

SOUTH DAKOTA RESIDENTS SPEAK OUT ON RESEARCH

A Public Opinion Study for Research!America

2003

Research!America has been gauging public opinion on people's attitudes toward medical, health and scientific research since 1992. Results of the recent poll in South Dakota show a high level of support and value for research conducted in both the public and private sector. These poll responses indicate there is an overwhelming belief in South Dakota that research is important and is a high priority for its citizens, particularly as it impacts the state's health, education and economy.

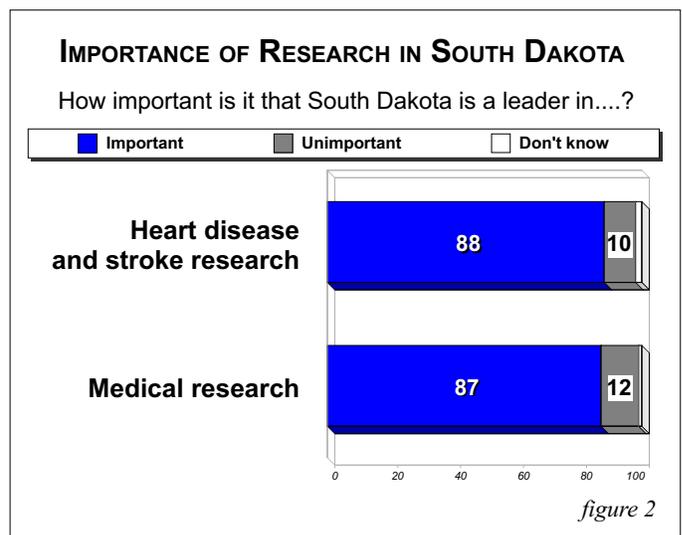
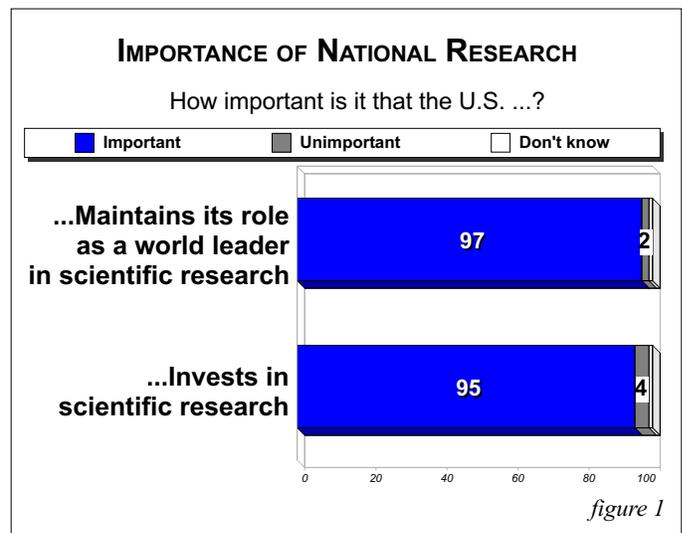
LEADERSHIP IN RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT TO SOUTH DAKOTA RESIDENTS

Research is clearly important to South Dakota residents (see figure 1). In fact, 97% of South Dakota residents say it is important that the United States maintains its role as a world leader in scientific research, with 77% saying this is *very important*.

Similarly, 95% of South Dakota residents agree it is important for the US to invest in scientific research in areas such as physics, mathematics, and engineering. Sixty percent feel it is *very important* for the US to invest in this type of research. Sixty-seven percent say we should be spending more than the current one cent per US health care dollar on disease prevention research. Furthermore, nearly three-quarters agree that even if it brings no immediate benefits, basic research which advances the frontiers of knowledge is necessary and should be supported by the federal government.

Eighty-seven percent of residents say it is important for South Dakota to be a leader in medical research, and 45% say it is *very important*. However, only 20% say South Dakota is currently very much a leader. Forty percent say the state is somewhat a leader, and 32% believe South Dakota is not a leader.

A large majority of residents feel it is important for South Dakota to be a leader in heart disease and stroke research. Eighty-eight percent believe South Dakota's leadership in heart disease and stroke research is important, and 47% say it is *very important* (see figure 2).



