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# *July/August 2004 Health Poll Report Survey*

August 2004

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### Methodology

The Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Poll Report Survey* was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation. Fieldwork was conducted by telephone by Princeton Survey Research Associates International between August 5 and August 8, 2004, among a nationally representative random sample of 1,200 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.

**AUGUST 2004 KAISER HEALTH POLL REPORT**

Q.1a To begin... What do you think is the most important problem for the government to address? Is there another problem you think is almost as important for the government to address?

***Based on One-Half of Total Respondents (n=602)*** (Total Net Responses)

- 34 Economy (NET)
- 23 Health care (NET)
- 23 War (NET)
- 20 Terrorism/National Security (NET)
- 12 Miscellaneous (NET)
- 9 Other Government Issues (NET)
- 7 Education (NET)
- 6 Taxes/Budget (NET)
- 3 Crime (NET)
- 6 Other
- 12 Don't know/Refused

*Note: adds to more than 100% because of multiple responses*

Q.1b 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?

***Based on One-Half of Total Respondents (n=598)***

46	<b>COSTS (NET)</b>
23	Cost of health care
21	Cost of prescription drugs/medicines
10	Cost of insurance/affordable insurance
3	Costs – other (incl. doctor and hospital costs)
26	<b>ACCESS TO CARE AND INSURANCE (NET)</b>
17	Universal coverage / coverage for uninsured
6	Health care availability (general)
2	Health care for the poor
	Access to health care – other (incl. staff cutbacks and difficulties
3	w/pre-existing conditions)
15	<b>SENIORS' ISSUES (NET)</b>
8	Senior citizens' care/ issues (incl. Social Security)
4	Medicare
4	Coverage of rx drugs (for elderly/Medicare)
10	<b>MEDICAL CONDITIONS (NET)</b>
4	Cancer/Cancer Research
2	AIDS/AIDS research/HIV
5	Medical Conditions/ Procedures – other
4	<b>INSURANCE COMPANY CONCERNS (NET)</b>
3	Health insurance (general)
2	HMO/Managed care concerns
8	<b>OTHER POLICY (NET)</b>
2	Government stay out of healthcare
2	Quality of care
2	Children's care/issues
2	Other policy/social issues (incl. abortion, drug abuse, Medicaid, etc.)
16	<b>OTHER ISSUE</b>
14	<b>DON'T KNOW/REFUSED</b>

*Note: adds to more than 100% because of multiple responses*

Q.2 Next, I am going to read you a list of specific health care issues. For each one, please tell me how important it will be in your vote for president this year. Will it be extremely important in deciding your vote, very important, somewhat important, or not important? (First,) how important will this issue be in determining your vote for president... **(INSERT ITEM, READ & RANDOMIZE)?**

**REPEAT FOR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY:** Will it be extremely important in deciding your vote, very important, somewhat important, or not important?

	<u>Extremely Important</u>	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not Important</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
a. The cost of health care and health insurance	44	38	12	6	*
b. The number of Americans without health insurance	41	34	16	8	1
c. Abortion	24	24	21	24	6
d. Medicare	30	41	19	9	2
e. Medical malpractice	19	30	32	15	4
f. Prescription drug benefits for seniors	36	40	17	7	*
g. The cost of prescription drugs	36	38	18	7	*
h. Protecting patients' right in HMOs and managed care plans	30	37	22	8	2

*Asked of those who said more than one issue would be "extremely important" in their vote for president:*

Q2.1 Which of the following issues you said are extremely important do you think will be MOST important in determining your vote for president this year?

- 16 The number of Americans without health insurance
- 15 The cost of health care and health insurance
- 9 Abortion
- 6 The cost of prescription drugs
- 5 Medicare
- 5 Prescription drug benefits for seniors
- 4 Protecting patients' rights in HMOs and managed care plans
- 2 Medical malpractice
- 1 Other issue is most important (VOL.)
- 7 All the same/equally important (VOL.)
- 30 None extremely important
- 1 Don't know/Refused

*Note: also includes those who named only one issue as "extremely important"*

Q.3 Who do you trust to do a better job handling **(INSERT ITEMS, RANDOMIZE)**, (George W. Bush) OR (John Kerry) **(ROTATE ITEMS IN PARENTHESE)**

