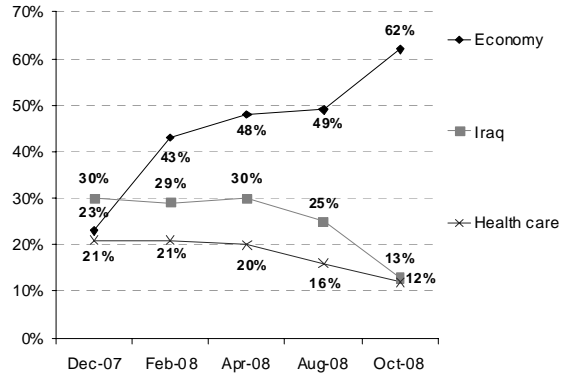


## Health care as an agenda item

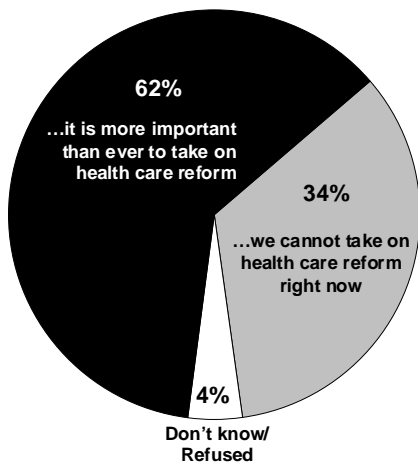
2008 has been a roller coaster year in countless ways, and not least for those interested in health care's role in the presidential election. While the year started with health care tied a close second with the economy for top voting issue (and only 9 percentage points behind the then-top issue – Iraq) the rising tsunami of economic problems swamped health care and every other issue to dominate the agenda in the weeks before the November vote. Health care remains roughly tied for second, but this ranking is somewhat misleading: it is 50 percentage points lower than the economy, as is the other former top tier issue – Iraq.

Thinking ahead to the November 2008 presidential election, what is the single most important issue in your vote for president? Is there another issue that's nearly as important? (open-ended, top 3 responses shown among registered voters)



Which comes close to describing your own views? (among registered voters in October 2008)

Given the economic challenges facing the country...



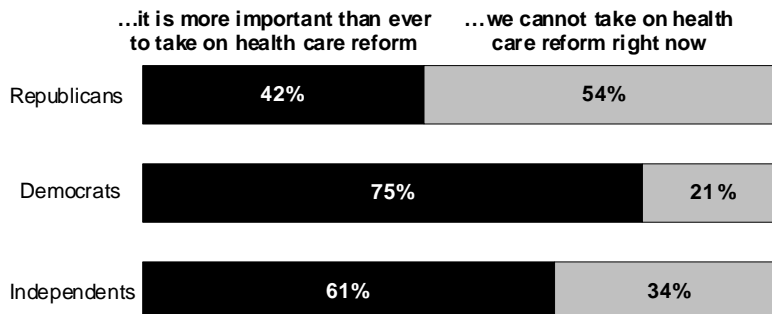
## Despite economy, health care reform not off the table

That said, Kaiser's final election tracking poll shows that health care reform is far from off the table. Overall, nearly twice as many voters agree that in the face of a struggling economy "it is more important than ever to take on health care reform" than agree the country cannot tackle this issue given the current situation. This resonates with our continued finding that health care concerns are a major strand of voters' economic anxiety.

The majority agreement among registered voters on health care reform masks an important ideological divide: large majorities of Democrats (75 percent) and political independents (61 percent) say that now more than ever we need to tackle health care issues. But a majority of Republicans (54 percent) say that "given the economic challenges facing the country, we cannot take on health care reform right now."

Which comes closer to your view? (among registered voters in October 2008)

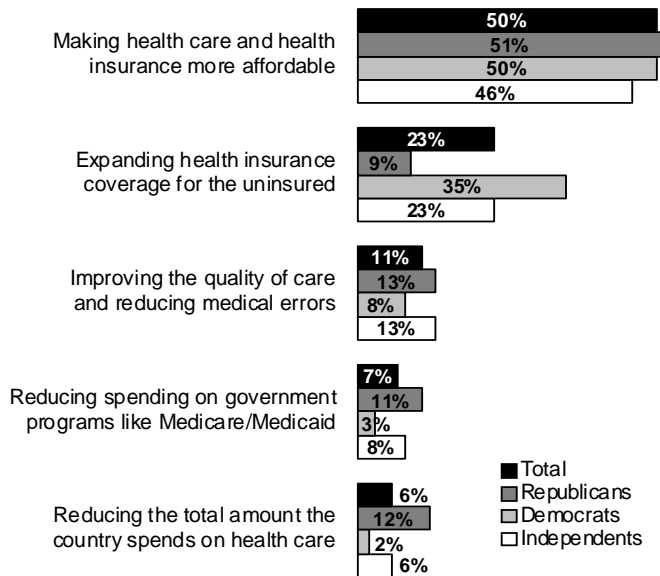
Given the economic challenges facing the country...\*



\*Don't know/Refused not shown

## When it comes to health care, it's affordability that tops the list

Which ONE of the following health care issues is most important in your vote for president? (among registered voters in October 2008)

