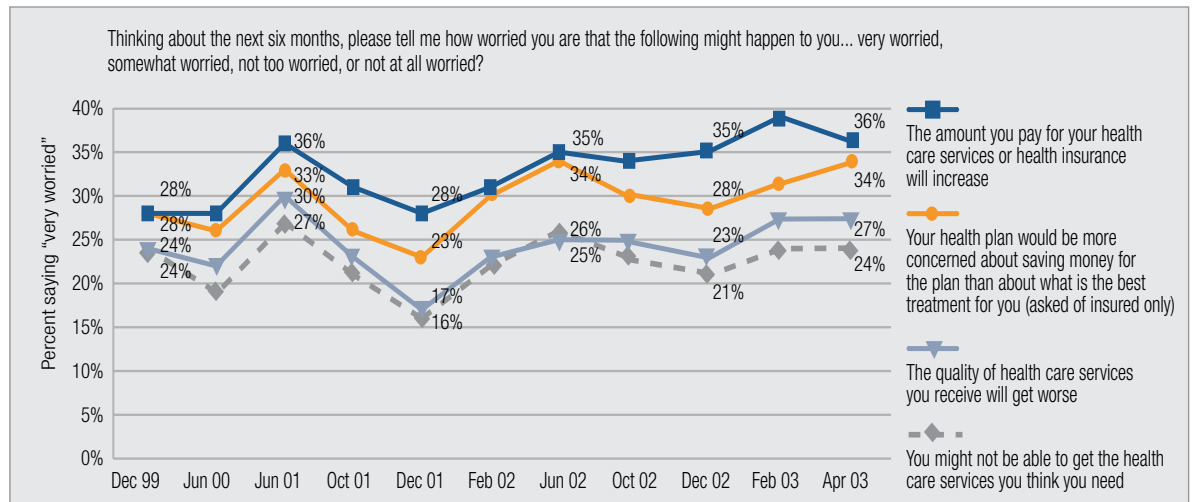


Kaiser Health Poll Report is a bimonthly report designed to provide key tracking information on public opinion about health care topics to journalists, policymakers and the general public. It includes tracking on how secure the public feels about their health care, the most important health care problem facing our government, and the health news stories the public is following most closely. In addition, each report includes poll findings on featured topics.

### HEALTH SECURITY WATCH

The percentage of people concerned about their own ability to access and pay for health care remained fairly steady between February and April 2003, continuing to be about as high as it has ever been since we started tracking health care worries.



### HEALTH CARE PRIORITIES

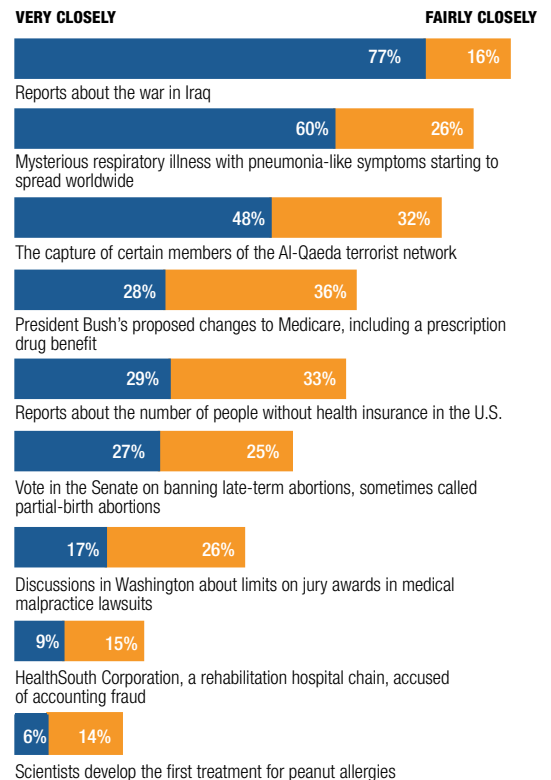
Based on response to the question, "Which of the following health care issues do you think is the most important for the President and Congress to deal with?"

ISSUE	PERCENT SAYING "MOST IMPORTANT"
Helping people age 65 and over pay for prescription medicines	27
Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance	27
Making Medicare more financially sound for future generations	18
Lowering the cost of medical malpractice insurance for physicians	11
Helping states with the cost of Medicaid, the government program that provides health insurance for many low-income families	8
All equally important (volunteered response)	6
None are very important	3
Don't know/Refused	0

For more information about *Health Security Watch*, *Health Care Priorities*, and the Kaiser/Harvard School of Public Health *Health News Index*, including text summaries and charts with trend information and analysis by various demographic groups, visit [www.kff.org/healthpollreport](http://www.kff.org/healthpollreport)

### Kaiser/Harvard School of Public Health HEALTH NEWS INDEX

How closely the public followed leading stories in the news from March 3 to April 1, 2003. Based on response to the question, "How closely did you follow this story...?"



The Kaiser Health Poll Report is prepared by Dr. Mollyann Brodie, Vice President and Director, Public Opinion and Media Research, Elizabeth Hamel, and Jaime Valdez of the Kaiser Family Foundation.

