

OHIO RESIDENTS SPEAK OUT ON RESEARCH

A Public Opinion Study for Research!America

Summer 2001

Research!America has been gauging public opinion on people's attitudes toward medical, health and scientific research since 1992. Research!America's poll in Ohio brings the total number of states surveyed to more than thirty-five. Results show a high level of support and value for research both in the public and private sector, particularly as it impacts the state's health, education and economy. These poll responses indicate there is an overwhelming belief in Ohio that medical, health, science and engineering research are important and are a high priority for the citizens of this state.

OHIO'S ROLE IN MEDICAL, HEALTH AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IS A HIGH PRIORITY

In terms of priorities for their state, 92% of Ohioans say funding to train medical students and other health professionals is an important priority, and 91% say funding for science research and engineering is important.

Medical research is clearly a priority to Ohio residents, even when compared with several other national priorities (*see figure 1*). In fact, 98% say this is an important priority; more than any other issue. Residents consider the next highest priority to be strengthening education programs for children. Spending more money for science and engineering research ranks third, and solidifying Social Security and Medicare is a close fourth. Residents consider tax cuts to be a slightly lower priority, and developing a missile defense system ranks as the lowest priority of those tested.

Similarly, 99% say it is important that the United States maintains its role as a world leader in scientific research, with 89% saying this is very important (*see figure 2*). Four-in-five Ohio residents also agree that even if it brings no immediate benefits, basic science research which advances the frontiers of knowledge is necessary and should be supported by the federal government. In fact, 51% strongly agree and 32% somewhat agree.

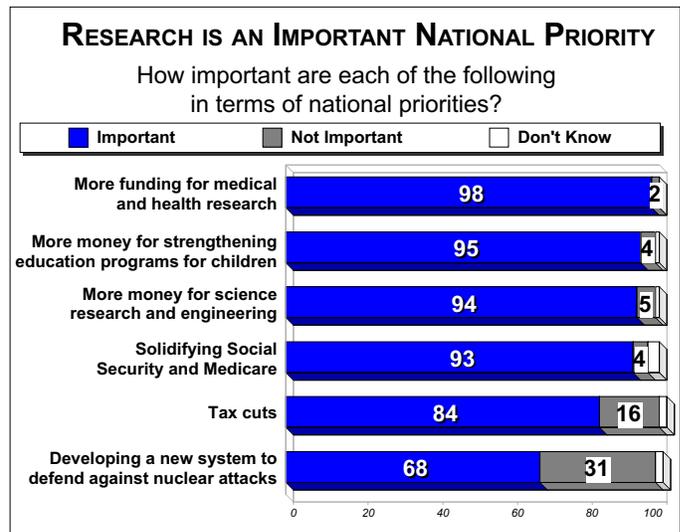


figure 1

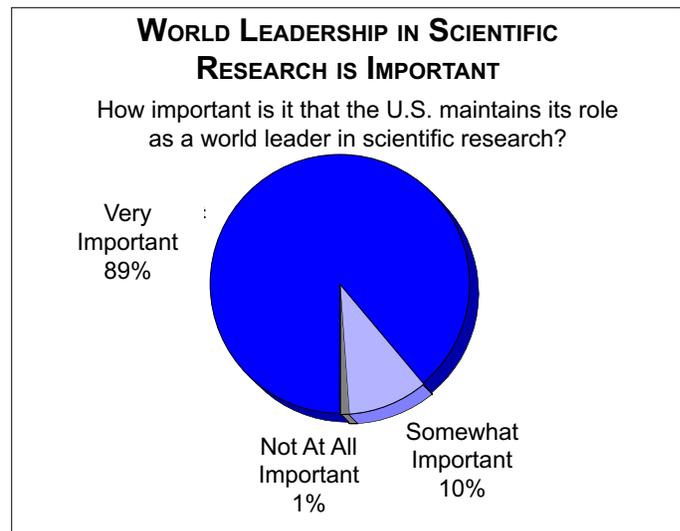


figure 2

LEADERSHIP IN MEDICAL RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT TO OHIO

When asked if they feel the state of Ohio should be a leader in medical research, 75% say leadership is very important and 22% say it is somewhat important. However, while most feel Ohio should be a leader, only 52% say Ohio is very much a leader. Thirty-three percent say the state is somewhat a leader, and 8% say the state is not a leader. *Respondents ages 65 or older are more likely to believe Ohio currently is a leader in medical or health research.*

Furthermore, a large majority of residents feel it is important for Ohio to be a leader in specific areas of medical research. Ninety-six percent feel Ohio's leadership in heart disease and stroke research is important (75% very important), while 95% say leadership in Cancer research is important for the state (72% very important).