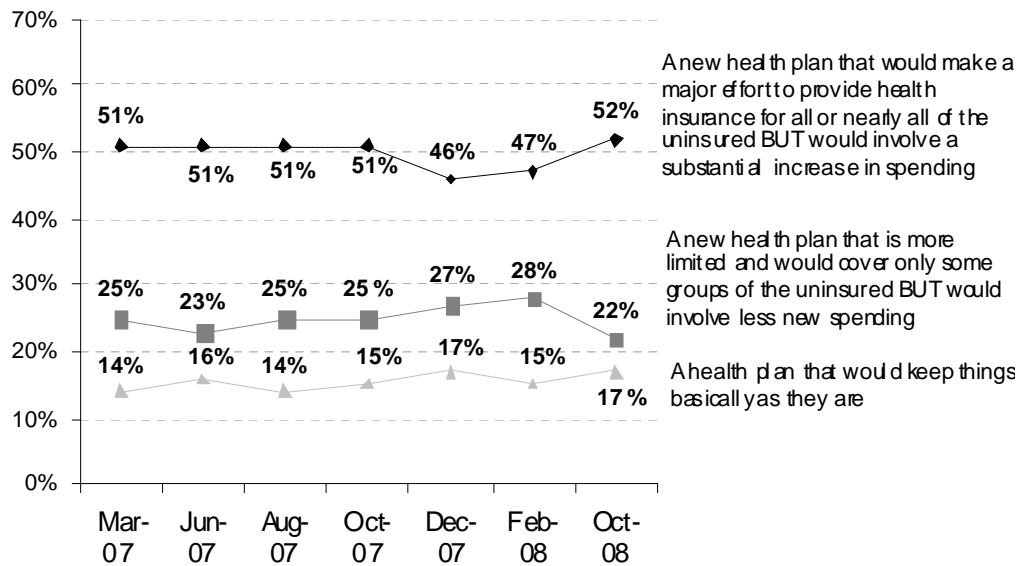


Affordability is now the issue named by the largest number of Republicans (51 percent), Democrats (50 percent) and political independents (46 percent). Among Democrats, expanding coverage for the uninsured ranks second, named by 35 percent of those voters. Coverage also ranks second for political independents, named by a somewhat smaller proportion (23 percent). Relatively few Republicans (9 percent) name coverage as a health care priority.

These findings are reflected in the type of coverage reform voters are seeking. A large majority of Democrats (74 percent) say they would like to see a major effort to provide health insurance for all or nearly all the uninsured, even if this entails spending. On the other hand, a plurality of Republicans (36 percent) say they would prefer not to tackle coverage issues at all, with 29 percent supporting a minor expansion. Independents lean toward a major plan (47 percent), though fewer support the effort than among Democrats.

Overall, support for a major effort on coverage has hovered around 50 percent for the duration of the campaign, with roughly one in four supporting a minor effort and one in seven supporting the status quo. This stability does mask some internal movement among partisans on the coverage issue, however. Perhaps in reaction to the fall's economic news, Democrats are now at their highest support in the tracking poll for a big plan, while Republicans have moved in the other direction and are at their highest level of support for maintaining the status quo.

Which ONE of the following three things would you like to see in a health care reform proposal from a presidential candidate? (among registered voters)

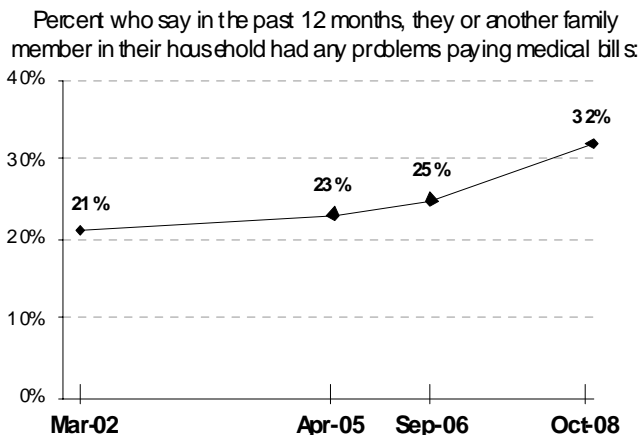


These partisan differences in support for coverage expansion may be in part explained by the fact that most Democrats (69 percent) and half of independents (51 percent) think that universal coverage would help the overall economic situation in the United States, while only 34 percent of Republicans agree.

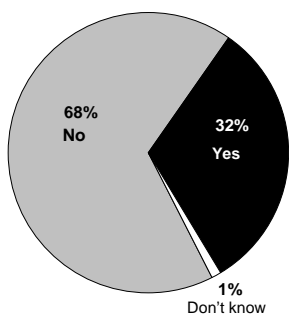
## Health care costs and the economic downturn: Personal impact

One in three Americans report their family has had problems paying medical bills in the past year, up from about a quarter saying the same two years ago. Those with low incomes are even more likely to report such problems – nearly half (46 percent) of those making under \$30,000 a year say they have experienced such a problem in the past 12 months.

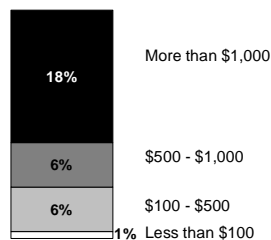
And these bills are not negligible. Among those who report having trouble with medical expenses over the past year, most say the bills in question are in the thousands of dollars, rather than the hundreds. Overall then, nearly two in ten Americans report problems paying medical bills totaling upwards of \$1,000 in the past twelve months. Given these amounts, it is not surprising that among the group reporting problems paying medical bills, a majority say these expenses have had a “major impact” on their families.