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Kerry</u>	<u>Both equally (VOL.)</u>	<u>Neither (VOL.)</u>	<u>DK/ Ref</u>
a. Health care in general	37	42	1	8	13
b. Prescription drug benefits for people on Medicare	36	42	*	6	16

Q.4 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...? **(INSERT--READ AND RANDOMIZE)**

**REPEAT CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY:** Did you follow this story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
a. Military action and peace keeping efforts in Iraq	61	26	7	6	1
b. Campaigns for the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election	46	31	12	11	*
c. Release of the 9/11 Commission Report	36	34	14	14	1
d. The International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand and related reports on global HIV/AIDS	12	23	22	42	1
e. A study reporting that a drug used to treat Alzheimer's may also delay onset of the disease	24	32	18	26	1
f. The release of new guidelines calling for lower cholesterol targets among people at risk for heart disease	18	24	20	37	1
g. Reports about a change in Medicare's policy towards obesity	14	25	22	37	1
h. A new test that helps doctors determine the best treatment for prostate cancer	17	20	21	41	1

Q.5 Thinking about what you have heard or seen in the news, which of the following best describes the recent change in Medicare's policy towards obesity? If you're not sure, that's okay. Just tell me and I'll go to the next question. **(READ ANSWER CATEGORIES)**

- 5 Medicare will stop covering treatments for obesity, OR
- 30 Medicare will begin covering some treatments for obesity
- 65 Don't know/Refused

Q.6 Do you favor or oppose changing the law to allow Americans to buy prescription drugs from pharmacies in Canada if they think they can get a lower price?

**Based on One-Half of Total Respondents (n=602)**

- 73 Favor
- 18 Oppose
- 9 Don't know/Refused

Q.7 I'm going to read you a list of things some people have said about allowing Americans to buy prescription drugs from pharmacies in Canada, and I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements. Some people say that allowing Americans to buy prescription drugs from Canada... **(READ AND RANDOMIZE)**.

Do you agree or disagree? (**Get answer then ask:** Is that strongly or somewhat?)

**Based on One-Half of Total Respondents (n=602)**

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
a. Will expose Americans to unsafe medicines from other countries	16	20	22	36	5
b. Will lead U.S. drug companies to do less research and development	14	13	28	39	6
c. Will make medicines more affordable without sacrificing safety or quality	39	28	15	10	8

- Q.8 Do you favor or oppose changing the law to allow the federal government to use its buying power to negotiate with drug companies to try to get a lower price for prescription drugs for people on Medicare?

***Based on One-Half of Total Respondents (n=598)***

- 80 Favor  
8 Oppose  
12 Don't know/Refused

- Q.9 I'm going to read you a list of things some people have said about allowing the federal government to use its buying power to negotiate with drug companies to try to get a lower price for prescription drugs for people on Medicare, and I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements. Some people say that allowing the federal government to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices...**(READ AND RANDOMIZE)**.

Do you agree or disagree? (**Get answer then ask:** Is that strongly or somewhat?)

***Based on One-Half of Total Respondents (n=598)***

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. Will mean government price controls on prescription drugs	21	38	22	10	9
b. Will lead U.S. drug companies to do less research and development	11	21	30	32	6
c. Will make medicines more affordable for people on Medicare	47	36	5	4	7
d. Makes sense because the government already negotiates lower prices for the Defense Department and Veterans Administration	28	36	13	8	14



Now, on another topic...

Q.10 Are you NOW self-employed, working full-time for an employer, working part-time for an employer, are you retired, or are you not employed for pay?

- 12 Self-employed
- 41 Full-time for an employer
- 9 Part-time for an employer
- 20 Retired
- 11 Not employed
- 2 Homemaker (VOL.)
- 2 Student (VOL.)
- 3 Disabled (VOL.)
- \* Don't know/Refused

Q.11 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)? **USE VARIANT WORDING IN CALIFORNIA:** (Medi-Cal)

- 83 Yes, insured
- 17 No, not insured
- 0 Don't know/Refused

Q.12 Which type of health insurance do you now have? Is it a plan through your or your spouse's employer, a plan you purchased yourself, are you covered by Medicare or Medicaid, some other government program, or do you get your health insurance from somewhere else?