Additionally, a majority of residents (84%) are more likely to think a hospital is a good one if it is conducting research and training medical students and other health professionals (*see figure 3*).

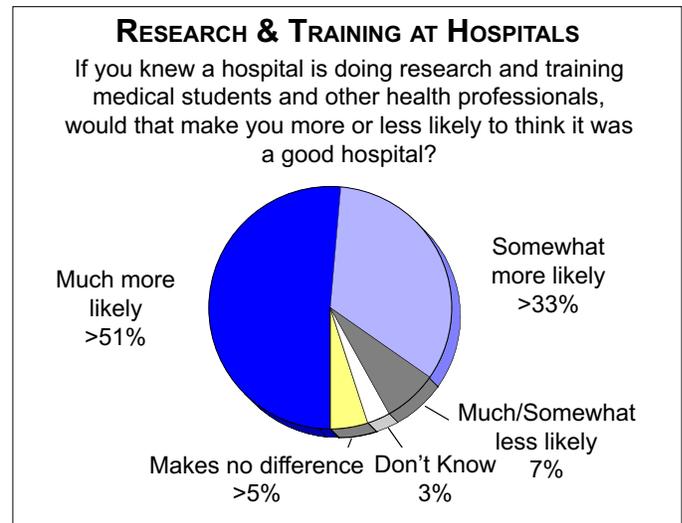


figure 3

MEDICAL AND SCIENCE RESEARCH ARE IMPORTANT TO OHIO'S ECONOMY

Thinking in terms of jobs, incomes, and quality of life, 94% of Ohio residents feel that spending money on medical and health research is important to the state's economy. About half (51%) feel spending on medical and health research is very important to Ohio's economy, and another 43% feel it is somewhat important. Additionally, 93% say conducting medical and health research at public universities is important to Ohio's economy, with 49% saying this is very important and 44% saying it is somewhat important. A majority of 89% also say science and technology research conducted at public universities is important to Ohio's economy.

Residents also feel it is important that Ohio contribute to science and technology research in several ways. New initiatives for funding research rank high, as 81% feel it is important for the state to allow bond money to be used for medical and health research, and 36% say this is very important. Ranking slightly higher than bonds was tax revenue, as 86% feel it is important for the state to use current tax revenue to further develop high-tech industries in the state, with 35% saying this is very important. Seventy-nine percent believe it is important for Ohio to use excess tax revenue to further develop science and technology in public universities. Expanding lottery and gaming gained much less support as an additional revenue stream for research, with half of all respondents saying such an initiative is unimportant. (*see figure 4*).

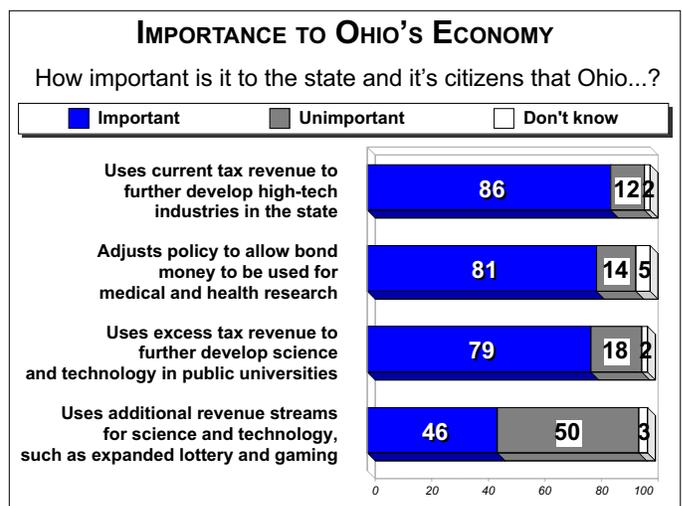


figure 4

RESIDENTS FAVOR ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR RESEARCH

Residents strongly support the state offering financial incentives to attract new scientific research, such as labs. In fact, 50% say they strongly approve of such incentives and an additional 35% say they somewhat approve. Additionally, 60% feel that too little funding is a major barrier to medical and health research in the nation. Fifty-four percent of residents believe that an excess of regulations is a major barrier to medical and health research, and 49% say a shortage of researchers presents a major barrier.

