



Views on the U.S. Role in Global Health Update

The Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on the U.S. Role in Global Health Update* builds on the Foundation’s previous survey work in measuring Americans’ attitudes toward U.S. global health investments and priorities. The survey tracks some questions that were asked earlier in 2009, and delves into some new questions about specific areas of global health spending and how aid should be distributed. Following President Obama’s announcement of the Global Health Initiative, the survey also measures public perception of the current Administration and Congress with regards to global health efforts.

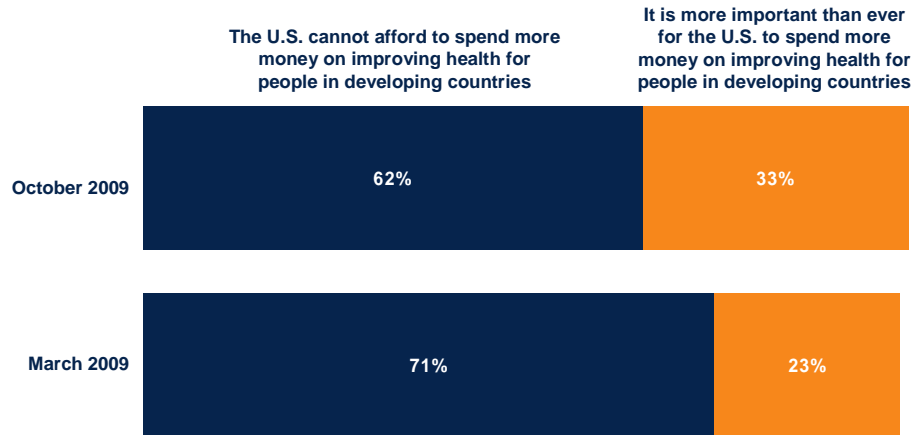
There is general public support for maintaining current levels of U.S. aid for global health, but broader concerns about the economy continue to make Americans leery of increasing spending abroad.

As we found in March, the public continues to support maintaining or increasing spending on global health. Despite the continuing economic recession, two-thirds say the U.S. is spending too little (34 percent) or about the right amount (32 percent) on efforts to improve health for people in developing countries, while just a quarter say we are currently spending too much in this area.

However, despite this general level of support, the current economic crisis continues to contribute to Americans’ apprehension about increased spending abroad, although this may be abating somewhat since earlier in the year. Six in ten (62 percent) say that given the serious economic problems facing the country and the world right now, the U.S. cannot afford to spend more money on improving health for people in developing countries, while a third (33 percent) say the economic crisis makes it more important than ever for the U.S. to increase such spending. This represents a slight shift since March, when 71 percent said the U.S. could not afford to spend more on global health and 23 percent said increasing such spending was more important than ever.

Spending on Global Health in Hard Economic Times

Which of the following comes closer to your view? Given the serious economic problems facing the country and the world right now...



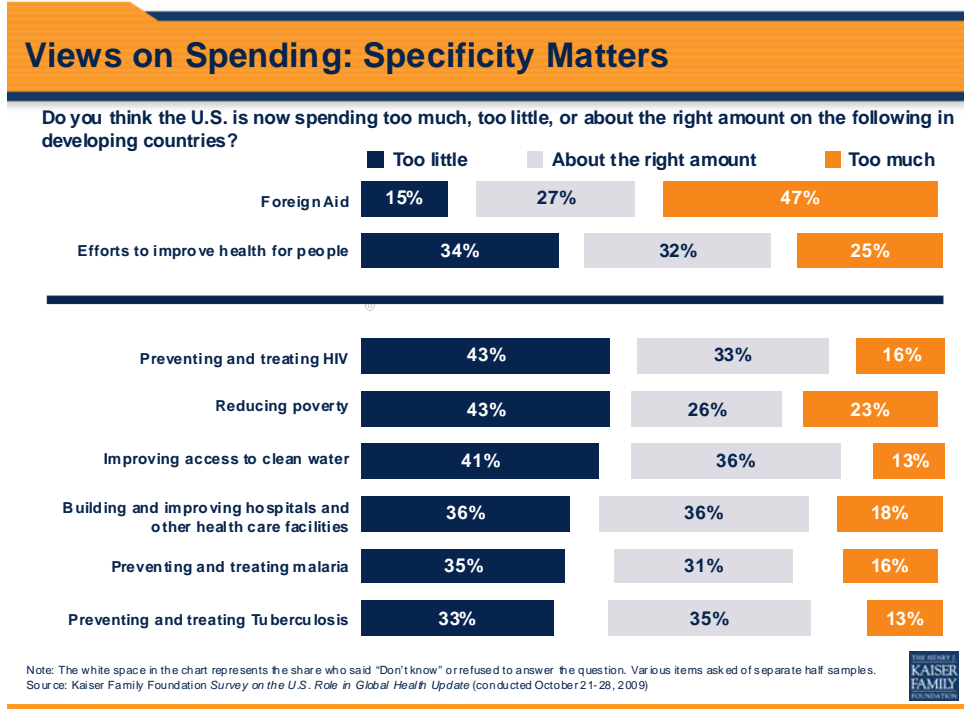
Note: Don't know/Refused responses not shown.
Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on the U.S. Role in Global Health Update* (conducted October 21-28, 2009); Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on the U.S. Role in Global Health* (conducted January 26-March 8, 2009)



