

Research!America
National Public Opinion Survey
January 22-25, 2021

1. Please indicate which of the following should be the top FIVE priorities for President Biden's and the new Congress first 100 days in office. (Choose 5)

Top 5:

Ending the COVID-19 pandemic	69%
Assuring economic stability and growth	49%
Growing jobs	45%
Unifying the country	42%
Reducing health care costs	37%

2. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

	A great deal	Some	Not much	None at all	Not sure
Military	59%	26%	8%	4%	4%
Police	42%	30%	17%	8%	3%
Small business	39%	43%	10%	4%	4%
Research institutions	33%	44%	13%	7%	4%
The church/organized religion	32%	33%	19%	13%	4%
U.S. Supreme Court	27%	37%	22%	10%	4%
Colleges and universities	26%	38%	23%	9%	4%
Public K-12 schools	25%	44%	20%	7%	4%
Your state government	24%	37%	22%	15%	3%
Large technology companies	21%	35%	26%	14%	4%
E The federal government	19%	32%	29%	16%	4%

3. How important is investing in research to each of the following?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	Not sure
Economic recovery	68%	25%	4%	1%	3%
Job creation	67%	24%	4%	2%	3%
Economic growth	65%	24%	6%	2%	3%
Finding new ways of preventing, treating and curing illnesses	62%	29%	4%	2%	3%
Safety and availability of clean water	60%	30%	5%	2%	3%
Food security	59%	30%	6%	2%	3%
Preventing the next pandemic	59%	27%	8%	3%	3%
Maintaining U.S. standing in global economic competitiveness	54%	32%	7%	2%	5%
Addressing the threat of climate change	48%	29%	12%	7%	4%

4. In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits all, most, some, or very few people in this country?

	January 2021	August 2020
All	32%	39%
Most	39%	37%
Some	22%	18%
Very few	5%	3%
Not sure	3%	3%

5. In general, to what extent do you think the work that scientists do benefits you?

	January 2021	August 2020
To a great extent	41%	55%
Somewhat	42%	33%
A little	13%	8%
Not sure	5%	4%

6. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Even if it brings no immediate benefits, basic scientific research that advances the frontiers of knowledge is necessary and should be supported by the federal government.

	January 2021	Aug 2020	Jan 2020	Jan 2019
Strongly agree	46%	47%	50%	40%
Somewhat agree	39%	30%	36%	40%
Somewhat disagree	8%	12%	5%	6%
Strongly disagree	2%	3%	2%	3%
Not sure	5%	8%	5%	10%

7. Can you name a living scientist?

	January 2021	August 2020	Jan 2020	Jan 2019
Yes	27%	29%	25%	20%
No/Not Sure	73%	71%	75%	80%

Of those who said “yes”

Anthony Fauci	35%
Neil Degrasse Tyson	7%
Bill Nye	5%
Timothy Berners-Lee	3%
Michio Kaku	3%
Steven Hawking*	2%
Alain Aspect	2%
Jane Goodall	2%
Other	42%

*deceased

(Dr. Fauci up to 35% from 24% in August)

8. How important is it for scientists to inform elected officials about their research and its impact on society?

	January 2021	Aug 2020	Jan 2020
Very important	59%	54%	51%
Somewhat important	30%	27%	34%
Not very important	5%	8%	7%
Not at all important	1%	4%	1%
Not sure	4%	8%	7%

9. How important is it for scientists to inform the public about their research and its impact on society?

	January 2021	Aug 2020	Jan 2020
Very important	59%	56%	55%
Somewhat important	32%	27%	34%
Not very important	5%	7%	4%
Not at all important	1%	4%	2%
Not sure	3%	6%	5%

10. What would you say is the single most important health issue facing the nation? (Choose one)

COVID-19	52%
Cost of health care	8%
Cancer	8%
Substance abuse/opioid abuse/drug abuse	8%
Mental health	6%
Diabetes	4%
Obesity	3%
Heart disease	3%
Not sure	3%
Gun violence	3%
HIV/AIDS	2%
Suicide	1%
Alzheimer's disease	1%
Other (specify)	1%

11. What would you say is the second most important health issue facing the nation? (Choose one)

Top choices:

Cost of health care	16%
Cancer	14%
COVID-19	13%
Mental health	12%
Substance abuse/opioid abuse/drug abuse	11%

12. Do you favor or oppose doubling federal spending on medical research over the next five years?

	January 2021	January 2020	January 2019
Strongly favor	34%	38%	29%
Somewhat favor	41%	38%	41%
Somewhat oppose	12%	8%	10%
Strongly oppose	5%	5%	5%
Not sure	8%	12%	15%

13. Would you be willing to pay \$1 per week more in taxes if you were certain that all of the money would be spent on additional medical research?