Recognizing the value of all medical and health research, nearly three-quarters of residents favor a proposal to double total national spending on government-sponsored medical and health research over the next five years (*see figure 5*). This is an increase of 14 percentage points since this question was asked in 1997. Additionally, 87% of Ohio residents would be more favorable toward an elected official who supports increased funding for research to find cures, treatments and prevention for disease and disability. By comparison, 72% say they would be more favorable toward an elected official who supports increased funding for tax cuts.

Not only do residents approve of government spending on research, they are also willing to pay more for it (*see figure 6*). Nearly two-thirds say they would be willing to pay \$1 more per week in taxes for more health research, which is an increase of seven percentage points since 1997. Residents ages 18-24 are more likely to be willing to pay more.

Medical research on the prevention, treatment or cure of disease is seen by Ohio residents as the most important health policy issue facing the country that President Bush should address, with 32% citing such issues. Medical research issues are also the top health policy concerns Ohio residents feel should be addressed by Governor Taft, with 26% citing these issues. Other health policy issues residents feel Governor Taft should address include elderly issues (16%), and insurance coverage issues (15%).

OHIO RESIDENTS PLACE A HIGH VALUE ON CLINICAL AND OUTCOMES RESEARCH

Nearly all Ohio residents believe clinical research to be valuable. In fact, 61% say it is a great value and an additional 36% say it is of some value (*see figure 7, next page*).

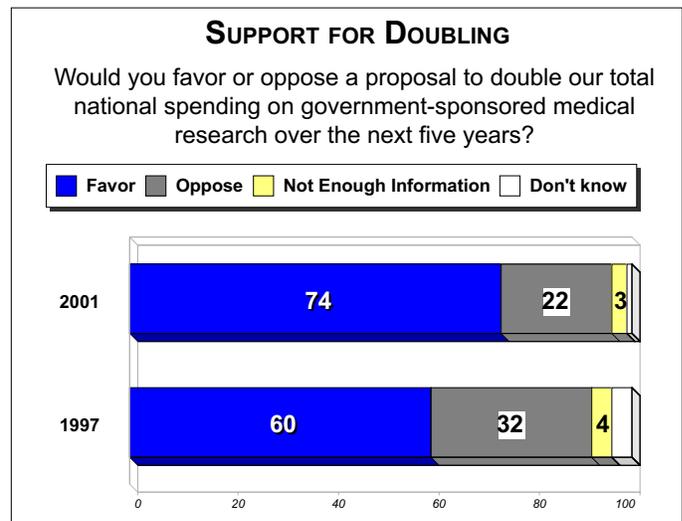


figure 5

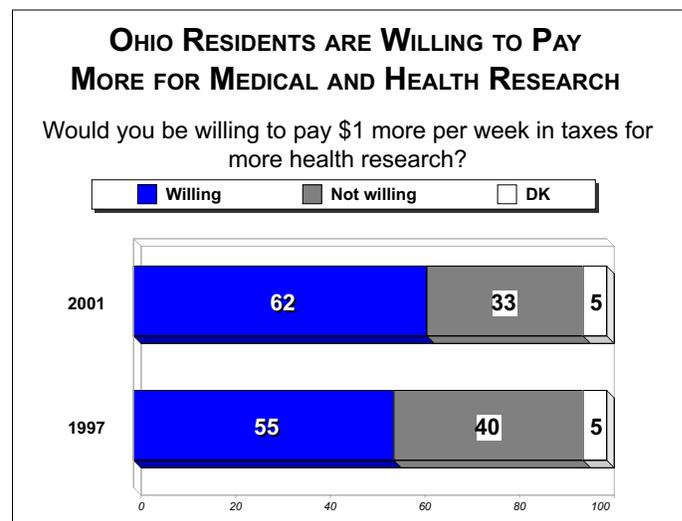


figure 6

A majority of Ohio residents (65%) say they are likely to participate as a volunteer in a clinical research study. The most important factor in deciding to participate in such a study is the competence and reputation of the people or the institution conducting the research (*see figure 8*). In fact, 77% feel this would be a primary reason in their decision to participate. Other important factors include: the opportunity to possibly improve their own health or that of others, privacy and confidentiality issues, and recommendation from a personal physician. Residents do not consider payment for participation to be a major factor.

