



*Toplines*

***January/February 2003 Health News Index  
Survey***

**February 2003**

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### **Methodology**

The Kaiser Family Foundation *Health News Index Survey* was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health. Fieldwork was conducted by telephone by Princeton Survey Research Associates International between February 6 and February 10, 2003, among a nationally representative random sample of 1,201 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.

Q.1a What do you think are the two most important issues for the government to address?

***Based on One-Half of Respondents (n=633)*** (Total Responses)

- 12 Healthcare (NET)
- 44 Economical (NET)
- 12 Governmental/Political Issues (NET)
- 2 Unlawful (NET)
- 9 Terrorism (NET)
- 48 War (NET)
- 8 Security/Safety Concerns (NET)
- 22 Miscellaneous (NET)
- 4 Other
- 9 Don't know/Refused

*Note: percentages may add to more than 100% due to multiple responses*

Q.1b What do you think are the two most important health care issues for the government to address?<sup>1</sup>  
 Based on One-Half of Respondents (n=568)

<b>COSTS (NET)</b>	35
Cost of prescription drugs/medicines	19
Cost of health care	12
Cost of insurance/affordable insurance	7
Costs – other (incl. doctor and hospital costs)	1
<b>Seniors' issues (NET)</b>	32
Senior citizens' care/ issues (incl. Social Security)	14
Coverage of rx drugs (for elderly and disabled)	11
Medicare	10
<b>MEDICAL CONDITIONS/PROCEDURES (NET)</b>	19
Cancer/Cancer Research	10
AIDS/AIDS research/HIV	9
Medical Conditions/ Procedures – other	9
<b>ACCESS (NET)</b>	17
Universal coverage / coverage for uninsured	11
Health care availability (general)	3
Health care for the poor	1
Access to health care – other (incl. staff cutbacks and difficulties w/pre-existing conditions)	3
<b>INSURANCE COMPANY CONCERNS (NET)</b>	8
Health insurance (general)	5
HMO/Managed care concerns	3
<b>OTHER POLICY (NET)</b>	10
Children's care/issues	3
Quality of care	2
Other policy/social issues (incl. abortion, drug abuse, Medicaid, etc.)	5

*Note: "Don't know" and responses mentioned by less than .5 percent are not shown*

*Note: percentages may add to more than 100% due to multiple responses*

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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 / Refuse</u>
Protecting patients' rights in HMOs and managed care plans	67	24	3	2	3
Helping people age 65 and over pay for prescription medicines	81	15	1	2	1
Making Medicare more financially sound for future generations	80	16	1	2	1
Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance	74	18	3	2	3
Making healthcare more affordable	86	10	1	2	1

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

- 4 Protecting patients' rights in HMOs and managed care plans
- 16 Helping people age 65 and over pay for prescription medicines
- 12 Making Medicare more financially sound for future generations
- 14 Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance
- 44 Making health care more affordable
- \* Other issue is most important (VOL.)
- 5 All the same/equally important (VOL.)
- 3 None Very Important
- 1 Don't know/Refused

Q.3a Would you be willing to pay more--either in higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes--in order to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance, or not?

***Based on One-Half of Respondents (n=633)***

52 Yes  
42 No  
6 Don't know/Refused

Q.3b Would you be willing to pay FIFTY DOLLARS more per month--either in higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes--in order to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance coverage, or not?

***Based on One-Half of Respondents (n=568)***

46 Yes  
48 No  
6 Don't know/Refused

Q.3c Would you be willing to pay an extra THIRTY DOLLARS a month, or not?

***Based on those not willing to pay extra \$50 (n=276)***

24 Yes  
73 No  
3 Don't know/Refused

Q.3d Would you be willing to pay an extra FIVE DOLLARS a month, or not?

***Based on those not willing to pay extra \$30 (n=205)***

53 Yes  
46 No  
1 Don't know/Refused

- Q.3b Would you be willing to pay FIFTY DOLLARS more per month--either in higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes--in order to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance coverage, or not?
- Q.3c Would you be willing to pay an extra THIRTY DOLLARS a month, or not?
- Q.3d Would you be willing to pay an extra FIVE DOLLARS a month, or not?