Negative views of “foreign aid” persist, but support is higher for increased spending on specific global health-related priorities.

Nearly half (47 percent) of Americans think the U.S. spends too much on foreign aid, while just 15 percent say we are spending too little, and about a quarter say such spending is about right. We’ve shown in the past that misperceptions about the actual size of U.S. foreign aid spending may be contributing to this sense that the U.S. is spending too much in this area.

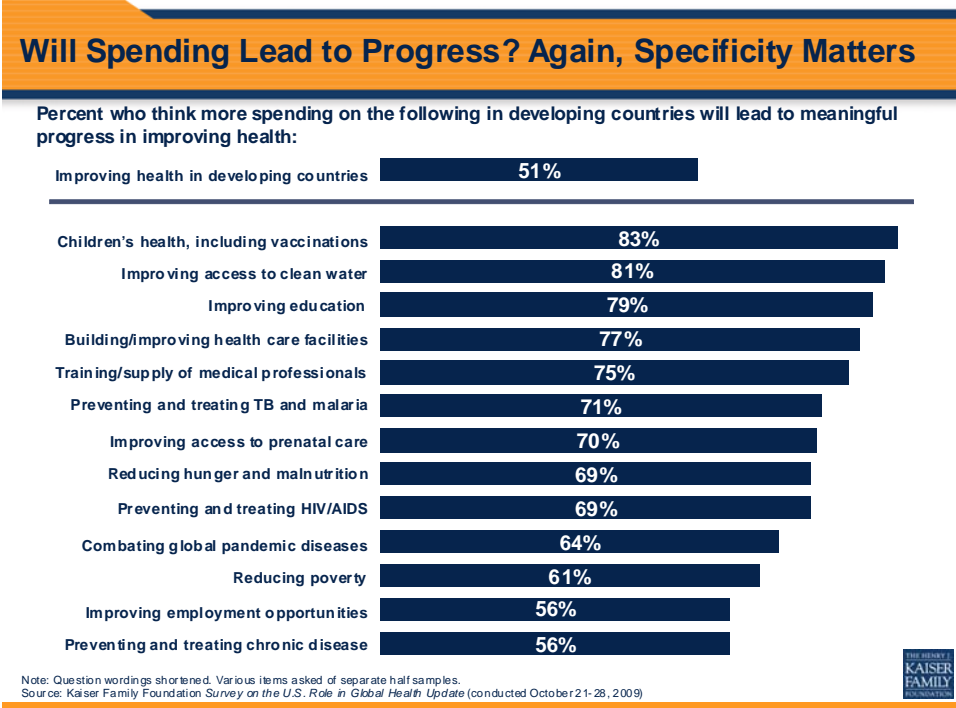
This survey also indicates that when people hear the term “foreign aid,” they are thinking about many different areas of spending, including military assistance. Large majorities – between about two-thirds and three-quarters – say that U.S. foreign aid includes spending on preventing and treating disease (77 percent), health system improvement (70 percent), military assistance (69 percent), and general infrastructure improvement (67 percent) in developing countries.