In addition to clinical research, residents are also supportive of research that focuses on how well the nation's health delivery system is functioning and what could be done to make it function better. In fact, 72% believe this research to be very important. Furthermore, residents believe it is important to research diseases that disproportionately affect low income and minority citizens. Ninety-three percent say it is important to conduct research to end these differences. Specifically, 66% feel this is very important and 27% feel it is somewhat important (*see figure 9*).

PHYSICIANS, VOLUNTARY HEALTH AGENCIES, AND TEACHING HOSPITALS ARE MOST CREDIBLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON MEDICAL AND HEALTH RESEARCH

Residents consider their physicians to be the most trustworthy sources of information about medical and health research, with 96% saying they are very or somewhat credible. Voluntary health agencies such as the American Heart Association and medical schools and teaching hospitals are also highly credible, with 94% considering each of these sources of information to be very or somewhat credible. Pharmaceutical companies are considered credible by 72% and the Internet is considered less credible, with only 57% saying it is very or somewhat trustworthy. Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) are considered the least credible, with only 52% saying they are credible sources (*see figure 10, next page*).

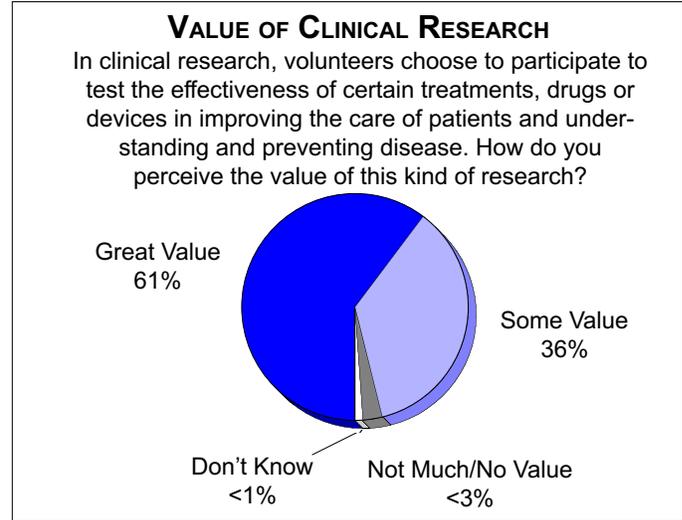


figure 7

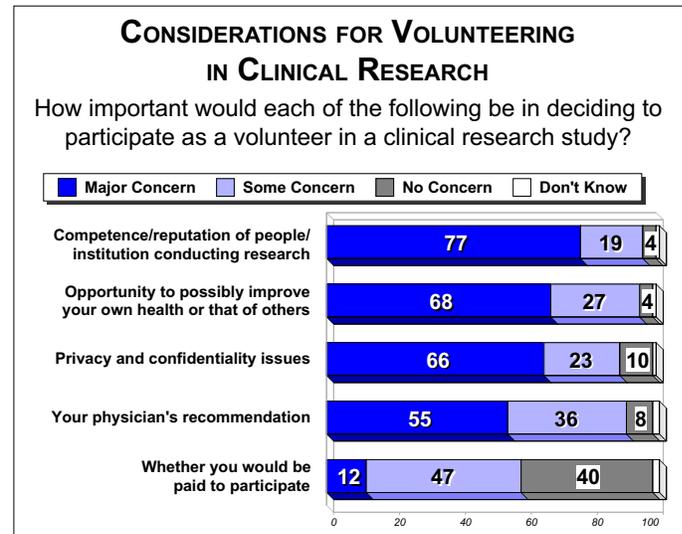


figure 8

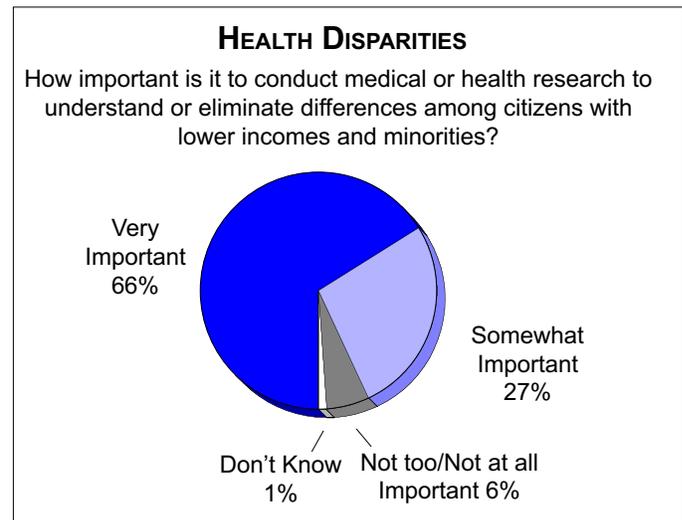


figure 9

TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT ON MEDICAL RESEARCH AND HEALTH EDUCATION

When asked how Ohio should spend the settlement money it will receive from various tobacco companies, 92% of residents feel the government should spend it on research into the prevention, treatment or cure of disease. More specifically, 64% of residents feel the Ohio state government should spend a lot of money on research. Eighty-four percent feel the state should spend money on health education to prevent children and teenagers from smoking, with 53% saying the state should spend a lot of money. Over two thirds (69%) also support spending the settlement funds on incentives for partnerships between research companies and public universities (see figure 11).

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, AND CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION HAVE LOW PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Despite their eagerness to support medical, health, science and engineering research efforts, Ohio residents generally do not know what agencies are responsible for spending their tax dollars on that research. Sixty-nine percent say they cannot name the government agency that funds most of the medical research paid for by taxpayers, and only seven percent correctly identified the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Similarly, 79% say they cannot identify the government agency that funds most of the basic research and educational programming in the sciences, mathematics and engineering in this country. Only two percent correctly identified the National Science Foundation (NSF). Finally, while 64% say they do not know the name of the agency whose primary mission is disease prevention and health promotion, 18% correctly identified the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (see figure 12).

In contrast, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) garners a high level of public recognition, with two-thirds correctly identifying the government agency which conducts the review and approval of new drugs and devices before they can be put on the market.

