

Research!America has been gauging public opinion on Americans' attitudes toward medical, health and scientific research since 1992. Results of our recent Louisiana state poll show that mental and public health issues are of great importance to residents, particularly following the hurricanes of 2005. Louisianans support greater investment in medical and health research and state and local health departments.

LEADERSHIP IN RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT TO LOUISIANA RESIDENTS

Eighty-four percent of Louisiana residents say that it is very important for the state to be a leader in medical and health research. Louisiana should also take a lead in education with 91% saying it is very important followed by oil and energy (83%), agriculture (77%) and tourism (60%). However, only 32% of residents say that Louisiana is currently very much a leader in medical and health research and even fewer (27%) say the state leads in education (Figure 1). Most residents identified Louisiana as a leader in agriculture (70%), oil and energy (59%) and tourism (52%).

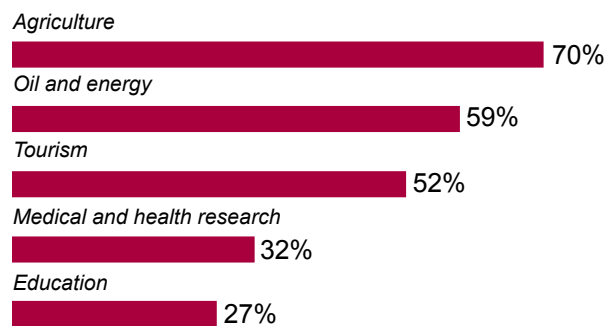
MENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH IN LOUISIANA

Sixty-four percent of Louisianans say that the hurricanes of 2005 had an effect on the health of people living in their community, but only 39% say that the hurricanes had an effect on their personal health.

When thinking about all health impacts from the hurricanes, residents mention mental health issues, such as increased anxiety, stress and depression, most often (20%), followed by destroyed homes/property (16%), wind/roof damage (15%) and making people sick (8%). A majority of Louisianans (53%) say that the hurricanes had an effect on the mental health of people living in their neighborhood or community (Figure 2).

Louisiana as a Leader

What is your opinion as to whether or not Louisiana is a leader in any of the following enterprises?
(% saying "very much a leader")

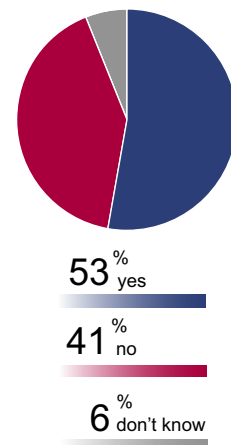


Source: Louisiana Survey, 2008
Charlton Research Company for Research!America

Figure 1

Hurricanes Affected Mental Health of Many Louisianans

Did the hurricanes have an effect on the mental health of people living in your neighborhood or community?

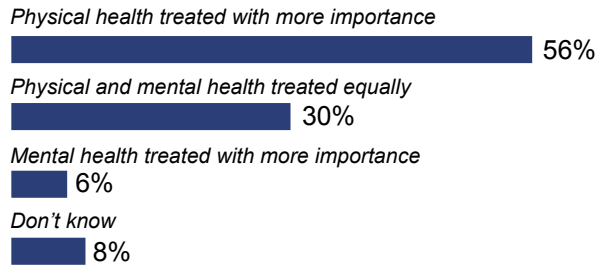


Source: Louisiana Survey, 2008
Charlton Research Company for Research!America

Figure 2

Physical and Mental Health NOT Treated with Equal Importance

Do you think our health care system treats mental health and physical health the same?



Source: Louisiana Survey, 2008
Charlton Research Company for Research!America Figure 3

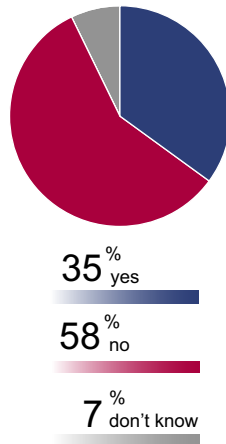
A significant portion of residents (41%) say they know someone who has used the mental health services available in the community. On a more personal level, 6% say they felt a need to get counseling and got it and another 8% say they needed counseling but did not get it. About a third of residents (31%) say that the hurricanes affected them but they did not need counseling and half say that the hurricanes did not have a big effect on them.

More than two-thirds of Louisianans (68%) think that people feel ashamed or embarrassed if they are dealing with a mental health or psychological problem. A majority (69%) think that people who survived the hurricanes have developed new skills for coping with disaster.

A large majority (87%) say that mental and physical health are equally important. Only a few identified physical health (8%) or mental health (4%) as being more important than the other. A reason for this may be that 88% of Louisianans say that a person's mental and physical health are linked. It is important to fund research to find out about the connection between mental and physical health according to 96% of Louisiana residents. Despite the strong support for this connection, a majority (56%) say that physical health is treated with more importance in our health care system (Figure 3). Less than one-third (30%) say that the system treats physical and mental health with equal importance and only 6% say mental health is treated with more importance.

Many Say Mental Health Resources Are Inadequate

Do you feel there are enough resources, like specialized health care and medicines, in your community today for people who need mental health services?



