



*Toplines*

# ***November/December 2005 Health Poll Report Survey***

**December 2005**

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### **Methodology**

The Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Poll Report Survey* was conducted and analyzed by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation. A nationally representative sample of 1,202 adults ages 18 and older – including 304 adults ages 65 and older – was contacted by telephone by Princeton Survey Research Associates International between December 6 and December 11, 2005. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

The margin of sampling error for the survey is plus or minus 3 percentage points for total respondents; for respondents ages 65 and older it is plus or minus 6 percentage points. 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=599)* (Total Net Responses)

<b>WAR/FOREIGN POLICY (NET)</b>	<b>40</b>
War/Situation with Iraq	27
War (general)	13
<b>ECONOMY (NET)</b>	<b>25</b>
The economy	9
Poverty/homelessness	7
Rising gas/fuel prices	4
Unemployment	4
Wages	1
Housing	1
<b>HEALTH CARE (NET)</b>	<b>16</b>
Health care/health care reform	9
Medical/medicine/health issues	3
Health insurance	2
Medicare	2
Prescription drug costs	1
<b>TERRORISM/NATIONAL SECURITY (NET)</b>	<b>9</b>
National security	6
Terrorism/Sept. 11 attacks	3
War on terrorism	1
<b>TAXES/BUDGET (NET)</b>	<b>9</b>
National budget/deficit	4
Taxes/tax reform	4
Reduce government spending	1
<b>SOCIAL SECURITY (NET)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>EDUCATION (NET)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CRIME (NET)</b>	<b>3</b>
Crime/violence	2
Drug problems	1
<b>OTHER GOVERNMENT ISSUES (NET)</b>	<b>8</b>
Honesty in government	1

- 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=603)*

<b>COSTS (NET)</b>	<b>32</b>
Cost of health care	17
Cost of prescription drugs/medicines	11
Cost of insurance/affordable insurance	8
Costs – other (incl. doctor and hospital costs)	1
<b>ACCESS TO CARE AND INSURANCE (NET)</b>	<b>18</b>
Universal coverage / coverage for uninsured	9
Health care availability (general)	6
Health care for the poor	2
Access to health care – other (incl. staff cutbacks and difficulties w/pre-existing conditions)	2
<b>SENIORS' ISSUES (NET)</b>	<b>15</b>
Senior citizens' care/ issues (incl. Social Security)	7
Medicare	7
Coverage of rx drugs (for elderly/Medicare)	3
<b>MEDICAL CONDITIONS (NET)</b>	<b>11</b>
Cancer/Cancer Research	4
AIDS/AIDS research/HIV	4
Medical Conditions/ Procedures – other	5
<b>INSURANCE COMPANY CONCERNS (NET)</b>	<b>6</b>
Health insurance (general)	6
HMO/Managed care concerns	1
<b>OTHER POLICY (NET)</b>	<b>9</b>
Children's care/issues	2
Quality of care	2
Stem cell research	1
Too many frivolous lawsuits (malpractice suits)	1
Government should stay out of health care	1
Other policy/social issues (incl. abortion, drug abuse, Medicaid, etc.)	3

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

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/Next,) How important is this issue... **(INSERT ITEM, READ & RANDOMIZE)?**

	<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	76	14	5	3	2
b. Reforming the medical malpractice system	48	33	8	5	6
c. Lowering the cost of prescription drugs	80	14	3	2	1
d. Lowering the cost of health insurance	83	12	2	2	1
e. Reducing medical errors or mistakes	71	19	4	3	3
f. Assuring the smooth implementation of the new Medicare prescription drug benefit	53	29	6	5	7
g. Reforming the Medicaid program	54	27	5	4	10

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

- 27 Lowering the cost of health insurance
- 26 Increasing the number of Americans covered by health insurance
- 14 Lowering the cost of prescription drugs
- 8 Reducing medical errors or mistakes
- 6 Reforming the medical malpractice system
- 5 Reforming the Medicaid program
- 3 Assuring the smooth implementation of the new Medicare prescription drug benefit
- \* **(VOL.)** Other issue is most important
- 8 **(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/Next,) 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	57	27	9	7	*
b. The nomination of Samuel Alito to the United States Supreme Court	22	22	20	34	2
c. The federal government's plan to prepare for a possible outbreak of bird flu	32	37	19	11	1
d. The start of enrollment in the new Medicare prescription drug benefit	22	26	24	26	1
e. A study finding that it is possible to detect Down's Syndrome earlier in pregnancy	12	16	20	50	2
f. Ongoing lawsuits against Merck, maker of the pain medication Vioxx	18	25	24	31	1
g. A government report investigating the FDA's decision to not allow over-the-counter sales of the Morning After Pill	19	22	23	34	2

Q4. As you may know, beginning in 2006 there will be a new prescription drug benefit for people on Medicare. 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>Total</u>	<u>Ages 65+</u>	
9	16	Very well
21	23	Somewhat well
27	25	Not too well
41	34	Not well at all
2	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 65 and older (n=334)*

40	Yes
54	No
5	Don't know/Refused

Q6. Given what you know about it, in general, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of this new Medicare prescription drug benefit?

<u>Total</u>	<u>Ages 65+</u>	
28	28	Favorable
37	50	Unfavorable
24	16	Neither/Neutral (VOL.)
10	7	Don't know/Refused

Q7. Thinking ahead, 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 65 and older (n=334)***

- 28 Will enroll in a drug plan
- 35 Will not enroll in a plan
- 29 Haven't heard enough to decide
- 6 Already enrolled (VOL.)
- 3 Don't know/Refused

Q8. Now thinking about your own health status. In general, would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

- 22 Excellent
- 37 Very good
- 23 Good
- 11 Fair
- 5 Poor
- 1 Don't know/Refused

Q9. Do you currently take any prescription medicine on a daily basis, or not?

Q10. How many different prescription drugs do you take?

- 50 Yes, take prescription medicine
- 32 1-3 prescription medicines
- 18 4 or more prescription medicines
- 1 Don't know how many
- 49 Don't take any prescription medicine
- 1 Don't know/Refused

Q11. Do you currently have any insurance plan or program that helps you pay for prescription medications or not?

- 76 Yes
- 23 No
- 1 Don't know/Refused

Q12. 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
- 39 Full-time for an employer
- 11 Part-time for an employer
- 20 Retired
- 13 Not employed
- 2 **(VOL.)** Homemaker
- 1 **(VOL.)** Student
- 3 **(VOL.)** Disabled
- 1 **(DO NOT READ)** Don't know/Refused

Q13. 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)

- 82 Yes, insured
- 17 No, not insured
- 1 Don't know/Refused



**DEMOGRAPHICS:**

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

**D1. RECORD RESPONDENT'S SEX**

- 49 Male
- 51 Female

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

- 18 18-29
- 41 30-49
- 23 50-64
- 17 65 and older
- 1 Refused

**D3. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?**

- 26 Republican
- 34 Democrat
- 31 Independent
- 5 **(VOL.)** No preference/Not interested in politics
- 1 **(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
- 11 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)
- 17 College graduate (B.S., B.A., or other four-year degree)
- 9 Post-graduate or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a Master's degree or Ph.D; law or medical school)
- 1 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)**

- 7 Less than \$10,000
- 9 \$10,000 to under \$20,000
- 11 \$20,000 to under \$30,000
- 20 \$30,000 to under \$50,000
- 18 \$50,000 to under \$75,000
- 9 \$75,000 to under \$100,000
- 7 \$100,000 to under \$200,000
- 1 \$200,000 or more
- 6 **(DO NOT READ)** Don't know
- 12 **(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?)**

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



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