

July 2002

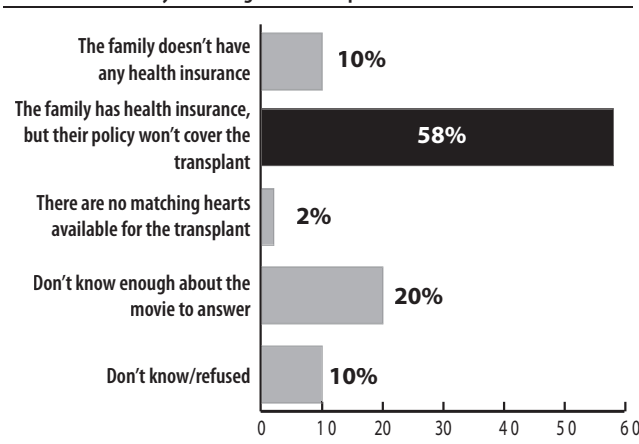
Response to the Movie *John Q*

When the movie *John Q* was released in February of this year, it brought a new round of press attention to the issue of health insurance coverage in America, and to the role of entertainment media in drawing public attention to – or reflecting public concern with – this topic. More than 15 million people saw this tale of a man whose employer-provided health insurance won't cover the heart transplant his son needs to survive – and whose hospital won't provide the treatment without payment. With his son essentially condemned to death, the man takes the hospital hostage in a desperate, last-bid attempt to get this life-saving transplant for his son.

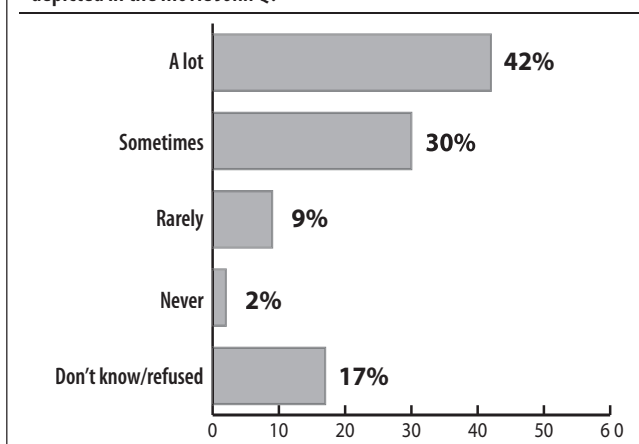
In June, the Kaiser Family Foundation conducted a brief, nationally representative random dial telephone survey on the impact of the movie: how many people remember hearing about it, what they understand the movie to be about, and how accurately they think it reflects real life. Following are highlights of the results:

- The movie had a ripple effect through the public: while only 6% actually saw it, more than four in ten (44%) say they have heard of it.
- The majority of people (58%) who have heard about the movie know the issue it concerns – that although the family had health insurance, the insurance company won't cover the life-saving heart transplant their son needs.
- Most people believe the movie is an accurate reflection of reality: 42% say they think health insurers refuse to pay for treatments like those in the movie "a lot" and another 30% say they think that happens "sometimes;" about one in ten say this happens rarely (9%) or never (2%).

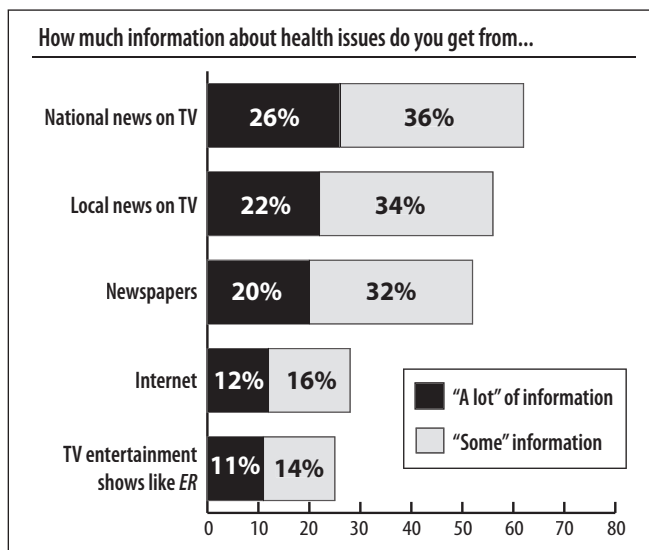
The movie *John Q* is about a family whose son needs a heart transplant and can't get it. From what you may have seen or heard about the movie, which comes closer to why he can't get the transplant?



Thinking about real life, how often do you think health insurance companies refuse to pay for transplants or procedures like what was depicted in the movie *John Q*?



- One in four people say they get “a lot” (11%) or “some” (14%) information about health issues from entertainment shows on TV like the NBC drama *ER*. This is far fewer than say they get this much information from the news media, but about the same as the Internet.



Methodology

Response to the Movie John Q was part of a nationally representative, random dial telephone survey of 1,201 adults 18 years and older, conducted as part of the Kaiser Family Foundation's ongoing survey series The Health News Interest Index. The survey was designed and analyzed by staff of the Kaiser Family Foundation. Fieldwork was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates May 31-June 3, 2002. The margin of error is +/- 3%.

Copies of this publication (#3245) are available on the Kaiser Family Foundation's website at www.kff.org.

#