Despite somewhat reticent views about foreign aid spending in general, Americans are more supportive of increased spending abroad when more specific health-related purposes are mentioned. For example, while 47 percent say the U.S. spends too much on foreign aid, just a quarter say the country spends too much on “efforts to improve health for people in developing countries,” and even fewer say the same about spending on specific health measures in developing countries, such as preventing and treating HIV (16 percent), malaria (16 percent) and tuberculosis (13 percent)

and improving access to clean water (13 percent). Conversely, while just 15 percent say the U.S. spends too little on foreign aid, more than twice as many Americans say we spend too little on improving health in developing countries (34 percent) and on various other specific health measures.

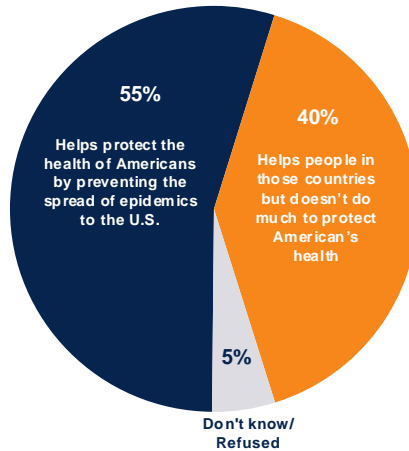
Similarly, Americans have somewhat mixed views on the potential impact of increased global health spending, but are more confident that spending will lead to progress when specific health priorities are mentioned. Just about half (51 percent) believe that in general, more spending from the U.S. and other developed countries will lead to meaningful progress in improving health in developing countries, while over four in ten (43 percent) say that spending more money won’t make much difference. However, the public is more likely to think spending will lead to meaningful progress when it comes to specific priorities. Notably, about eight in ten say that more spending on children’s health (83 percent), improving access to clean water (81 percent), and improving education (79 percent) will lead to meaningful progress in improving health in developing countries.



Beyond seeing a potential impact in developing countries of increased spending on global health, Americans also see at least one potential benefit on the home front. More than half (55 percent) agree that “U.S. spending to improve health in developing countries helps protect the health of Americans by preventing the spread of epidemics to the U.S.”, while four in ten disagree and say such spending “helps people in those countries but doesn’t do much to protect Americans’ health.”

Does Spending Abroad Protect Health in the U.S.?

Do you think U.S. spending to improve health in developing countries...



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Survey on the U.S. Role in Global Health Update (conducted October 21-28, 2009)

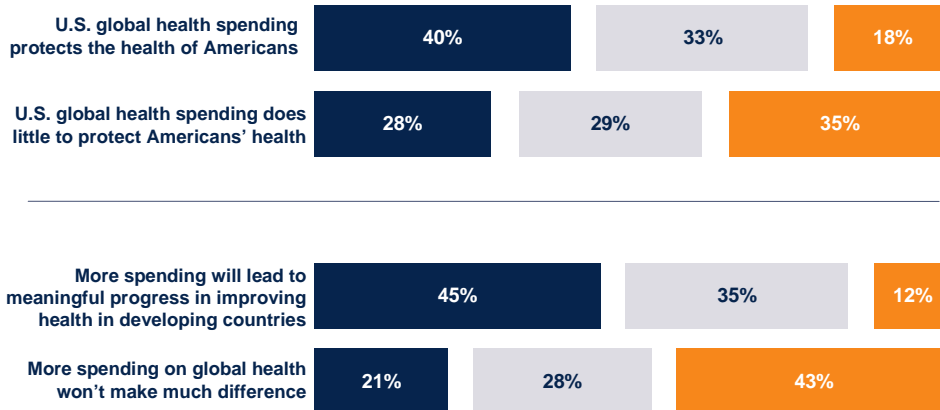


Perhaps not surprisingly, views on whether spending on global health will lead to progress and views on the potential benefit to Americans’ health are correlated with opinions about the current level of U.S. spending. Those who think spending will lead to meaningful progress and those who see a benefit at home are more likely than their counterparts to say the U.S. currently spends too little on global health, and less likely to say we spend too much.

Views on Spending Correlated with Perceived Effects

Do you think the U.S. is now spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on efforts to improve health for people in developing countries?