MEDICAL RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT TO SOUTH DAKOTA'S ECONOMY

Thinking in terms of jobs, incomes, and quality of life, four-in-five South Dakota residents feel that spending money on medical and health research is important to the state's economy. One-third feel spending on medical and health research is *very important* to South Dakota's economy, and another 49% feel it is somewhat important (see Figure 3).

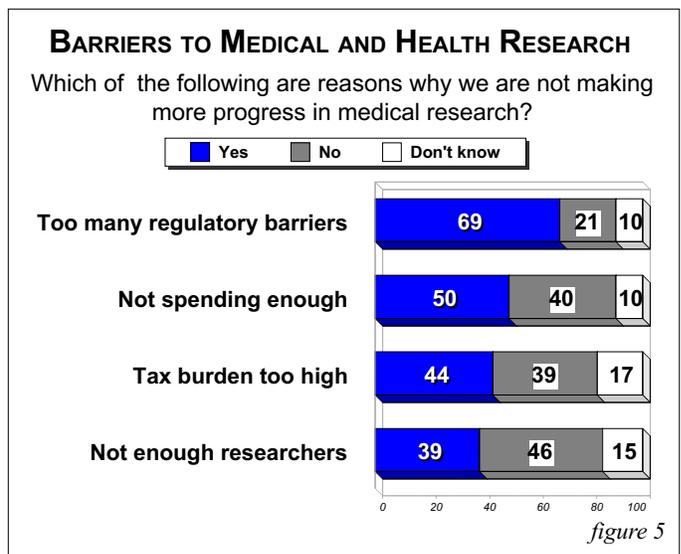
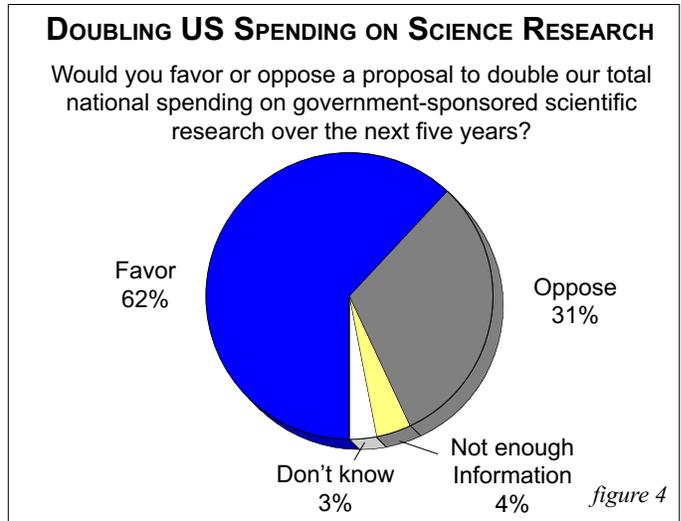
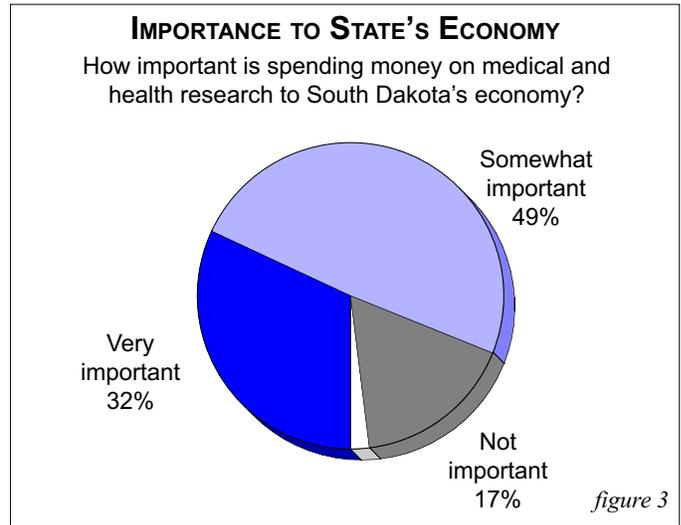
RESIDENTS FAVOR ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR RESEARCH

Residents strongly support the state offering financial incentives to attract new scientific research. In fact, 50% strongly approve of such incentives and an additional 34% somewhat approve. Furthermore, 62% of residents favor a proposal to double total national spending on government-sponsored scientific research over the next five years (see figure 4).