The Kaiser/Harvard School of Public Health Health News Index, Health Security Watch and Health Care Priorities for April 2003 are based on a national random sample survey of 1,211 adults conducted April 3-6, 2003 to measure Americans' interest in and knowledge of health stories covered in the news media during the previous month. The survey was designed and analyzed by Dr. Mollyann Brodie, Elizabeth Hamel and Jaime Valdez of the Kaiser Family Foundation and Dr. Robert J. Blendon and John M. Benson at the Harvard School of Public Health. Fieldwork was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates. The margin of sampling error is +/-3%.

Additional copies of this report (#3338) are available on the Kaiser Family Foundation's website at [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org).

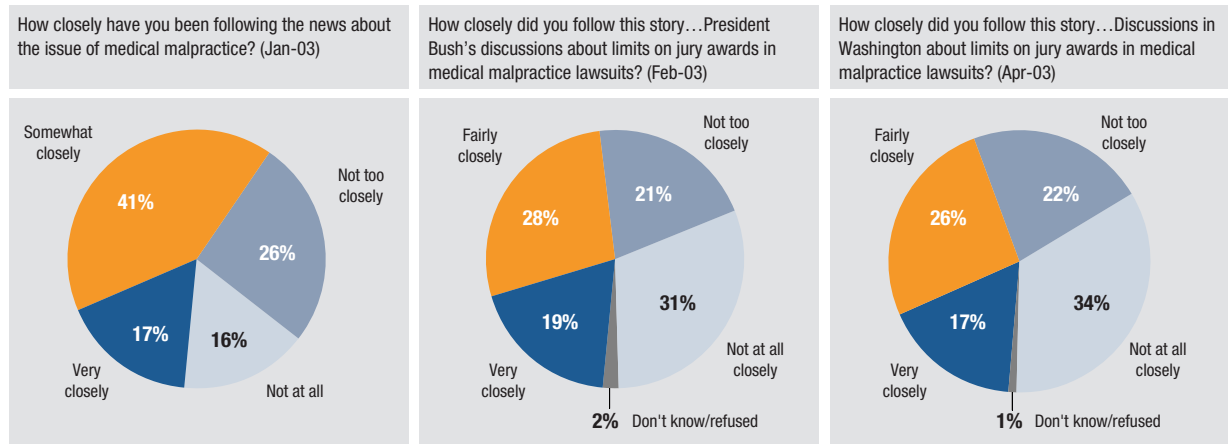
The Kaiser Family Foundation is an independent, national health philanthropy dedicated to providing information and analysis on health issues to policymakers, the media, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

**FEATURED TOPIC**

**Public Opinion on the Medical Malpractice Debate**

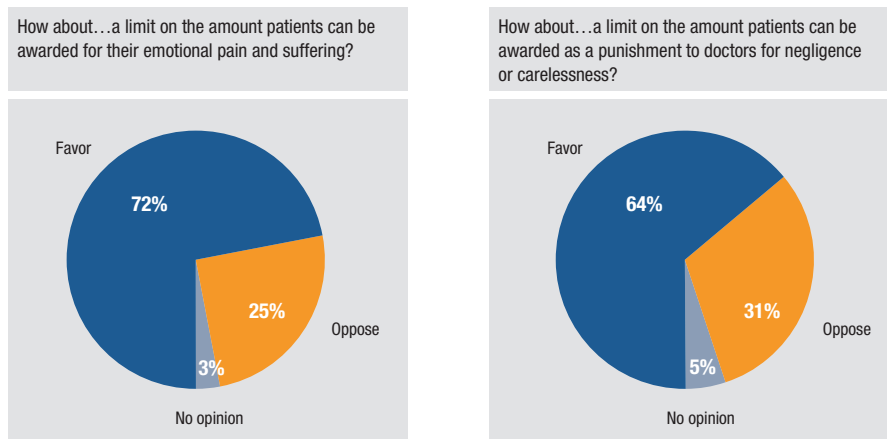
The issue of medical malpractice has been a subject of much public discussion in recent months. This Featured Topic examines the public's attitudes and opinions about the current malpractice debate.

**Attention to the debate:** In 2003, six in ten Americans (58%) said they were following news about the issue of medical malpractice very or fairly closely. When asked about more specific news stories, about half (47%) said they closely followed news stories about President Bush's discussions of limits on jury awards in February, while about four in ten (43%) reported closely following news about malpractice discussions in Washington in April.



**Limits on jury awards:** Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the public say they would favor putting limits on the amount patients can be awarded for emotional pain and suffering. Support is slightly lower for limits on the amount that can be awarded as punishment to doctors for negligence or carelessness (64% say they favor this option). While these questions provide some context to the debate, it's important to note that this is a topic that perhaps deserves more attention in public opinion research, including gauging support for different proposed solutions to rising malpractice insurance costs, and examining how arguments for and against such proposals impact the public's views.

As you may know, there have been some recent proposals to change the laws concerning the money patients can receive when medical malpractice is proved. One proposal would set no limit on the amount of money patients can receive to pay for their medical costs and financial losses, but would limit other payments. Under this plan, would you favor or oppose each of the following proposals. (Jan-03)



For more information about public opinion on the medical malpractice debate, including additional survey questions as well as full wording and sources for all questions shown here, visit [www.kff.org/healthpollreport](http://www.kff.org/healthpollreport)