Among those who say: ■ Too little ■ About the right amount ■ Too much

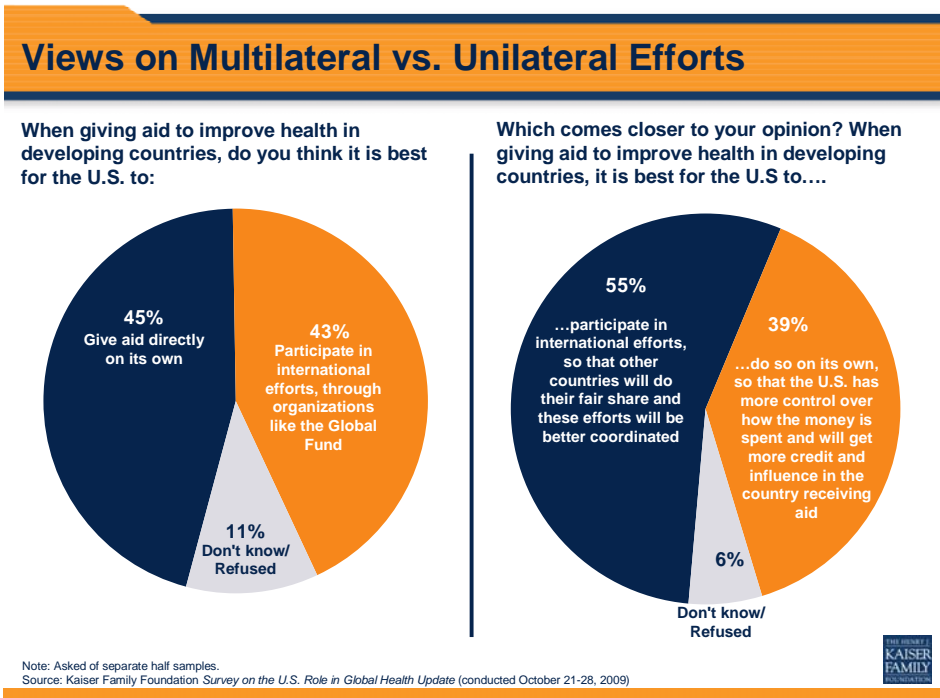


Note: The white space in the chart represents the share who said "Don't know" or refused to answer the question.
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Survey on the U.S. Role in Global Health Update (conducted October 21-28, 2009)



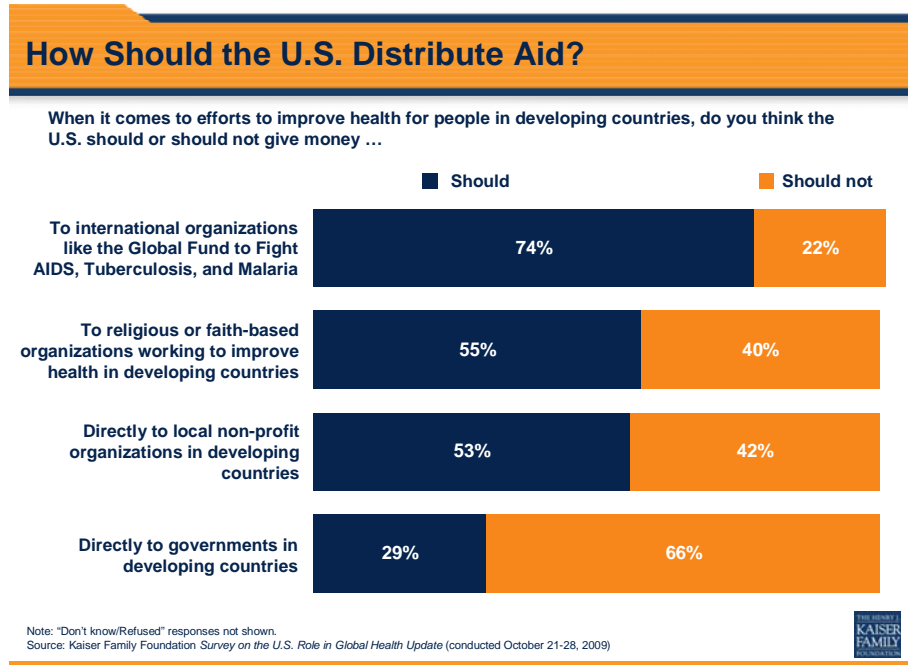
How should aid be distributed? Public leans towards multilateral efforts, doesn't see big difference between government aid and private charities.