Additionally, 50% feel that too little funding is a barrier to medical and health research in the nation, and 69% of residents believe that an excess of regulations is a major barrier to medical and health research (see figure 5). Forty-four percent agree that the research and development tax burden is a barrier to progress in medical research. Nearly three-quarters agree that Congress should support tax and regulatory policies that encourage private industries to conduct more medical research.

A plurality of 48% of South Dakota residents believe we should be spending more than the current five to six cents per US health care dollar on medical and health research. Twenty-nine percent say this is the right amount and only 4% say we should be spending less.

Not only do residents approve of more government spending on research, they are also willing to pay more for it. Fifty-four percent would be willing to pay \$1 more for each prescription drug if the money would be spent on additional medical research. Forty-seven percent say they would be willing to pay \$1 more per week in taxes for more health research (see figure 6, next page).



RESIDENTS FAVOR ELECTED OFFICIALS WHO SUPPORT RESEARCH

Although South Dakota residents favor increased spending on research, 36% say they are not well informed about the stance of their elected officials when it comes to their support of medical, health and scientific research (see figure 7). Eighty-eight percent say they would be more likely to vote for candidates who support increased funding for health services and education programs, with 43% saying they would be *much more likely* to support them. Similarly, 86% would be more likely to vote for candidates who support increased funding for research to find cures for and prevent diseases, with 39% saying they would be *much more likely* to support them (see figure 8).

AWARENESS OF POLITICIANS' POSITIONS

How well informed are you on the stance of your elected officials on medical, health, and scientific research?

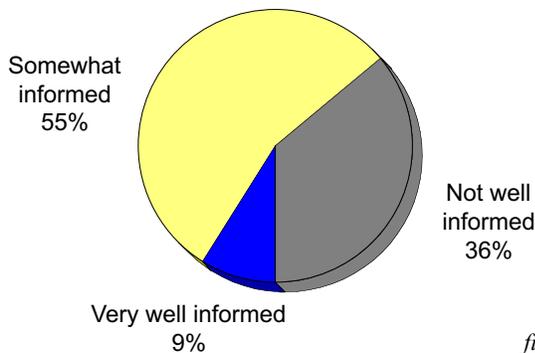


figure 7

SOUTH DAKOTA RESIDENTS ARE WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR RESEARCH

Would you be willing to pay \$1 more...?

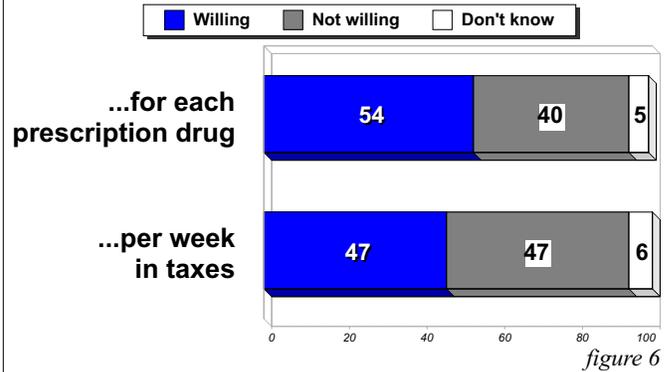


figure 6

LIKELIHOOD TO VOTE FOR CANDIDATES

Would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate who supported increased funding for...?

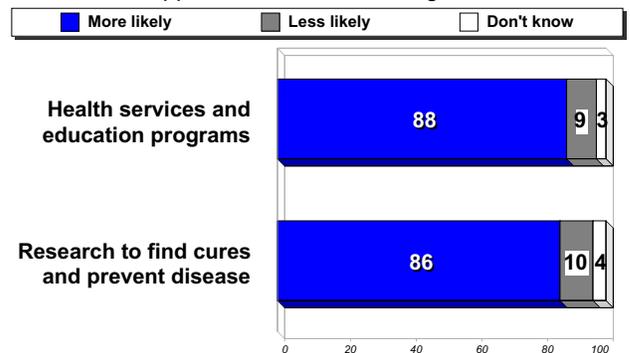


figure 8

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

When asked how South Dakota should spend the settlement money it will receive from various tobacco companies, 85% feel it should be spent on research into the prevention, treatment or cure of disease (see figure 9). Forty-four percent of residents feel the South Dakota government should spend *a lot of money* on research. Eighty-six percent feel the state should spend money on health education to prevent children and teens from smoking, with 54% saying the state should spend *a lot of money*. Seventy-eight percent support spending the money on local community based health prevention efforts, and nearly three-quarters (69%) support spending the settlement funds on programs to help tobacco-users quit.

