



Toplines

March/April 2005 Health Poll Report Survey

April 2005

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 March 31 and April 3, 2005, among a nationally representative random sample of 1,203 adults ages 18 and older, including 273 adults ages 65 and older and 930 adults ages 18 to 64.

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.

Q1a. 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=624) (Total Net Responses)

	Apr-05
WAR/FOREIGN POLICY (NET)	25
War/Situation with Iraq	19
Foreign policy/Foreign relations	3
War (general)	2
Middle East crisis	1
World peace/Peace in the Middle East	1
ECONOMY (NET)	24
Rising gas/fuel prices	8
Unemployment	8
The economy	6
Poverty/homelessness	2
Wages	2
Housing Wages	1
SOCIAL SECURITY (NET)	21
HEALTH CARE (NET)	19
Health care/health care reform	11
Health insurance	3
Medicare	3
Prescription drug costs	2
TAXES/BUDGET (NET)	11
National budget/deficit	6
Taxes/tax reform	4
Reduce government spending	2
TERRORISM/NATIONAL SECURITY (NET)	8
National security	5
Terrorism/Sept. 11 attacks	2
War on terrorism	<1%
EDUCATION (NET)	7
CRIME (NET)	5
Crime/violence	2
Drug problems	2
OTHER GOVERNMENT ISSUES (NET)	8
Honesty in government	2
Size of government is too large	--

Note: Adds up to more than 100 percent because respondents were allowed to give more than one answer.

Q1b. 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 for the government to address?

Based on one-half of respondents (n=579)

COSTS (NET)	43
Cost of health care	19
Cost of prescription drugs/medicines	16
Cost of insurance/affordable insurance	13
Costs – other (incl. doctor and hospital costs)	2
ACCESS TO CARE AND INSURANCE (NET)	26
Universal coverage / coverage for uninsured	15
Health care availability (general)	5
Health care for the poor	3
Access to health care – other (incl. staff cutbacks and difficulties w/pre-existing conditions)	3
SENIORS' ISSUES (NET)	17
Senior citizens' care/ issues (incl. Social Security)	10
Medicare	7
Coverage of rx drugs (for elderly/Medicare)	4
MEDICAL CONDITIONS (NET)	11
Cancer/Cancer Research	4
AIDS/AIDS research/HIV	3
Medical Conditions/ Procedures – other	7
INSURANCE COMPANY CONCERNS (NET)	6
Health insurance (general)	4
HMO/Managed care concerns	2
OTHER POLICY (NET)	10
Quality of care	2
Children's care/issues	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: Adds up to more than 100 percent because respondents were allowed to give more than one answer.

Q2. 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... **(INSERT ITEM, READ & RANDOMIZE)?**

	Very <u>imp.</u>	Somewhat <u>imp.</u>	Not too <u>imp.</u>	Not at all <u>imp.</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
a. Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance	79	14	2	3	1
b. Reforming the medical malpractice system	50	31	8	5	6
c. Lowering the cost of prescription drugs	79	16	3	2	1
d. Lowering the cost of health insurance	82	13	2	2	2
e. Reducing medical errors or mistakes	66	23	6	3	2

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

- 31 Lowering the cost of health insurance
- 26 Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance
- 16 Lowering the cost of prescription drugs
- 9 Reducing medical errors or mistakes
- 8 Reforming the medical malpractice system
- * (VOL.) Other issue is most important
- 7 (VOL.) All the same/equally important
- 1 (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused
- 2 None very important

- Q3. 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)** 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	52	31	9	8	*
b. Proposals by President Bush to change the Social Security System	46	32	11	10	*
c. News reports about the case of Terri Schiavo, a disabled woman in Florida whose feeding tube was removed by doctors	57	28	8	7	*
d. Reports of a newly identified, more potent strain of HIV contracted by a man in New York	9	18	14	57	2
e. Stories about Pope John Paul II's recent hospitalization and health problems	38	34	15	13	*
f. Investigations of steroid use in Major League Baseball	15	28	25	31	1
g. Former President Bill Clinton's recent surgery following complications from open heart surgery	14	25	24	36	*
h. The debate on proposed cuts to the Medicaid program in President Bush's 2006 budget	26	30	17	26	1
i. A study which assessed the effect of aspirin on women's risk of heart attacks and stroke	16	24	19	40	1
j. Stories about a shooting at a high school in Minnesota	35	36	17	11	*

- Q3.2 Do you currently take any prescription medicine on a daily basis or not?