On the question of whether U.S. global health funding should be administered directly by the U.S. or through coordinated international efforts, the survey found somewhat mixed results. When asked the question directly, the public is split roughly down the middle, with 45 percent saying it is best for the U.S. to give aid directly on its own, and 43 percent saying it is best to participate in international efforts through organizations like the Global Fund. However, when arguments are presented for each side, more than half think the U.S. should “participate in international efforts, so that other countries will do their fair share and these efforts will be better coordinated,” while a smaller share – 39 percent – think it is best for the U.S. to give on its own in order to have “more control over how the money is spent and get more credit and influence in the country receiving aid.” While more Democrats and independents clearly favor international efforts when these arguments are presented, Republicans are more split between the two.



	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
It is best for the U.S. to participate in international efforts, so that other countries will do their fair share and these efforts will be better coordinated	59	58	50
It is best for the U.S. to give aid on its own, so that the U.S. has more control over how the money is spent and will get more credit and influence in the country receiving aid	38	33	47

Further, nearly three-quarters of the public (74 percent) say that when it comes to efforts to improve health in developing countries, the U.S. should give money to international organizations like the Global Fund. This is higher than the roughly half who say the U.S. should give money to religious or faith-based organizations working on global health issues (55 percent) or directly to local non-profit organizations in developing countries (53 percent). On the other hand, two-thirds (66 percent) say that when it comes to global health aid, the U.S. should *not* give money directly to governments in developing countries.



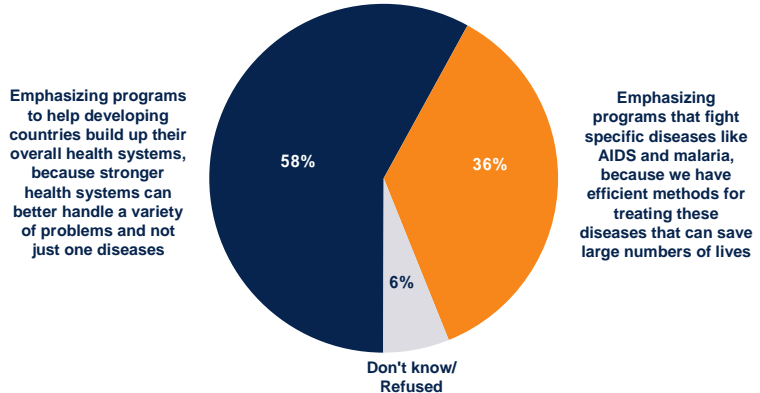
The public does not see a huge distinction in the effectiveness of money donated by private charities compared with money donated by the U.S. and other developed country governments. Half say both types of aid are equally likely to reach the people who need it most. Among those who do see a distinction, about twice as many say money donated by private charities is more likely to reach people who need it most (30 percent), compared with money donated by developed country governments (16 percent).

Focusing on health systems resonates with the public.

Among global health policy specialists, there are often debates about the best way to balance aid between programs that focus on specific diseases and those that aim to build and improve developing countries' health systems. The more system-focused goal seems to resonate with the public more so than the goal of fighting specific diseases, with 58 percent saying it is more important to emphasize the former, and 36 percent saying it is more important to emphasize the latter.

Fighting Disease or Building up Health Systems?

There is some discussion about how best to distribute U.S. aid for improving health in developing countries. Which do you think is more important?



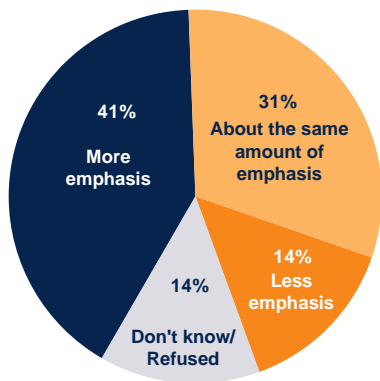
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Survey on the U.S. Role in Global Health Update (conducted October 21-28, 2009)



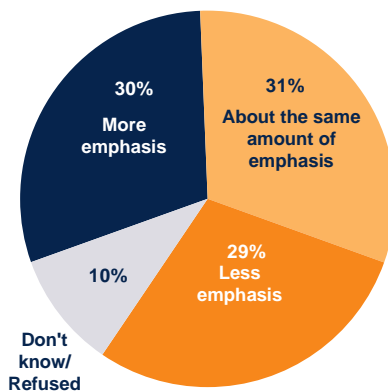
Views of Obama, Congress on Global Health

Views of Congress and President's Emphasis on Global Health

Do you think President Obama is placing more emphasis, less emphasis or about the same amount of emphasis as previous presidents on improving health for people in developing countries?