	January 2021	January 2020	January 2019
Yes	63%	68%	53%
No	21%	17%	25%
Not sure	15%	15%	22%

14. Do you believe the United States has the best health care system in the world?

	January 2021	January 2020	January 2019
Yes	39%	37%	21%
No	45%	46%	61%
Not sure	16%	17%	18%

15. How important do you think it is that the U.S. is a global leader in research to improve health?

	January 2021	October 2018	January 2017
Very important	54%	67%	65%
Somewhat important	34%	26%	26%
Not too important	7%	3%	3%
Not at all important	2%	1%	2%
Not sure	4%	2%	5%

16. How important is it for President Biden and the new Congress to assign a higher priority to ensuring faster medical progress?

Very important	54%
Somewhat important	31%
Not too important	7%
Not at all important	4%
Not sure	5%

17. In thinking about threats to your health, how important is it that elected officials at all levels listen to advice from scientists?

	January 2021	January 2020
Very important	58%	54%
Somewhat important	30%	36%

Not too important	6%	4%
Not at all important	2%	1%
Not sure	4%	6%

18. In thinking about threats to your health, how important is it that elected officials at all levels listen to advice from public health professionals?

	January 2021	January 2020
Very important	58%	57%
Somewhat important	29%	32%
Not too important	5%	4%
Not at all important	3%	2%
Not sure	4%	5%

19. How much confidence do you have in each of the following to act in your best interest:

	A great deal	Some	Not much	None at all	Not sure
Nurses	57%	28%	8%	4%	5%
Doctors	55%	31%	8%	3%	3%
Scientists	48%	32%	10%	6%	4%
Public health officials	40%	38%	13%	6%	3%
Police officers	39%	33%	15%	10%	3%
Military leaders	38%	35%	17%	7%	4%
Religious leaders	32%	30%	19%	16%	4%
Public school principals (K-12)	27%	40%	19%	9%	4%
College and university professors	26%	38%	21%	13%	4%
Business leaders	22%	36%	26%	12%	5%
Elected officials	19%	31%	30%	17%	3%

20. Which statement is closest to your view? Statement A: The COVID-19 pandemic is a disruptive event and requires that the United States assign a higher priority to science and technology. Statement B: Things will get back to normal soon; we don't need increased efforts in science.

Statement A: The COVID-19 pandemic is a disruptive event and requires that the United States assign a higher priority to science and technology.	73%
Statement B: Things will get back to normal soon; we don't need increased efforts in science.	18%
Not sure	8%

21. Which statement is closest to your view? Statement A: The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that major changes are needed in our public health systems, including more funding. Statement B: The COVID-19 pandemic is a once-in-a-lifetime event and existing systems are dealing with it adequately.

Statement A: The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that major changes are needed in our public health systems, including more funding.	70%
Statement B: The COVID-19 pandemic is a once-in-a-lifetime event and existing systems are dealing with it adequately.	22%

Not sure	8%
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22. There has been a great deal more attention to science during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some people say that science in general is now more trusted because of this heightened awareness; others disagree. Which would you say applies to you?

I have more trust in science than I did a year ago	46%
I have less trust in science than I did a year ago	18%
There has been no change in my level of trust in science	37%

23. Can you name any institution, company or organization where medical or health research is conducted?

	January 2021	January 2020
Yes (specify)	46%	53%
No/Not sure	54%	47%

Of those who said “yes”

Pfizer	14%
CDC	11%
Mayo Clinic	9%
Johns Hopkins University	7%
WHO	5%
NIH	5%
Johnson & Johnson	3%
Moderna	3%
St. Jude's	3%
Harvard	1%
Astra Zeneca	1%
Cleveland Clinic	1%
Duke University	1%
Other	37%

24. To the best of your knowledge, would you say that medical research in the U.S. is conducted in all 50 states?

	January 2021	January 2020
Yes	43%	34%
No	25%	31%
Not sure	32%	36%

25. How much, if at all, do you think climate change is currently harming:

	Strongly, yes	Somewhat, yes	Somewhat, no	Strongly, no	Not sure
Your own health	32%	26%	18%	18%	7%
The health of people in your household	25%	31%	19%	18%	8%

The health of Americans	30%	33%	18%	14%	7%
The health of people worldwide	33%	34%	13%	12%	8%

26. How much, if at all, do you think climate change will harm the following, in the next ten years:

	A great deal	A moderate amount	Only a little	Not at all	Not sure
Your own health	40%	26%	15%	14%	7%
The health of people in your household	31%	31%	16%	14%	8%
The health of Americans	36%	29%	15%	12%	7%
The health of people worldwide	39%	29%	13%	11%	8%

27. Studies show that in addition to increased risk from COVID-19, some health problems such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and infant mortality happen more often among certain minorities or citizens with lower incomes. How important do you feel it is to conduct medical or health research to understand and eliminate these disparities?