<u>Seniors (Ages 65+)</u>	<u>Total</u>	
86	53	Yes
14	47	No
*	*	Don't know/Refused

- Q4. As you may know, beginning in 2006 there will be a new prescription drug benefit that will give all people on Medicare the option of enrolling in a Medicare drug plan. How well would you say you understand this new benefit? Would you say you understand it very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not well at all?

<u>Seniors (Ages 65+)</u>	<u>Total</u>	
11	7	Very well
18	22	Somewhat well
30	27	Not too well
38	43	Not well at all
3	1	Don't know/Refused

- Q5. Do you feel you have enough information about the new Medicare prescription drug benefit to understand how it will impact you personally, or not?

Based on those who are 65 and older (n=273)

- 27 Yes
66 No
7 Don't know/Refused

- Q6. Thinking ahead to 2006--when the new Medicare drug benefit becomes available--do you think you will enroll in a Medicare drug plan, you will not enroll in a Medicare drug plan, or have you not yet heard enough to decide?

Based on those who are 65 and older (n=273)

- 9 Will enroll in a drug plan
37 Will not enroll in a plan
47 Haven't heard enough to decide
7 Don't know/Refused

- Q7. Given what you know about it, in general, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of this new Medicare prescription drug benefit?

<u>Seniors</u> <u>(Ages 65+)</u>	<u>Total</u>	
21	27	Favorable
34	26	Unfavorable
25	26	Neither/Neutral (VOL)
20	21	Don't know/Refused

- Q8. Please tell me if each of the following is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason you have a favorable impression of the new Medicare drug benefit. **(READ & ROTATE)**
(READ IF NECESSARY: Is this a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason you have a favorable impression?)

Based on those with favorable impression of Medicare Drug Benefit (n=309)

	<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. It is a good start and can be improved over time	69	25	3	2
b. It allows people on Medicare to choose a prescription drug plan that best meets their needs	75	20	3	3
c. It will be helpful for low-income people on Medicare	83	14	2	1
d. It will be helpful for people on Medicare with very high prescription drug bills	88	10	1	1
e. It will help pay many of the prescription drug bills for people on Medicare	78	17	3	3

- Q9. Please tell me if each of the following is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason you have an unfavorable impression of the new Medicare drug benefit. **(READ & ROTATE)**
(READ IF NECESSARY: Is this a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason you have an unfavorable impression?)

Based on those with unfavorable impression of Medicare Drug Benefit (n=336)

	<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. It will cost the government too much in the long run	33	31	29	7
b. It does not provide people on Medicare enough help with their prescription drug costs	67	14	12	7
c. It is too complicated for people on Medicare to understand	56	22	17	6
d. It will benefit private health plans and pharmaceutical companies too much	54	19	18	8

Based on those ages 65 and older with unfavorable impression of Medicare Drug Benefit (n=97)

	<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. It will cost the government too much in the long run	47	15	23	15
b. It does not provide people on Medicare enough help with their prescription drug costs	64	13	12	11
c. It is too complicated for people on Medicare to understand	59	13	15	13
d. It will benefit private health plans and pharmaceutical companies too much	67	9	13	11

- 10 I'm going to read you a list of places where people might turn to get help in deciding whether to enroll in a Medicare drug plan. For each, please tell me how likely you would be to turn to this source for help. (First/Next) How likely would you be to turn to **(INSERT, READ AND RANDOMIZE)** for help in deciding whether to enroll in a Medicare drug plan?

(READ FOR FIRST ITEM, THEN AS NECESSARY: Would you be very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely to use this source?