In the past 12 months, did you or another family member in your household have any problems paying medical bills, or not? (October 2008)

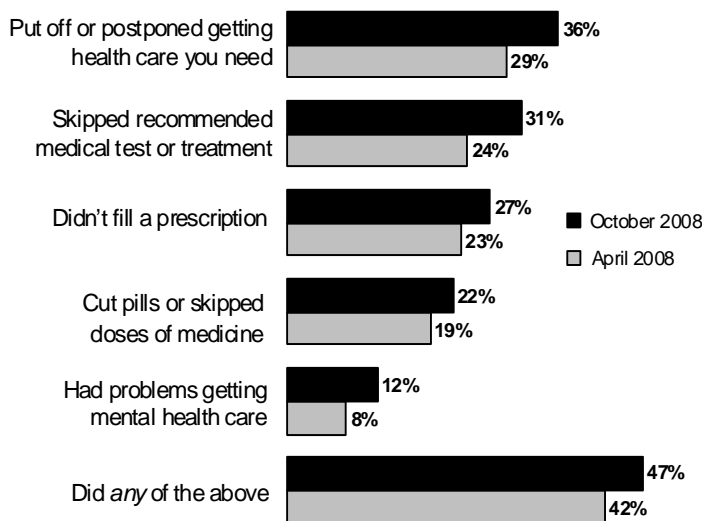


Would you say the amount of these medical bills was...\* (based on total; October 2008)



\*Don't know/Refused not shown

Percent of total who say they or a family member have done each of the following in the past year because of cost...



Not only are more Americans reporting problems meeting their medical expenses, many also report changing their actual consumption of health care services to help curb their costs. Nearly half (47 percent) of Americans report someone in their household taking one of five actions involving skipping necessary health care in the past year because of the cost. Specifically, just over one-third say they put off or postponed needed care and three in ten say they skipped a recommended test or treatment, both up seven percentage points since April. Roughly one in four say they did not fill a prescription, and only slightly fewer say they cut pills or skipped doses. One in ten say they have had problems getting mental health care because of the cost.

Americans with lower incomes are significantly more likely than those making more money to put off care. Fully half (51 percent) of low-income families say they put off or postponed getting the health care they needed in the past year, compared to three in ten (31 percent) families earning more than \$30,000 per year.

The October survey also finds an increase in the proportion of Americans making job-related decisions based mainly on health insurance considerations. One in four Americans (25 percent) report that they or someone in their family has stayed in a job over the past year because of health care benefits, up from 18 percent in April 2008. Roughly one in ten (13 percent) report switching jobs in the past year mainly because the new job offered better health care benefits. The share who say either has occurred – that in the past year, they or someone in their household had decided to take a new job or stay at a job mainly because of better health benefits – has grown from nearly one-quarter (23 percent) in April to three in ten (30 percent) now.

**Economic hardship spreading; Health care costs an exacerbating factor**

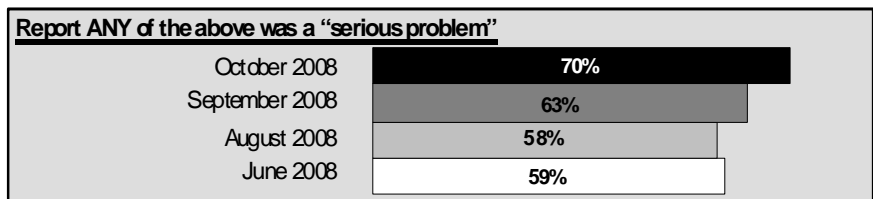
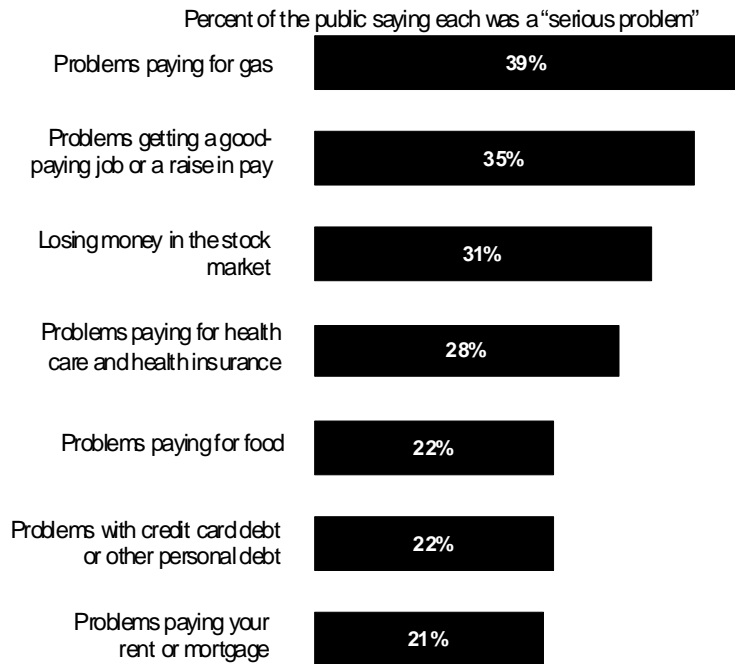
Health care is, of course, one of multiple vital goods and services which have become more expensive over the past year, meaning Americans are being faced with financial challenges on multiple important fronts at once. The current survey finds that seven in ten Americans now say they are experiencing a serious problem with at least one of a list of seven pertinent economic challenges as a result of recent changes in the economy, up 12 percentage points in two months. Overall, about three in ten report serious problems paying for health care or health insurance, roughly parallel to the findings above.

The biggest change in these measures over the past two months, not surprisingly, is the percent who report a serious problem with losses in the stock market, which doubled to 31 percent. The most widely experienced problem continues to be paying for gasoline, which four in ten say is a serious challenge for their family.

Asked what would make the most difference in their day to day financial lives, large majorities say that a decrease in the price of gas (73 percent) and food (64 percent) would help “a lot.” Getting a raise is the third most widely mentioned factor (57 percent).