HOW TO SPEND TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MONEY

How much of the tobacco settlement money should go to each of the following...?

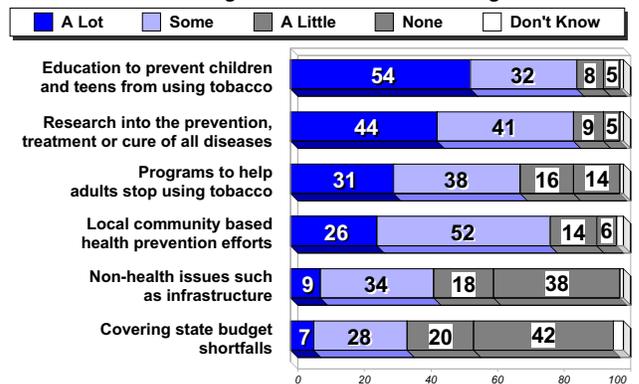


figure 9

RESIDENTS SUPPORT PROPOSALS TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMS

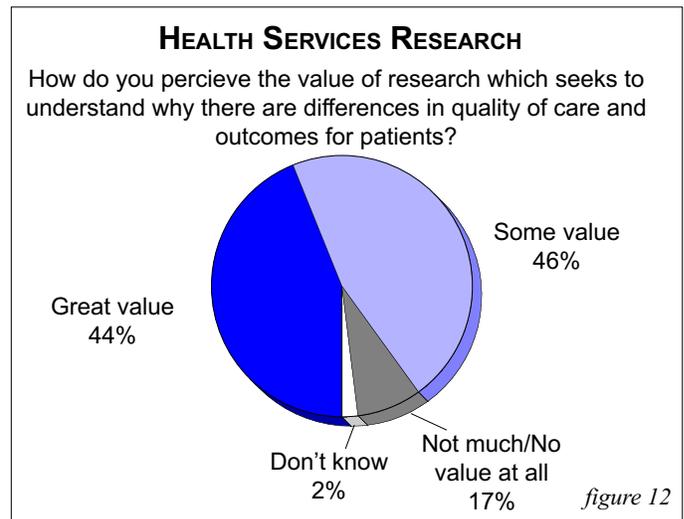
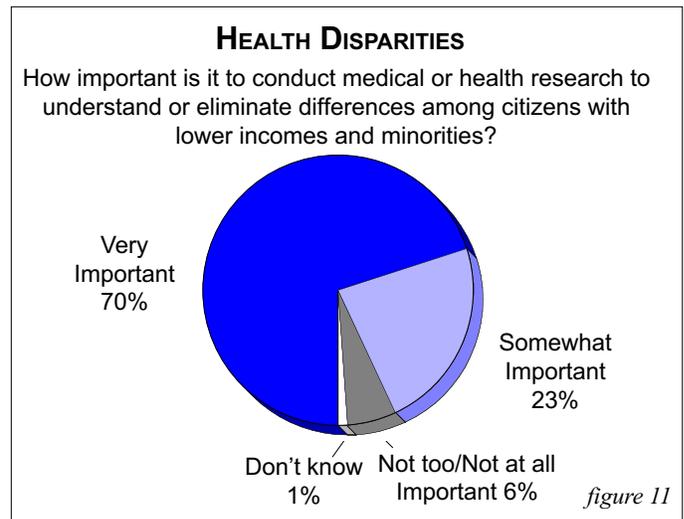
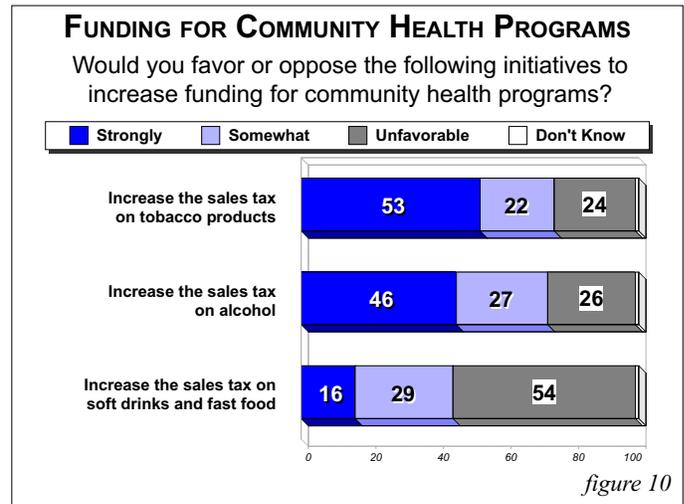
Sixty-seven percent of South Dakota residents say we should be spending more than the current one cent per US health care dollar on disease prevention research. Only 16% say we are spending the right amount.