Based on those who are 65 and older (n=273)

	<u>Very likely</u>	<u>Somewhat likely</u>	<u>Not too likely</u>	<u>Not at all likely</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. Friends or family members	27	17	10	42	4
b. Your doctor	49	19	8	22	2
c. Your pharmacist	33	22	9	31	4
d. A local seniors' group or community organization	18	26	13	36	7
e. An employer or union	8	4	9	75	4
f. A health insurance company	21	16	14	45	4
g. A Medicare mailing, website or phone number	23	26	9	37	5
h. A Social Security office, website, or phone number	27	20	11	38	4

- Q11. How helpful do you think the new Medicare prescription drug benefit will be for the following people? (First/Next), how helpful do you think the benefit will be for **(READ ITEM)**? Will it be very helpful, somewhat helpful, not too helpful, or not at all helpful? **(READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS, ALWAYS READ ITEM “e” LAST)**

	<u>Very helpful</u>	<u>Somewhat helpful</u>	<u>Not too helpful.</u>	<u>Not at all helpful</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. A typical person on Medicare	26	39	11	5	19
b. Low-income people on Medicare	44	25	8	6	16
c. People on Medicare with very high prescription drug costs	44	27	6	6	17
d. People on Medicare who currently have no drug coverage	46	26	6	7	16

Based on those ages 65 and older (n=273)

	<u>Very helpful</u>	<u>Somewhat helpful</u>	<u>Not too helpful.</u>	<u>Not at all helpful</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. A typical person on Medicare	22	35	12	5	26
b. Low-income people on Medicare	45	25	7	5	18
c. People on Medicare with very high prescription drug costs	39	26	8	8	19
d. People on Medicare who currently have no drug coverage	45	26	5	7	18
e. You personally	21	16	12	32	20

- Q12. 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 Respondents (n=624)

77	Favor
17	Oppose
6	Don't know/Refused

- Q13. I'm going to read you a list of things some people have said about allowing Americans to buy prescription drugs imported from 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 imported from Canada **(INSERT)**. Do you agree or disagree? Is that strongly or somewhat?

Based on one-half of respondents (n=624)

	<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	15	15	26	39	5
b. Will lead U.S. drug companies to do less research and development	14	12	19	51	4
c. Will make medicines more affordable without sacrificing safety or quality	44	26	12	12	5

- Q14. If Congress changed the law to allow Americans to buy prescription drugs imported from Canada, how much do you think this would help in reducing prescription drug costs in the U.S.? Would it help a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Based on one-half of respondents (n=624)

- 42 A lot
- 37 Some
- 9 Not much
- 9 Not at all
- 3 Don't know/Refused

- Q15. Do you favor or oppose Congress 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 respondents (n=579)

- 77 Favor
- 14 Oppose
- 5 (VOL.) Neither/Neutral
- 4 Don't know/Refused

- Q16. 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.

READ FOR EACH ITEM: Some people say that allowing the federal government to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices(INSERT). Do you agree or disagree? Is that strongly or somewhat?

Based on one-half of respondents (n=579)

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. Will lead U.S. drug companies to do less research and development	13	22	30	27	8
b. Will make medicines more affordable for people on Medicare	40	38	8	8	6
c. Makes sense because the government already negotiates lower prices for the Defense Department and Veterans Administration	39	29	13	10	9

- Q17. If Congress changed the law to allow the federal government to negotiate with drug companies to try to get a lower price on prescription drugs for people on Medicare, how much do you think this would help in reducing prescription drug costs in the U.S.? Would it help a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Based on one-half of respondents (n=579)

- 31 A lot
- 48 Some
- 12 Not much
- 6 Not at all
- 4 Don't know/Refused

(READ) Now, on another topic...