Very important	53%
Somewhat important	33%
Not very important	6%
Not at all important	3%
Not sure	5%

28. For the following, please indicate your willingness to share your personal health information, assuming that appropriate privacy protections are in place.

	Yes	No	Not Sure
To advance medical research	77%	12%	11%
So researchers can better understand diseases and develop new ways to prevent, treat and cure them	70%	16%	12%
So health care providers can improve patient care	71%	16%	13%
So public health officials can better track disease and disability and the causes	67%	18%	15%

No significant changes since January 2020

29. To the best of your knowledge, how essential was publicly funded research to the development of COVID-19 vaccines?

Very essential	56%
Somewhat essential	25%
Not too essential	7%
Not at all essential	3%
Not sure	10%

30. To the best of your knowledge, how essential was private sector funded research to the development of COVID-19 vaccines?

Very essential	54%
Somewhat essential	27%

Not too essential	5%
Not at all essential	3%
Not sure	12%

31. One kind of medical research is often referred to as a clinical trial. In this, volunteers choose to participate to test the safety and effectiveness of certain treatments, drugs, or devices. Have you ever heard of a clinical trial?

Yes	78%
No	14%
Not sure	8%

No significant change since 2017.

32. Have you or anyone in your family ever participated in clinical trials?

Yes	19%
No	74%
Not sure	7%

No significant change since 2017.

33. If your doctor found a clinical trial for you and recommended you join, how likely would you be to participate in a clinical trial?

	January 2021	August 2017
Very likely	30%	37%
Somewhat likely	38%	44%
Not likely	12%	7%
Would not participate	10%	3%
Not sure	10%	9%

34. Some governments have a goal to spend 3%-5% of GDP on research and development. Some, including Japan and Korea, have already met this goal, and others, including China, have pledged to do so. How important do you think it is for the U.S. to achieve this goal?

Very important	48%
Somewhat important	32%
Not very important	7%
Not at all important	4%
Not sure	10%

No significant changes since August 2020 or August 2010.

35. As you may know, the federal government provides public funds on a competitive basis to universities to conduct basic scientific research. Do you approve or disapprove of the federal government spending to sponsor scientific research at universities?

Strongly approve	40%
Somewhat approve	39%
Somewhat disapprove	8%
Strongly disapprove	4%

Not sure	9%
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36. How important is it that your state continues to support science and engineering research at state universities?

Very important	51%
Somewhat important	33%
Not too important	8%
Not at all important	3%
Not sure	5%

37. Do you agree or disagree the federal government should assign a higher priority to improving education focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics and careers in those fields?

	January 2021	August 2020	2017
Strongly agree	46%	46%	33%
Somewhat agree	38%	34%	36%
Somewhat disagree	7%	9%	10%
Strongly disagree	3%	3%	4%
Not sure	7%	8%	17%

38. If offered a COVID-19 vaccine, how likely are you to be vaccinated based on the following factors?

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not very likely	Not at all	Not sure
Your doctor recommended it	57%	20%	9%	10%	4%
It is described as being 95% effective	48%	24%	11%	12%	5%
It was FDA-approved	45%	25%	12%	13%	6%
The CDC recommended it	40%	29%	12%	13%	5%
A nurse recommended it	39%	29%	15%	13%	5%
Dr. Fauci recommended it	38%	23%	16%	17%	6%
A local or state public health official recommended it	35%	28%	16%	15%	5%
A family member recommended it	34%	29%	17%	14%	5%
Joe Biden recommended it	32%	21%	18%	23%	6%
It is described as being 75% effective	25%	48%	11%	12%	5%
Donald Trump recommended it	24%	20%	18%	30%	8%
I saw an advertisement on television	20%	19%	22%	30%	8%
A connection on social media recommended it	17%	19%	21%	36%	8%
A celebrity I trust recommended it	17%	19%	21%	36%	7%

39. Please indicate the extent to which you agree that opioid abuse and addiction is a major problem in your community.

	January 2021	January 2020
Strongly agree	43%	50%
Somewhat agree	33%	29%
Somewhat disagree	10%	9%

Strongly disagree	5%	4%
Not sure	8%	8%

40. In the past year, do you think the problem of people being addicted to opioids in your community has gotten better, gotten worse, or remained about the same?

Gotten better	20%
Gotten worse	34%
Remained the same	29%
Not sure	16%

41. Should ensuring universal access to broadband in the United States be an urgent, high, medium, or low priority or not a priority?

Urgent	19%
High priority	34%
Medium	25%
Low priority	8%
Not a priority	5%
Not sure	9%

42. Do you believe the use of embryonic stem cells is necessary for progress in human health?

	January 2021	January 2020
Yes	48%	54%
No	17%	18%
Not sure	35%	28%