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November/December 2003 Health Poll Report Survey

December 2003

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 December 3 to December 7, 2003, among a nationally representative random sample of 1,206 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.

DECEMBER 2003 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 Respondents (n=603) (Total Net Responses)

- 28 Economy (NET)
- 28 War (NET)
- 14 Health care (NET)
- 12 Miscellaneous (NET)
- 8 Terrorism/National Security (NET)
- 7 Taxes/Budget (NET)
- 7 Other Government Issues (NET)
- 6 Education (NET)
- 4 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 Respondents (n=603)

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

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

Q.2 Now, I'm going to read you some different health care issues. As I read each one, please tell me how important you think it is for the President and Congress to deal with this issue – very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important. (First,) how important is this issue...?

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not too Important</u>	<u>Not at all Important</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
a. Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance	75	17	4	2	2
b. Lowering the cost of medical malpractice insurance for physicians	49	34	6	6	4
c. Lowering the cost of prescription drugs	79	16	2	2	1
d. Lowering the cost of health insurance	81	15	2	2	1
e. Improving the quality of medical care	68	21	6	4	1
f. Reducing racial disparities in medical care	53	26	7	6	9
g. Helping families with the cost of caring for elderly or disabled family members who need long-term help	73	22	3	2	*
h. Protecting the privacy of medical records	60	27	8	3	2

Asked of those who said more than one issue would be “extremely important” for the President and Congress to deal with:

Q2.1 Which of the following issues you say are very important do you think is MOST important? (Summary)

- 24 Lowering the cost of health insurance
- 19 Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance
- 15 Lowering the cost of prescription drugs
- 13 Helping families with the cost of caring for elderly or disabled family members who need long-term help
- 10 Improving the quality of medical care
- 5 Lowering the cost of medical malpractice insurance for physicians
- 3 Protecting the privacy of medical records
- 2 Reducing racial disparities in medical care
- 1 Other issue is most important (**VOL.**)
- 6 All the same/equally important (**VOL.**)
- 2 None Very Important
- 1 Don't know/Refused

Note: also includes those who named only one issue as “extremely important”

Q.3 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...?

	<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	58	30	7	4	1
b. Wildfires in California	40	36	16	8	1
c. Reports about the U.S. economy	42	33	14	10	1
d. A vote in Congress on a bill to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare	34	31	16	19	1
e. A vote in Congress on a bill to ban late-term abortions, sometimes called partial-birth abortions	32	26	18	23	1
f. Hepatitis A outbreak at a restaurant in Pennsylvania	19	26	22	32	1
g. World AIDS Day	13	22	23	41	1
h. A new report from the United Nations on the global AIDS epidemic	14	29	22	34	
i. Federal judge's orders to close a chain of U.S. drugstores selling prescription drugs from Canada	18	26	21	34	1
j. A recent study about a new treatment for coronary artery disease	13	15	19	52	1
k. The South African government's announcement of a plan to provide free AIDS drugs to patients	13	17	24	44	1

Q.4 Now, I have a few more questions about some of the news stories that I mentioned earlier. If you're not sure of an answer, that's okay. Just tell me and I'll go to the next question.

You may have heard news about recent debates in Congress on a bill that would add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. To the best of your knowledge did Congress pass this bill, or not?

- 39 Yes, passed
- 13 No, not passed
- 49 Don't know/Refused

Q.5 Reports about a bill in Congress to ban late-term abortions, sometimes called partial-birth abortions, were also in the news recently. To the best of your knowledge, did Congress pass this bill, or not?

- 36 Yes, passed
- 17 No, not passed
- 48 Don't know/Refused

Q.6 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?

- 10 Self-employed
- 43 Full-time for an employer
- 9 Part-time for an employer
- 21 Retired
- 13 Not employed
- 1 Homemaker (**VOL.**)
- 1 Student (**VOL.**)
- 2 Disabled (**VOL.**)
- * Don't know/Refused

Q.7 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)?