- Q18. 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
- 41 Full-time for an employer
- 11 Part-time for an employer
- 20 Retired
- 9 Not employed
- 3 Homemaker (**VOL.**)
- 1 Student (**VOL.**)
- 3 Disabled (**VOL.**)
- * Don't know/Refused

- Q19. 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)

- 84 Yes, insured
- 16 No, not insured
- * Don't know/Refused

- Q20. 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	49	29	9	12	*
b. Not being able to afford the health care services you think you need	42	24	13	21	1
c. The quality of health care services you receive getting worse	32	28	15	24	1
d. Not being able to afford the prescription drugs you need	35	25	15	25	1
e. Being the victim of a violent crime	18	22	26	33	*
f. Being the victim of a terrorist attack	19	23	23	34	1
g. Your income not keeping up with rising prices	46	27	10	15	1
h. Losing your savings in the stock market	20	14	14	52	1
i. Not being able to pay your rent or mortgage	29	17	15	37	1
<i>Item J based on those who are employed (n=728)</i>					
j. Losing your job	23	15	20	42	*
<i>Item K based on those who are employed and insured (n=625)</i>					
k. Having to stay in your current job instead of taking a new job for fear of losing health benefits	21	14	18	46	2
<i>Items L-M based on those who are insured (n=1053)</i>					
l. Losing your health insurance coverage	35	17	17	30	1
m. Your HEALTH PLAN being more concerned about saving money for the plan than about what treatment is best for you	38	31	10	19	2

DEMOGRAPHICS:

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

- Q21. Have you heard of a toll-free phone number set up by the government, 1-800-MEDICARE, that you can call to get information about Medicare?

<u>Seniors</u> <u>(Ages 65+)</u>	<u>Total</u>	
53	38	Yes
45	61	No
2	1	Don't know/Refused

- Q22. Have you EVER gone online to use **(INSERT AND ROTATE ITEMS)?**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. The Internet or World Wide Web	70	30	*
b. E-Mail	65	35	*

Based on those ages 65 and older (n=273)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. The Internet or World Wide Web	29	71	1
b. E-Mail	28	72	1

- Q23. Have you heard of the website Medicare.gov?

<u>Seniors</u> <u>(Ages 65+)</u>	<u>Total</u>	
36	36	Yes
63	63	No
2	1	Don't know/Refused

D1. RECORD RESPONDENT'S SEX

49 Male
51 Female

D2. What is your age? (RECORD EXACT AGE AS TWO-DIGIT CODE.)

19 18-29
39 30-49
24 50-64
17 65 and older
1 Refused

58 Total Under 50
41 Total 50 and older

- D3. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?
- 28 Republican
 - 32 Democrat
 - 33 Independent
 - 4 **(VOL.)** No preference/Not interested in politics
 - * **(VOL.)** Other party
 - 1 Don't know
 - 2 Refused
- D4. What is the LAST grade or class that you COMPLETED in school? **(DO NOT READ)**
- 3 None, or grade 1-8
 - 10 High school incomplete (grades 9-11)
 - 34 High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)
 - 3 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)
 - 11 Post-graduate or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a Master's degree or Ph.D; law or medical school)
 - * Refused
- D5. Last year -- that is, in 2004 -- what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category. **(READ)**
- 9 Less than \$10,000
 - 12 \$10,000 to under \$20,000
 - 13 \$20,000 to under \$30,000
 - 19 \$30,000 to under \$50,000
 - 15 \$50,000 to under \$75,000
 - 10 \$75,000 to under \$100,000
 - 7 \$100,000 to under \$200,000
 - 2 \$200,000 or more
 - 4 **(DO NOT READ)** Don't know
 - 10 **(DO NOT READ)** 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? CODE AS WHITE (1) OR BLACK (2). IF RESPONDENTS REFUSED TO PICK WHITE OR BLACK HISPANIC, RECORD HISPANIC AS "OTHER," CODE 4)**

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



The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation
2400 Sand Hill Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Phone: (650) 854-9400 Fax: (650) 854-4800

Washington Office:
1330 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 347-5270 Fax: (202) 347-5274

www.kff.org

Additional copies of this publication (#7310) are available on the
Kaiser Family Foundation's website at www.kff.org.

The Kaiser Family Foundation is a non-profit, private operating foundation dedicated to providing information and analysis on health care issues to policymakers, the media, the health care community, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.