Importantly, half (51 percent) say lower prices for health care and insurance would make a big difference in their family’s financial situation, a larger percentage than say they would see a major impact from a rebound in the stock market (45 percent). This emphasizes a point we have consistently seen reflected in the tracking poll: health care concerns are an inextricable part of the economic concerns that voters are expressing this fall. A reduction in health care prices would make even more of a difference for those in lower income households: in this group, two in three (67 percent) say this would make a big difference in their financial situations.

**As a result of recent changes in the economy, have you and your family experienced any of the following problems, or not? Was this a serious problem, or not?**



## Majority say Senator Obama more likely to address health care as president

Consistent with his recent rise in the national horse race polls, Senator Obama has widened his advantage as the candidate who best represents voters' views on health care issues in recent months. For the first time, a majority of voters (54 percent) name Senator Obama, twice as many as name Senator McCain (25 percent). Independent voters are twice as likely to say Senator Obama represents their views on health care as to say Senator McCain does. Senator Obama has also strengthened his dominance in being perceived as the candidate who would be more likely to prioritize health care in his administration, with two-thirds (67 percent) of voters choosing him and two in ten (19 percent) choosing Senator McCain.

Voters were also asked which candidate would be more likely to take a variety of specific aspects of health care reform. Majorities of voters say Senator Obama would do more to make sure uninsured Americans get health coverage (72 percent) and to make health care and insurance more affordable (61 percent). In addition, a plurality say he would do more to lower the federal budget deficit (45 percent). Voters are more split between who would do more to lower the nation's overall health expenditures, with about four in ten saying Senator Obama (37 percent) and Senator McCain (41 percent) would do more.

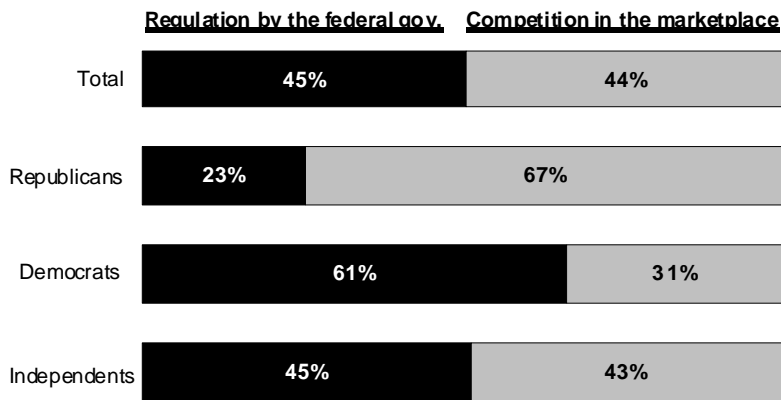
## Voters say candidates have paid too little attention to health care, energy

Just over half of voters say that the presidential candidates – at the end of two years of town hall meetings, speeches and debates – have paid too little attention to health care (54 percent) and energy issues (55 percent), with Democrats and independents more dissatisfied than Republicans on these issues. Pluralities also say there has not been enough attention on economic issues (50 percent) and terrorism (47 percent), with independents particularly in agreement on the former and Republicans on the latter. Voters were more divided on whether they had heard too little (36 percent), too much (18 percent), or the right amount (43 percent) on the topic of the war in Iraq.

## No agreement on how to hold down costs

There is a surprising amount of bipartisan agreement that lowering the cost of health care would help improve the overall U.S. economy. But there is little bipartisan agreement as to the best way to achieve those cost cuts. Overall, roughly half of voters say that regulation by the federal government would do a better job restraining costs, while the other half believe that competition in the marketplace is a more effective strategy. Not surprisingly, Democratic voters tilt toward the former explanation, while Republicans tilt toward the latter. Independents split down the middle.

Which of the following do you think would do a better job at keeping health care costs down? (among registered voters in October 2008)



\*Don't know/Refused not shown

In the midst of serious national disagreements over the role of regulation in the nation's financial meltdown, voters also disagree about the amount of regulation in the area of health care policy. The one area where a bipartisan majority agrees there is not enough regulation: health insurance company treatment of those with pre-existing conditions (72 percent of Democrats say so, 67 percent of independents and 51 percent of Republicans). Most Democrats and independents also think there is not enough regulation when it comes to the cost of health insurance (59 percent and 56 percent, respectively) and prescription drugs (54 percent and 53 percent). At the same time, a plurality of voters (46 percent) are content with the amount of regulation of doctor and hospital quality, and voters have mixed views

about current regulation of drug safety (43 percent say "right amount," 43 percent "not enough," and 8 percent "too much").

## Methodology

This *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Election 2008*, the eleventh and final in a series, was designed and analyzed by public opinion researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation led by Mollyann Brodie, Ph.D., and including Claudia Deane and Carolina Gutiérrez. A nationally representative random sample of 1,217 adults ages 18 and older, including 1,115 adults who say they are registered to vote, was interviewed by telephone between October 8 and 13, 2008. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is plus or minus 3 percentage points and plus or minus 4 percentage points for the sample of registered voters. For results based on subgroups, the sampling error is somewhat higher.

For full question wording and results, see the Toplines at [http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/h08\\_posr102108pkg.cfm](http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/h08_posr102108pkg.cfm).