***(Summary) Based on One-Half of Respondents (n=568)***

77	Willing to Pay (NET)
46	\$50
12	\$30
19	\$5
16	Not willing to Pay
7	Don't know/Refused

- Q.4 I'd like to ask you to think about uninsured Americans – that is, people with no health insurance at all. Would you say that more of them are...

39	Employed people and people from families in which someone is employed?
51	Unemployed people and people from families in which no one is employed?
11	Don't know/Refused

- Q.5 As you may know, Medicare does not currently pay for prescription drugs. Which ONE of the following three statements comes closest to your own opinion about what the federal government should do to help people age 65 and over pay for prescription drugs? Do you think the federal government should...?

4	Keep things as they are now; the Medicare program should not pay for prescription drugs
53	Expand Medicare to pay directly for part of prescription drug costs
35	Help seniors buy PRIVATE health insurance plans that would pay part of their prescription drug costs
7	Don't know/Refused

Q.6a Thinking about U.S. spending on foreign aid... Do you think the U.S. is now spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on foreign aid to developing countries?

***Based on One-Half of Respondents (n=633)***

60 Too much  
9 Too little  
21 Right amount  
11 Don't know/Refused

Q.6b Next, thinking about U.S. spending on foreign aid to deal with the problem of HIV/AIDS in developing countries such as those in Africa, Asia, and Latin America... Do you think the U.S. is now spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on foreign aid to deal with the HIV/AIDS problem in developing countries?

***Based on One-Half of Respondents (n=568)***

37 Too much  
20 Too little  
21 Right amount  
22 Don't know/Refused



Q.7 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. The U.S. war on terrorism	67	27	4	2	1
b. United Nations weapons inspections and possible U.S. military action against Iraq	66	25	6	3	1
c. Reports of an uncertain economic future in the U.S. stock market	26	33	19	22	1
d. Surgeons stage walk-outs in West Virginia hospitals	13	23	20	43	1
e. President Bush's discussions about limits on jury awards in medical malpractice lawsuits	19	28	21	31	2
f. General Electric workers go on strike to protest changes in benefits	9	18	23	49	1
g. 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Supreme Court decision Roe versus Wade	16	21	23	39	1
h. A study linking alcohol consumption to the risk of heart attacks in men	9	21	20	48	1
i. President Bush's State of the Union address	40	24	13	21	1
j. President Bush's Medicare reform proposal	21	33	22	24	1

Q.8 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.

Thinking about what you may have heard in the news recently about surgeons walking out of West Virginia hospitals, why did these surgeons decide to walk out? Is it...

- 58 Because of rising malpractice insurance premiums (correct answer)
- 6 Because they feel they are not paid enough by the hospitals
- 2 Because they want new hospital safety rules to be put in place
- 35 Don't know/Refused

Q.9 Thinking about what you have heard or seen in the news, which of the following statements best describes the reason why General Electric workers recently went on strike? Was it because they were protesting...

- 23 Increases in the amount workers are required to pay for their health insurance (correct answer)
- 8 The company's decision to decrease employer-sponsored retirement benefits
- 6 The company's decision to stop offering employees a choice of different health insurance plans
- 63 Don't know/Refused

Q.10 Thinking about what you have heard or seen in the news about President Bush's State of the Union address, did the President propose increasing the amount of money the U.S. contributes to fight AIDS in Africa, decreasing the amount the U.S. contributes to fight AIDS in Africa, or did he not talk about this in his State of the Union address?

- 35 Increasing (correct answer)
- 1 Decreasing
- 16 Did not talk about
- 48 Don't know/Refused

Q.11 Now, on another topic... A number of factors have been suggested as possible reasons for rising health care costs. For each factor I mention, please tell me whether you feel it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all in causing higher health care costs. If you do not know enough about some of these factors to have an opinion, just let me know. How important is (INSERT) as a factor in causing rising health care costs? (Next,) How about (INSERT)?