Do you think members of Congress today are placing more emphasis, less emphasis, or about the same amount of emphasis as they were five years ago on improving health for people in developing countries?



Note: Asked of separate half samples. Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Survey on the U.S. Role in Global Health Update (conducted October 21-28, 2009)



The survey indicates that President Obama's recently formulated global health initiative may be beginning to gain some awareness with the public. Thirty-seven percent say they have heard a lot (10 percent) or some (27 percent) about the president's plan, while another 37 percent have heard only a little and a quarter have heard nothing at all. In addition, there is a general perception of President Obama as having a greater global health focus than his predecessors. Four in ten (41 percent) say Obama is placing more emphasis than previous presidents on improving health for people in

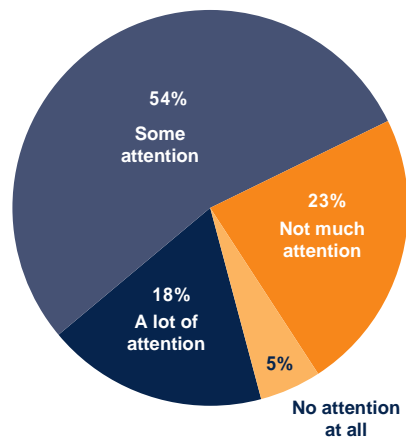
developing countries, while about three in ten (31 percent) say he's placing the same amount of emphasis and just 14 percent think he's paying less attention to global health than his predecessors. When it comes to the amount of emphasis Congress is placing on global health issues, the public is pretty evenly split, with three in ten each saying Congress is placing less emphasis, more emphasis, and about the same emphasis on the topic as they were five years ago.

Engagement in global health issues

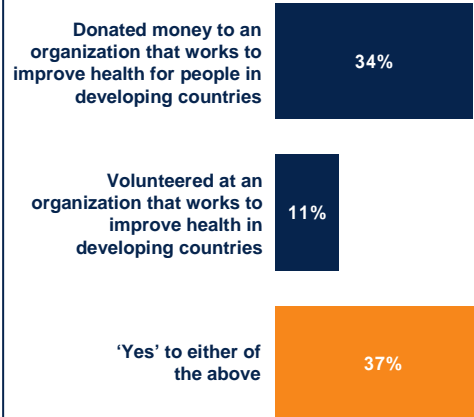
Similar to many specific issues, a minority of the public reports paying close attention to what's going on in global health. Fewer than one in five (18 percent) say they pay "a lot" of attention to issues related to global health; however, over half (54 percent) say they pay "some" attention. About one in three say they pay "not much" (23 percent) or "no attention at all" (5 percent). Americans report engaging in global health in other ways. About a third say they have given money to a global health charity in the past year, while about one in ten say they have volunteered their time for such a charity; 37 percent have engaged in at least one of these activities in the past year.

Engagement in Global Health Issues

In general, how much attention do you pay to issues related to global health?



Percent who say in the past year, they have...



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Survey on the U.S. Role in Global Health Update (conducted October 21-28, 2009)



Methodology

The Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on the U.S. Role in Global Health Update* was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation led by Mollyann Brodie, Ph.D., including Elizabeth Hamel, Sarah Cho and Sasha Buscho. The survey was conducted by telephone between October 21 – 28, 2009, among a nationally representative random sample of 1,205 adults ages 18 and older. Telephone interviews conducted by landline (N=799) and cell phone (N=406, including 147 who had no landline telephone) were carried out in English and Spanish by Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Results for all groups have been weighted to reflect their actual distribution in the nation.

The margin of sampling error for the overall survey is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based on subgroups, the margin of sampling error may be higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

This publication (#8013) is available on the Kaiser Family Foundation's website at www.kff.org.