



*Toplines*

# *May/June 2003 Health News Interest Index*

June 2003

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### **Methodology**

The Kaiser Family Foundation *Health News Interest Index* 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 June 5 -8, 2003, among a nationally representative random sample of 1,210 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.

**June 2003 HEALTH NEWS INTEREST INDEX**

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 Respondents (n=603)*** (Total Responses)

- 41 Economy (NET)
- 18 War (NET)
- 15 Terrorism/National Security (NET)
- 15 Taxes/Budget (NET)
- 14 Health care (NET)
- 11 Education (NET)
- 11 Miscellaneous (NET)
- 8 Other Government Issues (NET)
- 5 Crime (NET)
- 4 Other
- 15 Don't know/Refused

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 Respondents (n=607)***

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

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

Q.2 How satisfied are you with the state of the U.S. economy today—are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the state of the economy?

- 6 Very satisfied
- 35 Somewhat satisfied
- 30 Somewhat dissatisfied
- 27 Very dissatisfied
- 2 Don't know/Refused

Q.3 Which of the following is your biggest source of personal concern about how the economy might affect you?

***Based on One-Half Respondents (n=603)***

- 24 Not being able to pay for health care
- 7 Not being able to pay your rent or mortgage
- 7 Not being able to pay your other bills
- 12 Losing money in the stock market
- 5 Rising personal debt
- 26 Losing your job
- 6 Losing job benefits
- 8 None of these (VOL.)
- 5 Other (VOL.)
- 1 Don't know/Refused

Q.4 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>
Helping people age 65 and over pay for prescription medicines	78	16	3	2	*
Making Medicare more financially sound for future generations	78	17	2	1	1
Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance	73	20	4	3	1
Lowering the cost of medical malpractice insurance for physicians	50	31	93	6	3

Q4.1 Which of the following issues you say are very important do you think is MOST important?

- 31 Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance
- 25 Helping people age 65 and over pay for prescription medicines
- 19 Making Medicare more financially sound for future generations
- 11 Lowering the cost of medical malpractice insurance for physicians
- \* Other issue is most important (VOL.)
- 8 All the same/equally important (VOL.)
- 5 None Very Important
- 1 Don't know/Refused

Q.5 Now, thinking about government regulation of the health care industry today... Please tell me if you think there is too much, not enough, or about the right amount of government regulation in each of the following areas. (First,) what about... (INSERT)? Do you think there is too much, not enough, or about the right amount of government regulation in each of the following areas?

	<u>Too Much</u>	<u>Not Enough</u>	<u>About the Right Amount</u>	<u>Don't know/Refused</u>
a. The safety of prescription medicines	12	32	48	8
b. HMOs and managed care	19	41	22	18
c. The cost of health insurance	28	50	14	8
d. The quality of care in nursing homes	5	62	20	13
e. The cost of prescription medicines	27	49	16	7
f. The quality of doctors and hospitals	10	37	45	8

Q.6 Which of the following do you think would do a better job at keeping health care costs down...?

- 46 Regulation by the federal government
- 44 Competition in the marketplace
- 4 Both (**VOL.**)
- 1 Neither (**VOL.**)
- 5 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. Military action and peace keeping efforts in Iraq	65	25	6	3	*
b. Severe storms and tornadoes in the Mid-West	33	33	17	16	*
c. Debates in Washington about President Bush's tax-cut plan	31	34	17	16	1
d. Mad Cow disease found in cattle in Canada	21	33	24	22	*
e. President Bush's proposal to spend \$15 billion dollars over 5 years to fight AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean	19	26	19	35	1
f. A recent study on the effectiveness of the Atkins Diet	13	23	20	42	2
g. A Supreme Court decision allowing the state of Maine to negotiate prices for prescription drugs	10	16	18	54	2
h. A new study examining a possible link between hormone replacement therapies and dementia	15	19	18	47	2
i. Outbreaks of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, also known as SARS in Asia and Canada	42	35	13	9	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.

As you may know, this month Congress discussed President Bush's proposal to spend \$15 billion dollars over 5 years to fight AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean. To the best of your knowledge, did Congress approve this proposal or not?

- 18 Yes, approved proposal (*correct answer*)
- 13 No, didn't approve
- 69 Don't know/Refused

Q.9 Thinking about what you have seen or heard in the news, which of the following best describes the number of people who have died worldwide as a result of Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome, also know as SARS?

- 48 Less than 1,000 (*correct answer*)
- 26 More than 1,000, but less than 5,000
- 8 More than 5,000, but less than 10,000
- 3 More than 10,000
- 15 Don't know/Refused

Q.10 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
- \* Don't know/Refused

Q.11 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	25	25	18	31	1
b. The amount you pay for your health care services or health insurance will increase	34	28	13	23	2
c. You might not be able to get the health care you think you need because you can't afford it	26	20	16	37	1
d. The quality of health care services you receive will get worse	25	28	17	28	1
e. You might not be able to afford the prescription drugs you need	26	21	16	36	*
f. You might be the victim of a violent crime	9	23	29	38	1
g. You might be the victim of a terrorist attack	9	19	25	47	*
h. Your income might not keep up with rising prices	35	30	14	20	*
i. You might lose your savings in the stock market	13	17	12	57	2
j. You might lose your job	14	15	14	54	3
k. You might not be able to pay your rent or mortgage	17	16	17	50	1
<b>Items l-n based on those who are insured (n=1,047)</b>					
l. You will have to stay in your current job instead of taking a new job for fear of losing health benefits	12	11	11	61	5

*Question 11 continued...*

m. You might lose your health insurance coverage	17	17	21	44	1
n. Your HEALTH PLAN would be more concerned about saving money for the plan than about what is the best treatment for you	29	30	15	22	3

**DEMOGRAPHICS:****D1. 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?**

- 30 Republican
- 31 Democrat
- 31 Independent
- 4 No preference/Not interested in politics (**VOL.**)
- 1 Other party (**VOL.**)
- 1 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)
- 33 High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)
- 4 Business, technical, or vocational school AFTER high school
- 24 Some college, no 4-year degree
- 16 College graduate (B.S., B.A. or other 4-year degree)
- 10 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
- 21 50-64
- 17 65+
- 1 Don't Know/Refused

D5. 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?

- 11 Self-employed
- 40 Full-time for an employer
- 11 Part-time for an employer
- 19 Retired
- 11 Not employed
- 2 Homemaker (**VOL.**)
- 2 Student (**VOL.**)
- 3 Disabled (**VOL.**)
- 1 Don't know/Refused

D6. 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.

- 9 Less than \$10,000
- 12 \$10,000 to under \$20,000
- 14 \$20,000 to under \$30,000
- 19 \$30,000 to under \$50,000
- 16 \$50,000 to under \$75,000
- 7 \$75,000 to under \$100,000
- 6 \$100,000 to under \$200,000
- 1 \$200,000 or more
- 4 Don't know
- 12 Refused

D7. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?

D8. 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

73 White, Non Hispanic

25 Total Non-White

10 Black or African-American

10 Hispanic

2 Asian

2 Other or mixed race

3 Don't know / Refused



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