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not Very Important</u>	<u>Not At All Important</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
a. High profits made by drug companies	68	19	5	4	5
b. The use of expensive, high-tech medical equipment and expensive new drugs	45	36	7	4	8
c. The fact that most people with health insurance have no incentive to look for lower-priced doctors and services	29	32	14	13	12
d. The number of malpractice lawsuits	60	23	7	3	7
e. The amount of greed and waste that occurs in the health care system	59	22	5	3	10
f. The aging of the population	53	29	7	5	6

Q.11.1 Of those factors you said are very important in causing rising health care costs, which one do you think is the MOST important reason health care costs are rising? (Summary)

- 22 High profits made by drug companies
- 8 The use of expensive, high-tech medical equipment and expensive new drugs
- 4 The fact that most people with health insurance have no incentive to look for lower-priced doctors and services
- 21 The number of malpractice lawsuits
- 19 The amount of greed and waste that occurs in the health care system
- 12 The aging of the population
- 6 All equally important (VOL.)
- 5 None Very Important
- 3 Don't know/Refused

Q.12a Next, which political party – the Republicans or the Democrats – do you trust to do a better job handling health care?

***Based on One-Half of Respondents (n=633)***

28 The Republicans  
 36 The Democrats  
 19 Neither **(VOL.)**  
 3 Both equal **(VOL.)**  
 15 Don't know/Refused

Q.12b Next, which political party – the Democrats or the Republicans – do you trust to do a better job handling health care?

***Based on One-Half of Respondents (n=568)***

30 The Democrats  
 37 The Republicans  
 18 **(VOL.)** Neither  
 3 **(VOL.)** Both equal  
 13 Don't know/Refused

Q.13 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)?

87 Yes, insured  
 13 No, not insured  
 \* Don't know/Refused

Q.14 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	24	23	19	32	1
b. The amount you pay for your health care services or health insurance will increase	38	30	13	19	1
c. You might not be able to get the health care you think you need because you can't afford it	25	23	16	34	1
d. The quality of health care services you receive will get worse	27	30	18	24	1
e. You might not be able to afford the prescription drugs you need	26	21	20	32	*
f. You might be the victim of a violent crime	12	23	29	35	1
g. You might be the victim of a terrorist attack	19	27	22	30	1
h. Your income might not keep up with rising prices	37	31	11	21	*
i. You might lose your savings in the stock market	22	17	11	49	2
j. You might lose your job	13	13	15	53	5
k. You might not be able to pay your rent or mortgage	19	15	18	48	1
<b><i>Items l-m based on those who are insured (n=1,067)</i></b>					
l. You will have to stay in your current job instead of taking a new job for fear of losing health benefits	14	10	12	59	5
m. You might lose your health insurance coverage	18	18	19	43	1
n. Your HEALTH PLAN would be more concerned about saving money for the plan than about what is the best treatment for you	32	34	13	19	3

**DEMOGRAPHICS:****D1. RECORD RESPONDENT'S SEX:**

- 48 Male
- 52 Female

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?

- 28 Republican
- 31 Democrat
- 32 Independent
- 5 No preference/Not interested in politics (**VOL.**)
- 1 Other party (**VOL.**)
- 2 Don't know
- 2 Refused

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

- 4 None, or grade 1-8
- 10 High school incomplete (grades 9-11)
- 31 High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)
- 5 Business, technical, or vocational school AFTER high school
- 24 Some college, no 4-year degree
- 17 College graduate (B.S., B.A. or other 4-year degree)
- 9 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?

- 20 18-29
- 41 30-49
- 22 50-64
- 17 65+
- 1 Undesignated

- D4.1 Is there anyone now living in your household who is between the ages of 15 to 24 years?  
 D4.2 Is there anyone now living in your household who is between the ages of 16 to 17 years?

17 Total 15-24  
 7 16-17  
 10 No 16-17/DK  
 70 No 15-24  
 \* Don't know/Refused  
 12 Age 18-24 (not asked this Q)

- D5. Last year -- that is, in 2001 -- what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

6 Less than \$10,000  
 10 \$10,000 to under \$20,000  
 15 \$20,000 to under \$30,000  
 20 \$30,000 to under \$50,000  
 19 \$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  
 8 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**

74 White, Non Hispanic  
 25 Total Non-White  
 11 Black or African-American  
 9 Hispanic  
 2 Asian  
 2 Other or mixed race  
 2 Don't know/Refused



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