Information on previous *Kaiser Health Tracking Polls* shown as part of trend data:

Previous surveys referenced	Sample size of registered voters (RV) or general population (GP)	Field dates	Margin of sampling error
Sep08	1,081 RV	September 8-13	+/- 3
Aug08	1,362 RV	July 29-August 6	+/- 3
Jun08	1,066 RV	June 3-8	+/- 4
Apr08	1,759 RV	April 3-13	+/- 3
Feb08	1,770 RV	February 7-16	+/- 3
Dec07	1,063 RV	November 28-December 9	+/- 4
Oct07	1,058 RV	October 1-10	+/- 3
Aug07	1,303 RV	August 2-8	+/- 3
Jun07	1,050 RV	May 31-June 5	+/- 4
Mar07	1,013 RV	March 8-13	+/- 3

1. Thinking ahead to the November 2008 presidential election, what is the single most important issue in your vote for president? IF R GIVES ONE ISSUE PROBE FOR SECOND: Is there another issue that's nearly as important? (OPEN-END)

Note: top mentions shown below. Apr08, Feb08, and Dec07 question wording was about "choice" instead of "vote."

For full question wording and results, see [http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/h08\\_posr102108pkg.cfm](http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/h08_posr102108pkg.cfm).

	AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS: TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
<b>Economy</b>				
Oct08	62	54	66	65
Aug08	49	43	54	50
Apr08	48	43	51	54
Feb08	43	41	41	46
Dec07	23	18	23	26
<b>Iraq</b>				
Oct08	13	7	17	15
Aug08	25	20	32	21
Apr08	30	21	36	36
Feb08	29	18	37	30
Dec07	30	28	35	30
<b>Health care</b>				
Oct08	12	7	16	7
Aug08	16	9	22	13
Apr08	20	16	27	17
Feb08	21	11	27	19
Dec07	21	15	30	19
<b>Personal Characteristics*</b>				
Oct08	8	12	4	10
Aug08	7	9	5	7
<b>Terrorism/nat'l security</b>				
Oct08	7	14	1	9
Aug08	7	13	1	9
Apr08	7	13	2	8
Feb08	9	21	1	11
Dec07	9	14	4	11
<b>Gas prices/Energy</b>				
Oct08	5	4	5	6
Aug08	18	24	13	17
Apr08	8	6	9	7
Feb08	1	1	2	1
Dec07	5	3	6	4
<b>Morality issues</b>				
Oct08	5	13	1	3
Aug08	4	7	1	4
Apr08	4	8	1	2
Feb08	5	12	2	3
Dec07	5	12	1	5
<b>Taxes</b>				
Oct08	4	5	4	4
Aug08	6	8	4	6
Apr08	5	7	2	6
Feb08	7	9	7	4
Dec07	6	6	3	11
<b>Immigration</b>				
Oct08	2	1	3	2
Aug08	3	6	1	4
Apr08	5	9	3	6
Feb08	7	12	3	6
Dec07	11	12	10	13
<b>Frustration w/gov't</b>				
Oct08	2	1	2	2
Aug08	2	2	3	2
Apr08	14	19	12	12
Feb08	13	13	16	11
Dec07	11	16	9	10

\*Personal characteristics added in Aug08 to reflect a shift in voters' priorities in the general election.

2. As I read you some different issues, please tell me if you think the presidential candidates have paid too much attention, too little attention, or about the right amount of attention to each one during this year's campaign. (First,) what about...

AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS:	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
a. Economic issues				
Too much attention				
Oct08	9	14	8	5
Too little attention				
Oct08	50	43	46	60
Right amount				
Oct08	37	39	42	31
Don't Know/Refused				
Oct08	3	4	3	4
b. Health care issues				
Too much attention				
Oct08	9	15	5	11
Too little attention				
Oct08	54	40	60	56
Right amount				
Oct08	34	43	34	26
Don't Know/Refused				
Oct08	3	3	2	6
c. Energy policy				
Too much attention				
Oct08	8	8	10	6
Too little attention				
Oct08	55	45	53	64
Right amount				
Oct08	34	44	35	27
Don't Know/Refused				
Oct08	3	3	3	3
d. The war in Iraq				
Too much attention				
Oct08	18	16	20	15
Too little attention				
Oct08	36	29	37	41
Right amount				
Oct08	43	51	40	39
Don't Know/Refused				
Oct08	4	4	3	5
e. Terrorism				
Too much attention				
Oct08	16	6	22	18
Too little attention				
Oct08	47	55	41	45
Right amount				
Oct08	34	35	35	34
Don't Know/Refused				
Oct08	3	4	2	3



3. Now thinking specifically about HEALTH CARE, which ONE of the following health care issues is most important in your vote for president? (READ AND RANDOMIZE 1-5)

AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS:	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Making health care and health insurance more affordable				
Oct08	50	51	50	46
Aug08	53	52	54	51
Expanding health insurance coverage for the uninsured				
Oct08	23	9	35	23
Aug08	18	7	26	18
Improving the quality of care and reducing medical errors				
Oct08	11	13	8	13
Aug08	10	13	8	12
Reducing spending on gov't health programs like Medicare/Medicaid				
Oct08	7	11	3	8
Aug08	6	10	4	7
Reducing the total amount the country spends on health care				
Oct08	6	12	2	6
Aug08	5	7	3	7
None of these (VOL)				
Oct08	2	3	1	--
Aug08	3	6	2	3
Other issue (VOL)				
Oct08	*	--	*	*
Aug08	2	3	1	1
Don't know/Refused				
Oct08	1	1	1	2
Aug08	2	2	2	1

4. Which ONE of the following three things would you like to see in a health care reform proposal from a presidential candidate? Would you want your candidate to propose... (READ)?

	AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS: TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
A new health plan that would make a major effort to provide health insurance for all or nearly all of the uninsured BUT would involve a substantial increase in spending				
Oct08	52	21	74	47
Feb08	47	26	65	47
Dec07	46	32	57	48
Oct07	51	31	68	45
Aug07	51	32	65	51
Jun07	51	34	69	48
Mar07	51	38	64	49
A new health plan that is more limited and would cover only some groups of the uninsured BUT would involve less new spending				
Oct08	22	29	16	28
Feb08	28	35	24	27
Dec07	27	31	22	27
Oct07	25	34	19	26
Aug07	25	33	22	24
Jun07	23	30	15	24
Mar07	25	33	19	27
A health plan that would keep things basically as they are				
Oct08	17	36	6	15
Feb08	15	28	6	12
Dec07	17	27	13	15
Oct07	15	26	7	17
Aug07	14	25	4	15
Jun07	16	26	9	18
Mar07	14	19	9	14
Don't know/Refused				
Oct08	9	15	4	10
Feb08	10	10	5	14
Dec07	9	9	8	10
Oct07	9	9	6	12
Aug07	10	10	9	10
Jun07	9	10	8	10
Mar07	11	10	9	10

5. Which comes closer to describing your own views?

	AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS: TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Given the economic challenges facing the country, we cannot take on health care reform right now				
Oct08	34	54	21	34
Given the economic challenges facing the country, it is more important than ever to take on health care reform				
Oct08	62	42	75	61
Don't know/Refused				
Oct08	4	4	4	5

6F1. As a result of recent changes in the economy, have you or your family experienced any of the following problems, or not? First (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE)? IF YES, ASK: Was this a serious problem, or not? Next (INSERT NEXT ITEM)?\*

For full question wording and results, see [http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/h08\\_posr102108pkg.cfm](http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/h08_posr102108pkg.cfm).

	Percent of total sample saying each was a "serious problem"
a. Problems paying for health care or health insurance	
Oct08	28
Sep08	30
Aug08	24
Jun08	25
Apr08	28
b. Problems paying for gas	
Oct08	39
Sep08	39
Aug08	37
Jun08	43
Apr08	44
c. Problems getting a good-paying job or a raise in pay	
Oct08	35
Sep08	33
Aug08	26
Jun08	27
Apr08	29
d. Problems paying your rent/mortgage	
Oct08	21
Sep08	21
Aug08	15
Jun08	14
Apr08	19
e. Losing money in the stock market	
Oct08	31
Sep08	19
Aug08	15
Jun08	15
Apr08	16
f. Problems with credit card or other personal debt	
Oct08	22
Sep08	18
Aug08	16
Jun08	16
Apr08	18
g. Problems paying for food	
Oct08	22
Sep08	20
Aug08	18
Jun08	19
Apr08	18

\*Note: In October 2008, this question was asked of a randomly-selected half sample.

6F2. Thinking about your own family, how much would each of the following help your financial situation - A lot, a little, some, or not at all?

For full question wording and results, see [http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/h08\\_posr102108pkg.cfm](http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/h08_posr102108pkg.cfm).

	Percent of total sample saying it would help "a lot"
a. Lower prices for health care and health insurance Oct08	51
b. Lower gas prices Oct08	73
c. Getting a raise Oct08	57
d. Your rent/mortgage being lowered Oct08	48
e. The stock market going back up Oct08	45
f. Lower food prices Oct08	64
g. Lower interest rates on your credit card Oct08	38

\*Note: This question was asked of a randomly-selected half sample.

7. Thinking about all of the candidates for president in 2008, regardless of political party or who you intend to vote for, which candidate BEST represents your own views on health care?  
(OPEN-END)

Note: only remaining candidates shown

For full question wording and results, see [http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/h08\\_posr102108pkg.cfm](http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/h08_posr102108pkg.cfm).

	AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS: TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Named any candidate (NET)				
Oct08	83	83	91	73
Sep08	76	78	87	69
Aug08	71	72	81	64
Jun08	71	70	80	62
Apr08	70	67	84	60
Feb08	68	60	80	63
Dec07	48	42	63	41
Oct07	51	43	61	49
Aug07	43	33	59	40
Jun07	43	35	58	33
Mar07	36	29	48	31
Barack Obama				
Oct08	54	15	85	47
Sep08	45	5	80	40
Aug08	42	9	73	37
Jun08	28	6	45	27
Apr08	20	6	33	19
Feb08	19	8	28	19
Dec07	6	2	12	3
Oct07	8	2	14	5
Aug07	6	3	9	7
Jun07	9	4	14	8
Mar07	6	3	9	5
John McCain				
Oct08	25	66	3	22
Sep08	29	72	4	25
Aug08	24	61	5	21
Jun08	20	53	3	16
Apr08	19	51	3	16
Feb08	11	24	2	11
Dec07	1	2	1	1
Oct07	1	1	1	2
Aug07	1	2	*	1
Jun07	2	6	*	2
Mar07	3	4	2	3
Don't know/No candidate				
Oct08	17	17	9	27
Sep08	24	22	13	31
Aug08	29	28	19	36
Jun08	29	30	20	38
Apr08	30	33	16	40
Feb08	32	40	20	37
Dec07	52	58	37	59
Oct07	49	57	39	51
Aug07	57	67	41	60
Jun07	57	65	42	67
Mar07	64	71	52	69

8. Which presidential candidate do you think would be more likely to make health care reform a top priority in his administration - John McCain (or) Barack Obama? (Names rotated)

AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS:				
	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Barack Obama				
Oct08	67	42	88	64
Sep08	59	24	87	56
Aug08	58	29	82	56
John McCain				
Oct08	19	41	6	17
Sep08	23	54	4	21
Aug08	20	47	7	13
Both equally (VOL.)				
Oct08	3	3	2	5
Sep08	3	4	1	3
Aug08	2	2	2	4
Neither (VOL.)				
Oct08	6	9	2	8
Sep08	6	8	4	10
Aug08	9	10	5	13
Don't know/Refused				
Oct08	5	6	2	7
Sep08	8	10	4	10
Aug08	10	12	4	14