- 83 Yes, insured
- 16 No, not insured
- 1 Don't know/Refused

Q.8 Thinking about the next six months, please tell me how worried are you that each of the following might happen to you. (First,) how worried are you that...?
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. You might not be able to get the health care services you think you need	22	24	22	31	1
b. The amount you pay for your health care services or health insurance will increase	32	30	14	22	2
c. You might not be able to get the health care you think you need because you can't afford it	26	20	20	33	*
d. The quality of health care services you receive will get worse	21	28	20	29	1
e. You might not be able to afford the prescription drugs you need	25	22	21	32	*
f. You might be the victim of a violent crime	11	22	29	37	1
g. You might be the victim of a terrorist attack	11	20	29	39	1
h. Your income might not keep up with rising prices	33	31	15	20	*
i. You might lose your savings in the stock market	13	15	16	54	1
j. You might not be able to pay your rent or mortgage	15	15	21	49	*
<i>Item k based on those who are employed (n=734)</i>					
k. You might lose your job	13	16	22	48	1
<i>Item l based on those who are employed and insured (n=630)</i>					
l. You will have to stay in your current job instead of taking a new job for fear of losing health benefits	13	14	19	53	1

	<u>Very worried</u>	<u>Somewhat worried</u>	<u>Not too worried</u>	<u>Not at all worried</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
<i>Items m-n based on those who are insured (n=1,042)</i>					
m. You might lose your health insurance coverage	17	19	22	42	*
n. Your HEALTH PLAN would be more concerned about saving money for the plan than about what is the best treatment for you	29	33	16	20	2

DEMOGRAPHICS:

D1. SEX

48 Male
52 Female

V1. Finally, I have just a few questions we will use to describe the people who took part in our survey...
Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you currently registered to vote at your present address?

78 Yes, registered to vote
21 No, not registered to vote
* Don't have to register (VOL.)
1 Don't know/Refused

V2. As you may know, around half the public does not vote in presidential elections. How about you- did you vote in the presidential election in 2000, when George W. Bush ran against Al Gore, Ralph Nader, and Pat Buchanan, or did you skip that one?

67 Yes, voted
31 No, did not vote
1 Don't remember
1 Refused

V3. For PRESIDENT (in 2000), did you happen to vote for...?

Based on those who voted in 2000 Presidential Election (n=890)

- 37 Al Gore, the Democrat
- 46 George W. Bush, the Republican
- 2 Ralph Nader, the Green Party candidate,
- 1 Pat Buchanan, the Reform Party candidate, OR
- 2 Someone else?
- 12 Refused

V4. Do you remember for sure whether you voted in the November 2002 congressional election in your district?

- 50 Yes, voted
- 39 No, did not vote
- 10 Don't remember
- * Refused

V5. In the 2002 election for the U.S. House of Representatives in your district, did you happen to vote for...?

Based on those who voted in 2002 Congressional Election (n=673)

- 40 The Democratic candidate,
- 39 The Republican candidate,
- 3 Some other candidate, OR
- 2 Did you choose NOT to vote for Congress?
- 16 Refused

D2. Finally, I have just a few questions we will use to describe the people who took part in our survey... In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

- 26 Republican
- 29 Democrat
- 33 Independent
- 5 No preference/Not interested in politics (VOL.)
- 1 Other party (VOL.)
- 3 Don't know
- 3 Refused

- D2. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?
 V6. Do you consider yourself a strong (Republican/Democrat) or not a very strong (Republican/Democrat)?

26 Total Republican
 13 Strong
 13 Not strong
 29 Total Democrat
 17 Strong
 13 Not Strong
 33 Independent
 12 Other/ Don't know/Refused

- D2. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?
 V7. Do you consider yourself closer to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?

38 Total Republican/Lean Republican
 26 Republican
 12 Lean Republican
 44 Total Democrat/Lean Democrat
 29 Democrat
 15 Lean Democrat
 10 Non-Lean Independent
 8 Other/ Don't know/Refused

- V8. Would you say your views in most political matters are very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?

27 Total Liberal
 8 Very liberal
 19 Somewhat liberal
 32 Moderate
 34 Total Conservative
 12 Very conservative
 23 Somewhat conservative
 7 Don't know/Refused

D3. What is the LAST grade or class that you COMPLETED in school?

- 4 None, or grade 1-8
- 11 High school incomplete (grades 9-11)
- 32 High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)
- 4 Business, technical, or vocational school AFTER high school
- 23 Some college, no 4-year degree
- 18 College graduate (B.S., B.A. or other 4-year degree)
- 8 Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a master's degree or Ph.D; law or medical school)
- * Don't know/Refused

D4. What is your age?

- 21 18-29
- 40 30-49
- 22 50-64
- 17 65+

D5. Last year -- that is, in 2002 -- what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

- 7 Less than \$10,000
- 11 \$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
- 8 \$75,000 to under \$100,000
- 7 \$100,000 to under \$200,000
- 2 \$200,000 or more
- 5 Don't know
- 11 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

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



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