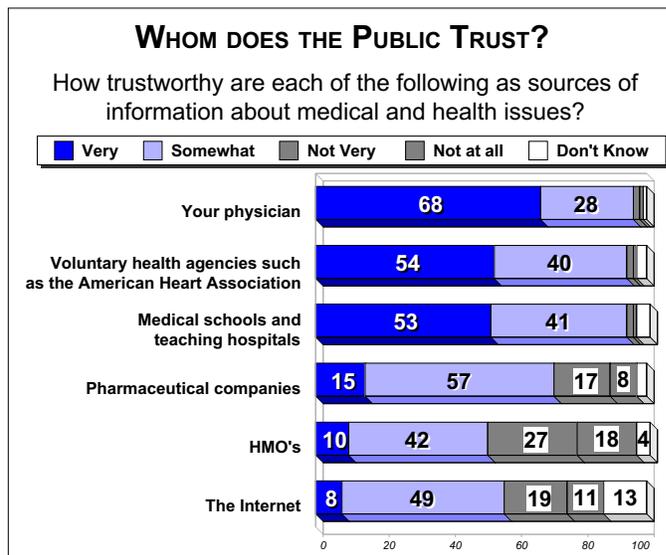


figure 10

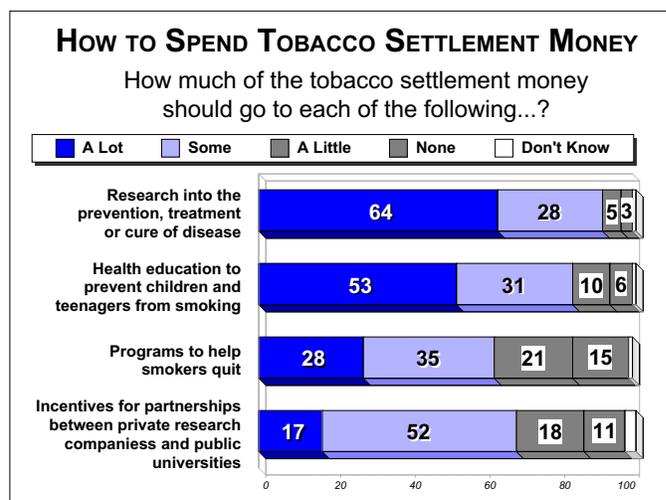


figure 11

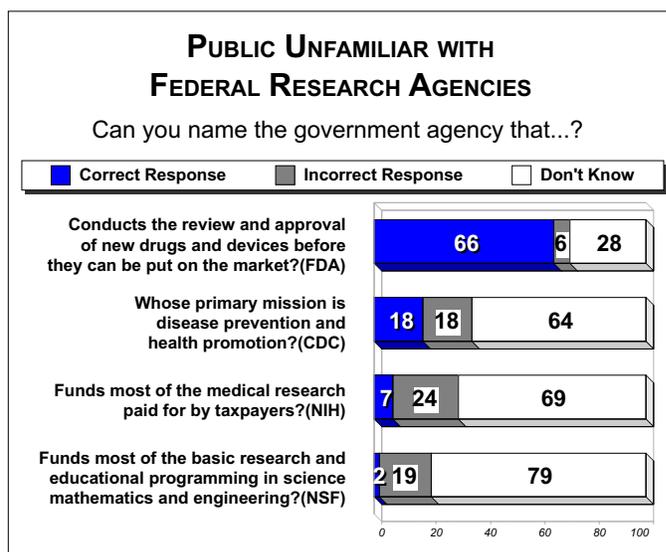


figure 12

ALSO OF NOTE...

Ohio residents strongly support proposals to protect research, training and health care as changes are made to Medicare. Ninety-four percent believe it is important that changes to Medicare ensure the ability of teaching hospitals to train medical doctors and other health care professionals and 73% say this is very important. A majority of 94% also believe it is important to ensure the ability of hospitals to provide health care to under-served communities, with 69% saying this is very important. Additionally, 91% percent say that changes to Medicare that ensure the ability of pharmaceutical, medical device and health care companies to conduct medical research are important, and 51% believe such changes are very important (see figure 13).

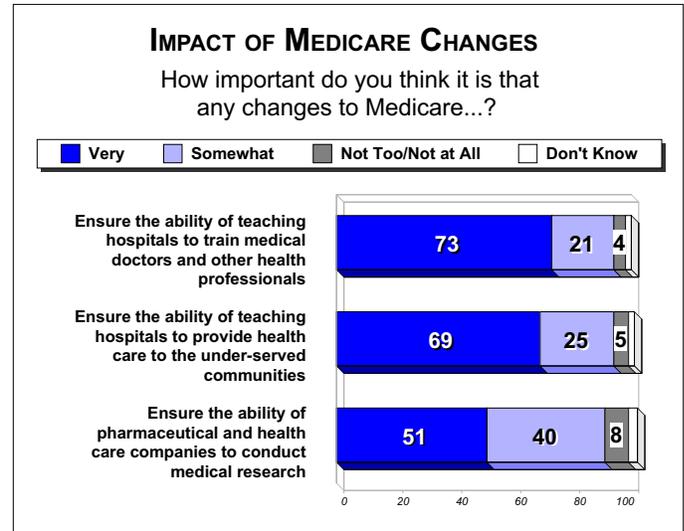


figure 13

Forty percent of Ohio residents are unable to name an organization in the state where medical research is conducted. Cleveland Clinic (22%) and Ohio State University (15%) top the list of those mentioned, followed by the University of Cincinnati (5%). All other organizations were cited by less than 5%.

Asked what concerns residents have about medical research, a plurality of 32% said they had no concerns. Of those who cited concerns, the top response was that more research is needed (7%), followed by wasting money (6%). The next greatest mention was lack of funding (5%). All other mentions were cited by fewer than 5% of respondents.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS DATA SHOW?

- ✓ Ohio residents are overwhelmingly supportive of medical, health and scientific research;
- ✓ Ohio residents recognize the benefits of medical, health and scientific research to local and state economies; and
- ✓ Ohio residents want their state to play a more active role in the funding and infrastructure support of medical, health and scientific research.

METHODOLOGY

Charlton Research Company conducted a telephone survey among 800 adults in Ohio. The entire sample was proportionate to the state's demographics, including geography, gender, voter registration and ethnicity. The survey, fielded July 9 through 15, 2001, has a theoretical sampling error of +/-3.5%. Please note that much of the question text in this report has been paraphrased. The 1997 poll fielded in January of 1997, and also consisted of 800 adults in Ohio with a margin of error of +/-3.5%.

This poll was commissioned by Research!America, a non-profit, membership-supported national alliance of groups and individuals dedicated to enhancing public education and advocacy for medical, health, and scientific research. For more information about the Ohio poll, including a list of sponsoring organizations, or for other questions about public attitudes towards scientific research, contact Research!America at: 908 King Street, Suite 400 East, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 · Telephone: 703/739-2577 · Fax: 703/739-2372 · e-mail: info@researchamerica.org · www.researchamerica.org.