***Based on those who are insured (n=1,034)***

- 63 Private plan through your or your spouse's employer
- 9 Plan purchased yourself
- 17 Medicare
- 4 Medicaid
- 5 Some other government program
- 2 Somewhere else
- 1 Don't Know/Refused

- Q.13 Some health plans charge less if you use a doctor from a list. They allow you to go to a doctor who is not on the list; however, you pay more to do this. Does your current plan work this way or not?

***Based on those who are insured through employer or self-purchased plan (n=727)***

- 64 Yes, current plan works this way
- 27 No, current plan does not work this way
- 10 Don't know/Refused

- Q.14 Some health plans require you to sign up with one specific primary care doctor or group of doctors who provide all of your routine health care. Does your current plan work this way or not?

***Based on those who are insured through employer or self-purchased plan (n=727)***

- 45 Yes, current plan works this way
- 45 No, current plan does not work this way
- 10 Don't know/Refused

- Q.15 Some health plans require you to have approval before they will pay for any of your costs for visiting a doctor who is not in the plan. Does your current plan work this way or not?

***Based on those who are insured through employer or self-purchased plan (n=727)***

- 43 Yes, current plan works this way
- 43 No, current plan does not work this way
- 14 Don't know/Refused

- Q.16 Some health plans require you to have a referral by a primary care doctor before you can see a specialist. Does your current plan work this way or not?

***Based on those who are insured through employer or self-purchased plan (n=727)***

- 52 Yes, current plan works this way
- 35 No, current plan does not work this way
- 13 Don't know/Refused

- Q.17 Based on all your experience with your current main health insurance plan, what letter grade would you give it for its performance – ‘A’ for excellent, ‘B’ for good, ‘C’ for average, ‘D’ for poor, or ‘F’ for failing?

***Based on those who are insured (n=1,034)***

- 31 A for excellent
- 39 B for good
- 21 C for average
- 5 D for poor
- 2 F for failing
- 3 Don't Know/Refused

**READ TO ALL:** Next I'd like to ask about your experience with HMOs and other managed care plans. These plans direct people to a list of doctors and hospitals, and cover all or nearly all of the costs for using those on the list, but charge extra to use doctors or hospitals not on the list...

- Q.18 In the past year, have you personally experienced any problem with an HMO or managed care plan, such as denials of coverage for health care services, payment delays, or difficulty getting referrals to see a particular doctor?

- 16 Yes
- 81 No
- 2 Don't Know/Refused

- Q.19 Was the problem you experienced related to getting appropriate medical care or was it related to billing and paperwork issues ONLY?

***Based on those who experienced a problem with HMO (n=187)***

- 28 Related to care
- 60 Related to billing and paperwork only
- 10 Related to something else (**VOL.**)
- 2 Don't Know/Refused

Q.20 During the past few years, do you think HMOs and other managed care plans...  
(INSERT—READ AND RANDOMIZE)?

- a. Have made it easier or harder for people who are sick to see medical specialists?
- 15 Easier
  - 56 Harder
  - 10 No effect (**VOL.**)
  - 19 Don't know/Refused
- b. Have increased or decreased the quality of health care for people who are sick?
- 20 Increased
  - 49 Decreased
  - 10 No effect (**VOL.**)
  - 21 Don't know/Refused
- c. Have made it easier or harder to get preventive services such as immunizations, health screenings, and physical exams?
- 32 Easier
  - 34 Harder
  - 13 No effect (**VOL.**)
  - 22 Don't know/Refused
- d. Have helped keep health care costs down, or haven't they made much difference?
- 13 Helped
  - 63 Haven't made much difference
  - 7 Made costs go up (**VOL.**)
  - 17 Don't know/Refused
- e. Have increased or decreased the amount of time doctors spend with their patients?
- 10 Increased
  - 60 Decreased
  - 11 No effect (**VOL.**)
  - 19 Don't know/Refused
- f. Have helped people get prescription drug coverage, or haven't they made much difference?
- 18 Helped
  - 58 Haven't made much difference
  - 4 Made it more difficult for people to get coverage (**VOL.**)
  - 20 Don't know/Refused

Q.21 Over the past several years, you may have heard about problems people have with HMOs and managed care plans. These problems could include things like denials of coverage for health care services, payment delays, and difficulty getting referrals to see a particular doctor. Compared to three or four years ago, do you think that these types of problems with managed care plans have gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?