Source: Louisiana Survey, 2008
Charlton Research Company for Research!America Figure 4

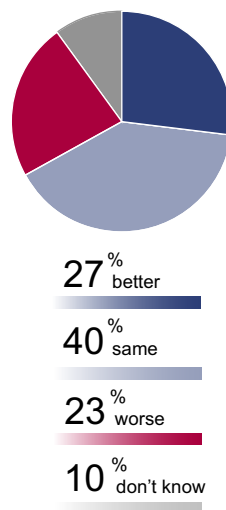
ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY

In terms of providing care for those who need mental health services, 58% of Louisianans say that there are not enough resources, like specialized health care and medicines, in their community today while 35% say they are adequate (Figure 4).

Forty percent of residents think that access to mental health services such as counseling is generally

Access to Mental Health Services

Please tell me if you think access to mental health services such as counseling is generally getting better, getting worse, or staying the same in Louisiana?



Source: Louisiana Survey, 2008
Charlton Research Company for Research!America Figure 5

staying the same, 27% say things are getting better and 23% say they are getting worse (Figure 5).

Few can name organizations that have contributed to improving health in Louisiana with 70% unable to identify a single one. The only organization mentioned by more than 5% of residents was the Red Cross (7%). However, Louisianans acknowledge the importance of hospitals (92%), volunteers (92%), health care professionals (91%), religious organizations (90%) and the business community (88%) to improving health conditions in Louisiana since the hurricanes (Figure 6).

Only one-fifth of residents (20%) say that there was a time after the hurricanes when they needed their health records but had trouble getting them. However, most (82%) think that it would be useful if health records were not only on paper but also available on the computer, including 59% who say it would be very useful.

IMPORTANT TO INVEST IN HEALTH AND RESEARCH

Ninety-three percent of Louisianans think that medical and health research is important to the state economy, with 67% saying it is very important (Figure 7). Specifically thinking about research designed to help Americans deal with mental health issues, 95% say it is very important for the U.S. to invest in this field (Figure 8). Majorities also say it is important for the U.S. to educate and train people to do medical and health research (97%) and to protect the community's health as public health professionals (96%).

A large majority (83%) would support increasing federal funding for state and local health departments that are expected to prepare for and respond to threats to our health. Ninety-five percent say it is important for elected officials to listen to advice from scientists and public health professionals when threats to our health occur, including 68% who say it is very important.

Groups Improving Health After Hurricanes

How important have each of the following groups been to improving health conditions in Louisiana since the hurricanes? (% saying "very important")

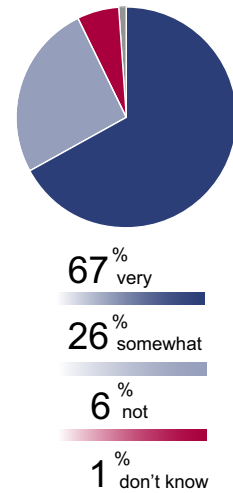


Source: Louisiana Survey, 2008
Charlton Research Company for Research!America

Figure 6

Medical and Health Research Important to Louisiana Economy

How important do you think medical and health research is to the economy of Louisiana?

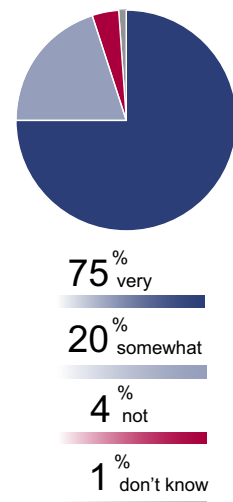


Source: Louisiana Survey, 2008
Charlton Research Company for Research!America

Figure 7

Important to Invest in Mental Health Research

How important is it for the U.S. to invest in research designed to help Americans deal with mental health issues?



Source: Louisiana Survey, 2008
Charlton Research Company for Research!America

Figure 8

METHODOLOGY

Research!America has been gauging public opinion on attitudes toward health-related research since 1992. Research!America and Pfizer recently commissioned a poll on Louisianans' attitudes on mental and public health and research as part of the *Mental and Public Health in Concert: Voices from Louisiana* program.

Charlton Research Company conducted a telephone survey among 800 adults (18 and older) in Louisiana. Random-digit dialing methodology was used and only residential numbers were included in the sample. The sample was proportionate to the state's demographics, including geography, gender and ethnicity. The survey, fielded in April 2008, has a theoretical sampling error of $\pm 3.5\%$.

ABOUT RESEARCH!AMERICA

Research!America is the nation's largest not-for-profit public education and advocacy alliance working to make research to improve health a higher national priority. Founded in 1989, Research!America is supported by more than 500 member organizations that represent the voices of 125 million Americans. For more information, see www.researchamerica.org.

ABOUT PFIZER

Pfizer Inc, founded in 1849, is dedicated to better health and greater access to health care for people and their valued animals. Every day, approximately 87,000 colleagues in more than 150 countries work to discover, develop, manufacture and deliver quality, safe and effective prescription medicines to patients. For more information, visit www.pfizer.com.



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