



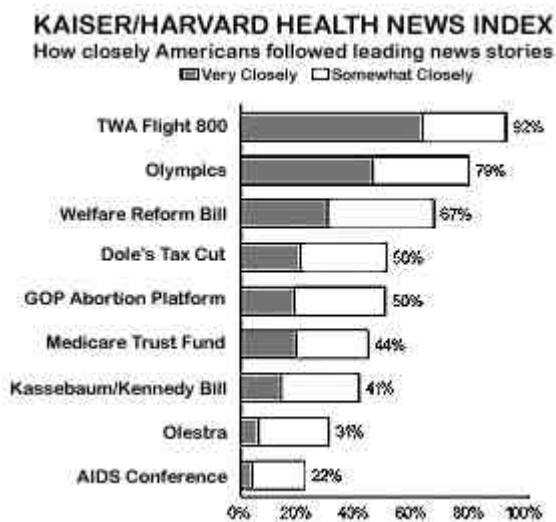
## The Kaiser/Harvard Health News Index

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August 1996

The Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard Health News Index is designed to help the news media and people in the health care field gain a better understanding of what health stories in the news Americans are following and what they understand about these issues.

Every two months, Kaiser/Harvard will issue a new index report. This first report is based on a survey of 1,003 American adults. The survey asked respondents about major health issues covered in the news between June 1 and August 5, 1996. For comparison purposes, respondents were also asked about other leading issues in the news during the same period.



### News Stories Followed by The Public

The health-related policy issue that Americans reported following most closely was welfare reform, with 67% following it very or somewhat closely. By comparison, 92% said they followed the crash of TWA flight 800, and nearly 80% followed the Olympics. Half of Americans (50%) followed the news about Presidential candidate Bob Dole's tax cut, which was announced just prior to this survey being

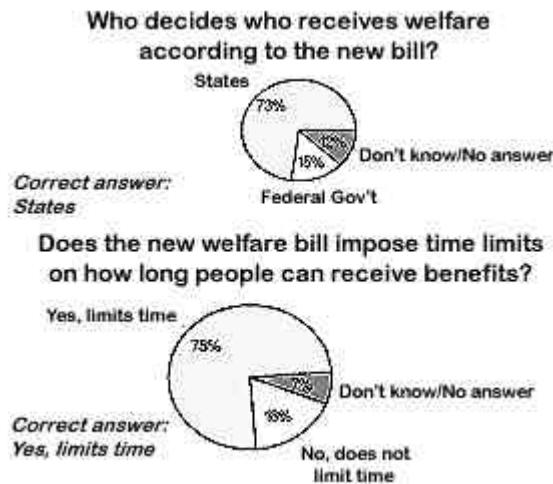
conducted. The same proportion followed the Republican Party's discussion over the abortion plank in its platform.

Less than half (44%) said they followed the announcement of the financial condition of the Medicare Trust Fund. Forty-one percent reported following the Kassebaum/Kennedy bill and about one in five (22%) followed the International AIDS Conference in Vancouver, Canada.

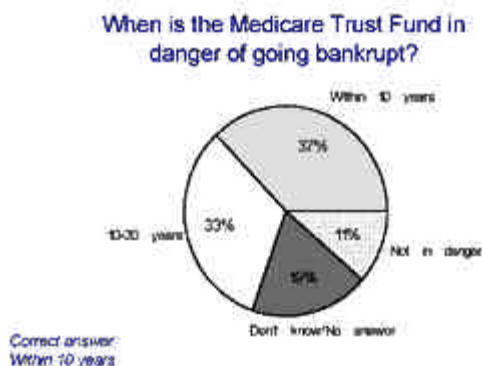
Three in ten (31%) Americans said they followed the top personal health/lifestyle story covered during this period, Olestra, an artificial fat substitute.

## Public Knowledge

*Welfare:* Most Americans understood the basic elements of the welfare reform bill. Three in four knew that states will decide who receives welfare and that there will be a limit on the amount of time recipients can receive benefits over their lifetime.



*Medicare:* Seven in ten Americans knew that the Medicare Trust Fund is in danger of going bankrupt. Only two in five knew that it is projected to go bankrupt within ten years (in 2001).



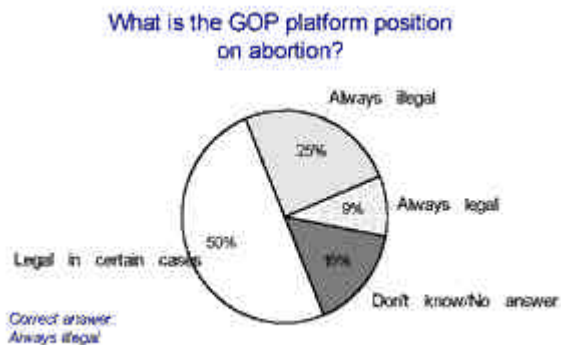
*Tobacco:* Nearly two out of five Americans knew the FDA is considering regulating nicotine as a drug. One-fifth (22%) thought the FDA is considering no action; nearly the same number (21%) thought the FDA wants to raise taxes on cigarettes.



*AIDS:* Two-thirds of Americans knew that the new drug "cocktail" announced at the International AIDS Conference is a treatment to make people with the disease less sick. One third didn't know (25%) or thought that it could cure AIDS (8%).

*Abortion:* Most Americans thought the abortion plank in the Republican platform is more liberal than it is. Only one quarter (25%) knew the platform calls for a Constitutional

Amendment making abortion illegal in all cases. (Note: survey conducted before the Republican convention.)



The Kaiser/Harvard Health News Index is based on a national random sample survey of 1,003 Americans conducted August 5-7, 1996, to measure Americans' interest in and knowledge of health stories covered by the news media over the prior two months. The survey was designed and analyzed jointly by the staff of the Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University and conducted by

#### Americans' knowledge of current health issues (% who gave correct answer)

Welfare reform bill sets time limit	75%
Welfare reform bill lets states decide who receives welfare	73%
The Medicare Trust Fund is going bankrupt	70%
AIDS "cocktail" is a treatment to keep people with AIDS from being so sick	66%
FDA is considering regulating nicotine as a drug	38%
The Medicare Trust Fund will be bankrupt within 10 years	37%
GOP platform position is that abortion should be illegal in all cases	25%

Market Facts, Inc. The margin of error is  $\pm 3.5\%$ .