- 12 Gotten better
- 29 Gotten worse
- 48 Stayed about the same
- 11 Don't Know/Refused

Q.22 Would you favor or oppose a new law that would give people the right to sue their health plan?

- 57 Favor
- 31 Oppose
- 12 Don't Know/Refused

Q.23 I'm going to read you a list of things that some people worry about and others do not. I'd like you to tell me how worried you are about each of the following things. (First,) how worried are you about...? (**INSERT—READ AND RANDOMIZE**)

**READ FOR FIRST ITEM AND THEN AS NECESSARY:** 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. Having to pay more for your health care or health insurance	45	30	8	15	1
b. Not being able to afford the health care services you think you need	40	23	14	22	1
c. The quality of health care services you receive getting worse	30	26	14	29	1
d. Not being able to afford the prescription drugs you need	38	24	14	23	1
e. Being the victim of a violent crime	17	25	28	29	1
f. Being the victim of a terrorist attack	20	29	22	28	1
g. Your income not keeping up with rising prices	42	29	11	17	1
h. Losing your savings in the stock market	21	17	14	47	2
i. Not being able to pay your rent or mortgage	31	17	14	37	*
<b>Item J based on those who are employed (n=729)</b>					
j. Losing your job	25	16	17	41	1
<b>Item K based on those who are employed and insured (n=624)</b>					
k. Having to stay in your current job instead of taking a new job for fear of losing health benefits	22	15	16	46	1
<b>Items L-M based on those who are insured (n=1,034)</b>					
l. Losing your health insurance coverage	34	17	16	32	*
m. Your HEALTH PLAN being more concerned about saving money for the plan than about what treatment is best for you	36	31	12	19	3

Q.24 During the past three years, has the amount of money you pay directly each month or have deducted from your paycheck for your health insurance premiums gone up a lot, gone up a little, stayed the same, or gone down?

***Based on those who are insured (n=1,034)***

- 30 Gone up a lot
- 35 Gone up a little
- 23 Stayed the same
- 3 Gone down
- 9 Don't know/Refused

Q.25 Was this a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem for you and your family?

***Based on those whose insurance premiums have gone up in past three years (n=703)***

- 25 Major problem
- 46 Minor problem
- 28 Not a problem
- 1 Don't know/Refused

**DEMOGRAPHICS:**

Finally, I have just a few questions we will use to describe the people who took part in our survey...

**D1. SEX**

- 49 Male
- 51 Female

**V1. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you currently registered to vote at your present address?**

- 81 Yes, registered to vote
- 18 No, not registered to vote
  - \* Don't have to register (**VOL.**)
  - \* Don't know/Refused

**D2. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?**

- 29 Republican
- 33 Democrat
- 30 Independent
- 4 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? (DO NOT READ)**

- 4 None, or grade 1-8
- 10 High school incomplete (grades 9-11)
- 32 High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)
  - 4 Technical, trade or vocational school AFTER high school
- 23 Some college, no four-year degree (includes associate degree)
- 16 College graduate (B.S., B.A., or other four-year degree)
- 10 Post-graduate or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a Master's degree or Ph.D; law or medical school)
  - 1 Refused



D4. What is your age? (**RECORD EXACT AGE AS TWO-DIGIT CODE.**)

- 20 18-29
- 37 30-49
- 24 50-64
- 16 65 and older
- 3 Refused

D5. Last year -- that is, in 2003 -- what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category. (**READ**)

- 7 Less than \$10,000
- 10 \$10,000 to under \$20,000
- 13 \$20,000 to under \$30,000
- 19 \$30,000 to under \$50,000
- 17 \$50,000 to under \$75,000
- 9 \$75,000 to under \$100,000
- 7 \$100,000 to under \$200,000
- 2 \$200,000 or more
- 5 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**)

- 71 White, Non Hispanic
- 26 Total Non-White
- 11 Black or African-American
- 10 Hispanic
- 2 Asian
- 3 Other or mixed race
- 3 Don't know/Refused



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