Furthermore, residents favor several proposals to increase funding for health promotion and disease prevention research. Three-quarters would favor an initiative that would increase the sales tax on tobacco products, and 72% would favor an increase of sales tax on alcohol. Sixty-nine percent would favor an initiative to create a state tax return check-off for voluntary donations to health research. Residents are less favorable toward increasing the sales tax on fast food and soft drinks, with 43% favoring and 56% opposing such a measure.

Residents are similarly favorable toward measures that would be designed to increase funding for community health programs (see Figure 10). Three-quarters would favor increasing the sales tax on tobacco products to fund these programs, and 73% of South Dakota residents would favor increasing the sales tax on alcohol to increase funding community health programs. Seventy-two percent would favor creating a state tax return check-off for voluntary donations to health research. Residents remain divided regarding increased sales taxes on soft drinks and fast food, with 45% favoring and 54% opposing the increase.

SOUTH DAKOTA RESIDENTS PLACE A HIGH VALUE ON RESEARCH TO ELIMINATE HEALTH DISPARITIES

South Dakota 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, seven-in-ten feel this is *very important* and 23% feel it is *somewhat important* (see figure 11). Additionally, 90% of South Dakota residents support research that seeks to understand why there are differences in quality of care and outcomes for patients. In fact, 44% believe this research to be *very valuable* (see figure 12).



NURSES, PHARMACISTS, AND TEACHING HOSPITALS ARE MOST TRUSTWORTHY SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON MEDICAL AND HEALTH RESEARCH

Residents consider health care providers to be the most trustworthy sources of information about medical and health research, with 94% saying nurses are very or somewhat credible, and 93% saying their pharmacists are credible. Medical schools and teaching hospitals also receive 93% credible ratings, and dentists and physicians are also highly credible, with 92% considering each of these sources very or somewhat credible. Voluntary health agencies such as the American Heart Association are seen as credible by 88%. Pharmaceutical companies and media sources are considered credible by 63% and 61% respectively, but the percentage who find these organizations *very trustworthy* is significantly lower (13% and 8% respectively). The Internet and HMOs are considered the least credible sources of health information overall (56% and 54%), with only 9% and 7% finding them *very trustworthy* (see figure 13).

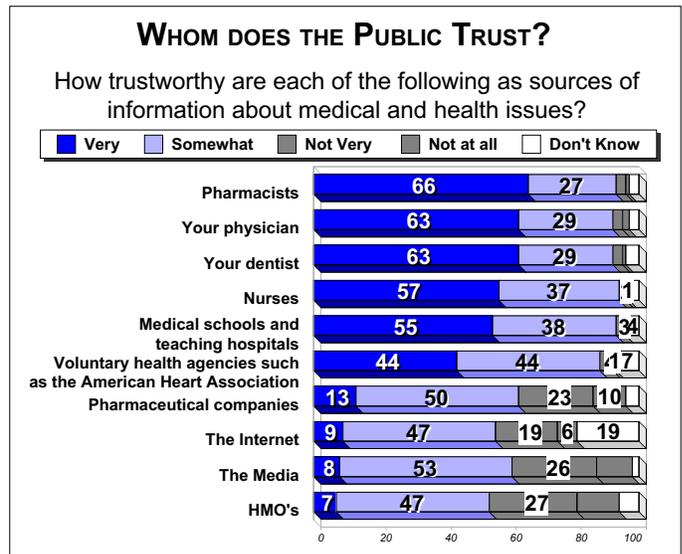


figure 13

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

Despite their willingness to support medical, health, science and engineering research efforts, South Dakota residents generally do not know what agencies are responsible for spending their tax dollars on that research. Over three-quarters say they cannot name the government agency that funds most of the medical research paid for by taxpayers, and only two percent correctly identified the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Similarly, 83% 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 three percent correctly identified the National Science Foundation (NSF). Finally, while 63% say they do not know the name of the agency whose primary mission is disease prevention and health promotion, 25% correctly identified the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (see figure 14).