9. And which presidential candidate would do more to (READ AND RANDOMIZE) - John McCain (or) Barack Obama? (Names rotated)

a. Make health care and health insurance more affordable

AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS:				
	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Barack Obama				
Oct08	61	24	88	61
Sep08	55	19	85	48
Aug08	54	22	82	49
John McCain				
Oct08	22	50	5	20
Sep08	24	57	4	22
Aug08	20	46	5	18
Both (VOL.)				
Oct08	1	3	*	2
Sep08	2	2	2	2
Aug08	2	1	1	3
Neither (VOL.)				
Oct08	8	12	2	10
Sep08	6	8	2	10
Aug08	10	14	5	14
Don't know/Refused				
Oct08	7	11	5	7
Sep08	13	13	6	19
Aug08	13	17	7	16

(continued on next page)

b. Make sure that Americans who don't currently have health insurance get it

	AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS:	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Barack Obama					
	Oct08	72	49	89	72
	Sep08	61	32	86	57
	Aug08	63	38	83	60
John McCain					
	Oct08	13	28	3	12
	Sep08	19	42	4	17
	Aug08	15	34	4	12
Both (VOL.)					
	Oct08	2	4	1	1
	Sep08	3	4	2	3
	Aug08	2	2	2	2
Neither (VOL.)					
	Oct08	6	8	2	9
	Sep08	7	7	3	11
	Aug08	9	11	5	12
Don't know/Refused					
	Oct08	7	11	5	7
	Sep08	11	15	5	12
	Aug08	11	15	6	13

c. Lower the total amount the country spends on health care

	AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS:	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Barack Obama					
	Oct08	37	12	60	28
	Sep08	37	8	65	29
	Aug08	34	12	56	25
John McCain					
	Oct08	41	66	22	45
	Sep08	38	69	16	39
	Aug08	36	60	22	38
Both (VOL.)					
	Oct08	1	2	2	1
	Sep08	1	1	1	3
	Aug08	1	1	1	1
Neither (VOL.)					
	Oct08	8	10	5	11
	Sep08	7	6	5	11
	Aug08	13	11	9	17
Don't know/Refused					
	Oct08	12	10	11	16
	Sep08	16	16	13	18
	Aug08	16	15	12	19

(continued on next page)

d. Lower the federal budget deficit

AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS:				
	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Barack Obama				
Oct08	45	11	74	37
Sep08	45	11	76	37
Aug08	40	9	72	31
John McCain				
Oct08	33	71	10	32
Sep08	33	69	7	37
Aug08	34	68	11	37
Both (VOL.)				
Oct08	2	2	2	3
Sep08	2	2	1	3
Aug08	1	1	2	1
Neither (VOL.)				
Oct08	10	11	5	13
Sep08	9	10	7	11
Aug08	13	12	8	17
Don't know/Refused				
Oct08	10	4	8	14
Sep08	10	9	9	12
Aug08	11	10	7	14

10. Would you say you have a basic understanding of what (INSERT AND ROTATE) is proposing to do on health care if he becomes president, or not?

AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS:				
	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
a. Barack Obama				
Yes, basic understanding				
Oct08	80	75	87	77
No, not a basic understanding				
Oct08	17	24	12	20
Don't Know/Refused				
Oct08	2	2	1	3
b. John McCain				
Yes, basic understanding				
Oct08	68	75	65	65
No, not a basic understanding				
Oct08	30	24	33	32
Don't Know/Refused				
Oct08	2	2	1	3

11a. If all Americans had health insurance coverage, do you think this would help or hurt the overall economic situation in U.S., or wouldn't it make much difference?

AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS:				
	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Help				
Oct08	54	34	69	51
Feb08	53	36	69	52
Hurt				
Oct08	16	29	6	16
Feb08	18	29	10	18
Wouldn't make much difference				
Oct08	25	31	22	25
Feb08	22	27	18	22
Don't know/Refused				
Oct08	5	7	3	8
Feb08	7	8	4	8



11b. If the cost of health care in this country was significantly lowered, do you think this would help or hurt the overall economic situation in U.S., or wouldn't it make much difference?

	AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS: TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Help				
Oct08	61	51	67	63
Feb08	64	57	70	66
Hurt				
Oct08	9	11	7	10
Feb08	6	9	4	6
Wouldn't make much difference				
Oct08	25	30	23	21
Feb08	25	29	22	22
Don't know/Refused				
Oct08	5	7	3	6
Feb08	6	5	4	6

12. When thinking about rising health care costs, which ONE of the following concerns you most...

	AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS: TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Increases in the amount people pay for their health insurance premiums and other out-of-pocket costs				
Oct08	44	37	49	45
Jun08	47	48	54	37
Increases in spending on government health insurance like Medicare/Medicaid				
Oct08	16	18	16	12
Jun08	14	17	13	13
Increases in what the nation as a whole spends on health care				
Oct08	14	16	16	12
Jun08	19	16	18	24
Increases in the health insurance premiums that employers pay to cover their workers				
Oct08	13	18	8	14
Jun08	10	11	6	14
All of these (VOL.)				
Oct08	5	4	3	8
Jun08	3	2	4	3
None of these (VOL.)				
Oct08	3	3	3	2
Jun08	2	2	2	4
Don't know/Refused				
Oct08	5	4	4	6
Jun08	4	4	4	5

13. Which of the following do you think would do a better job at keeping health care costs down - regulation by the federal government or competition in the marketplace? (ITEMS ROTATED)

AMONG TOTAL RESPONDENTS:	Gov't Regulation	Mktplace Competition	Both (VOL.)	Neither (VOL.)	DK Refused
Oct08	46	43	2	3	5
Jun03 <sup>1</sup>	46	44	4	1	5

14. Now, thinking about government regulation of the health care industry today... Please tell me if you think there is too much, not enough, or about the right amount of government regulation in each of the following areas. (First,) what about... (INSERT. READ AND RANDOMIZE). Do you think there is too much, not enough, or about the right amount of government regulation in this area?

AMONG TOTAL RESPONDENTS:	<u>Too much</u>	<u>Not enough</u>	<u>About right</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
The safety of prescription medications				
Oct08	9	42	44	6
Jun03 <sup>1</sup>	12	32	48	8
Jul01 <sup>2</sup>	10	37	48	5
The cost of health insurance				
Oct08	23	51	20	7
Jun03 <sup>1</sup>	28	50	14	8
The cost of prescription medications				
Oct08	22	48	24	6
Jun03 <sup>1</sup>	27	49	16	7
Jul01 <sup>2</sup>	20	54	19	7
The quality of doctors and hospitals				
Oct08	10	37	47	7
Jun03 <sup>1</sup>	10	37	45	8
Jul01 <sup>2</sup>	10	36	48	6
How health insurance companies treat people with pre-existing health conditions				
Oct08	12	64	16	8

15. In the past year, have you or another family member living in your household... (READ AND RANDOMIZE) because of the COST, or not?

16. Did the condition get worse as a result of (READ CORRESPONDING ITEM)?

AMONG TOTAL RESPONDENTS:	Yes	Got worse	Not worse/DK	No	DK/Ref
Skipped a recommended medical test or treatment					
Oct08	31	19	13	68	*
Apr08	24	13	11	76	1
Apr05 <sup>3</sup>	17	9	7	82	*
Jan00	15	NA	NA	85	--
Not filled a prescription for a medicine					
Oct08	27	17	10	72	*
Apr08	23	14	9	76	*
Apr05 <sup>3</sup>	20	11	9	79	*
Cut pills in half or skipped doses of medicine					
Oct08	22	14	8	78	*
Apr08	19	12	7	80	*
Apr05 <sup>3</sup>	16	8	7	84	*
Had problems getting mental health care					
Oct08	12	9	3	87	2
Apr08	8	5	3	90	2
Apr05 <sup>3</sup>	7	3	3	93	1
Jan00* <sup>4</sup>	4	NA	NA	96	1
Put off or postponed getting health care you needed					
Oct08	36	22	14	64	*
Apr08	29	20	10	70	1
Percent who say they or another family member did ANY of the five items above:					
Oct08	47				
Apr08	42				

\*Note: question wording did not include "or someone in your household"

17. In the past year, have you or anyone in your household ... (ROTATE) What about (INSERT NEXT ITEM)? In the past year, have you or anyone in your household done this?

a. Decided to stay in one job, rather than take another, mainly because the job you held at the time offered better health care benefits

	AMONG TOTAL RESPONDENTS:			
	Yes	No	NA (VOL.)	DK/Ref.
Oct08	25	64	10	1
Apr08	18	76	5	2

b. Decided to take a different job, rather than stay at a job, mainly because the new job offered better health care benefits

	AMONG TOTAL RESPONDENTS:			
	Yes	No	NA (VOL.)	DK/Ref.
Oct08	13	76	10	1
Apr08	12	82	5	2

Percent who say they or another family member did EITHER of the above:

Oct08	30
Apr08	23

18. In the past 12 months, did you or another family member in your household have any problems paying medical bills, or not?

	AMONG TOTAL RESPONDENTS:		
	Yes	No	DK/Ref.
Oct08	32	68	1
Sep06 <sup>5</sup>	25	75	*
Apr05 <sup>3</sup>	23	77	--
Mar02 <sup>6</sup>	21	79	--

19. How much of an impact have these bills had on you and your family – a major impact, a minor impact, or no real impact on you and your family?

**Based on those who had problems paying medical bills in the past 12 months (n=308)**

	AMONG TOTAL RESPONDENTS:			
	Major	Minor	No impact	DK/Ref
Oct08	61	35	5	--

Q19 Combination Table Based on Total

	AMONG TOTAL RESPONDENTS:			
	Major	Minor	No impact	DK/Ref
Oct08	19	11	2	--

20. Would you say the amount of these medical bills was:

**Based on those who had problems paying medical bills in the past 12 months (n=308)**

	AMONG TOTAL RESPONDENTS:				
	Less than \$100	\$100-\$500	\$500-\$1,000	\$1,000+	DK/Ref
Oct08	3	18	19	58	2

Q20 Combination Table Based on Total

	AMONG TOTAL RESPONDENTS:				
	Less than \$100	\$100-\$500	\$500-\$1,000	\$1,000+	DK/Ref
Oct08	1	6	6	18	1

**Sources cited in the Trends:**

- <sup>1</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF)/Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) *Health News Interest Index* (conducted Jun 5-8, 2003)
- <sup>2</sup> KFF/HSPH *Consumer Experiences with and Attitudes Towards Health Plans Survey* (conducted Jul 2-Aug 8, 2001)
- <sup>3</sup> USA Today/KFF/Harvard School of Public Health *Health Care Costs Survey* (conducted Apr 26-Jun 9, 2005)
- <sup>4</sup> KFF/Lehrer NewsHour *National Survey of the Uninsured* (conducted Jan 10-Feb 9, 2000)
- <sup>5</sup> ABC News/KFF/USA Today *Health Care in America 2006 Survey* (conducted Sep 7-12, 2006)
- <sup>6</sup> NPR/KFF/Kennedy School of Government *National Survey on Health Care* (conducted Mar 28-May 1, 2002)

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