In contrast, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) garners a fairly high level of public recognition, with 67% correctly identifying the government agency which conducts the review and approval of new drugs and devices before they can be put on the market.

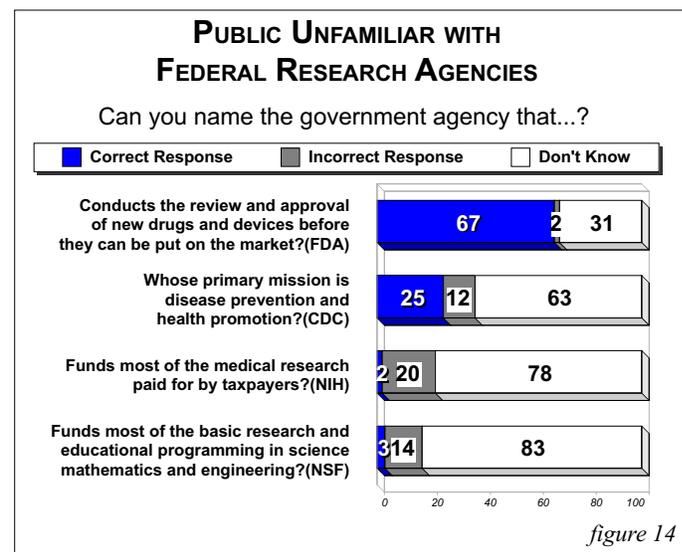


figure 14

ALSO OF NOTE...

The University of South Dakota received the most mentions when respondents were asked to name an organization in the state where medical research is conducted. University of South Dakota topped the list with 8%, followed by Sioux Valley Hospital (6%). All other organizations named were cited by fewer than 4%. Seventy-three percent were unable to name any organization in the state where medical research is conducted. Similarly, 69% of South Dakota residents were unable to name one institution in the United States where medical research is conducted. While residents mentioned a wide range of organizations across the nation where medical and health research is conducted, none received more than 10% of mentions. The top mentions were Mayo Clinic (10%), Johns Hopkins University (3%); no other organization was mentioned by more than 1%.

Asked what concerns residents have about medical research, a plurality of one-third cite no concerns. Of those who mentioned a concern, 8% mentioned the need for more research and 7% cited wasting money. Six percent mentioned finding a cure for cancer while 5% cited finding a cure for diseases in general. Another 5% mentioned concerns that there is not enough funding. All other concerns were cited by fewer than five percent.

Cloning was mentioned as a concern by only 3% of residents. When given more information about types of cloning, residents express support for research into therapeutic cloning (used to help in the search for possible cures and treatments for diseases and disabilities). Fifty-nine percent agree that research into therapeutic cloning should go forward, while thirty-six percent feel that it should not be allowed. More than four-in-five residents say research into reproductive cloning should not be allowed to go forward, with 74% who feel *strongly* that it should not be allowed. South Dakota residents believe the use of animals in medical research is necessary for progress in medicine. Over four-in-five residents feel this way, with 52% strongly and 30% somewhat.

METHODOLOGY

Charlton Research Company conducted a telephone survey among 800 adults in South Dakota. The entire sample was proportionate to the state's demographics, including geography, gender, voter registration and ethnicity. The survey, fielded November 2-11, 2002, has a theoretical sampling error of +/-3.5%. Please note that much of the question text in this report has been paraphrased.

This poll was commissioned by Research!America, a non-profit, membership-supported national alliance of organizations and individuals dedicated to enhancing public education and advocacy for medical, health, and scientific research. For more information about the South Dakota poll, including a list of sponsoring organizations, or for other questions about public attitudes towards scientific research, contact Research!America at: 1101 King Street, Suite 520, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 · Telephone: 703/739-2577 · Fax: 703/739-2372 · e-mail: info@researchamerica.org · www.researchamerica.org.

