

UNDERSTANDING AMERICANS' HEALTH AGENDA
A Joint Project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
and the Harvard School of Public Health

REPORT ON AMERICANS' VIEWS ON THE QUALITY OF
HEALTH CARE

March 22, 2011

- 1. Quality of Health Care Poll: Topline Results**
- 2. Quality of Health Care Poll: Responses by Race/Ethnicity and Household Income**
- 3. Preliminary Synthesis of Existing Polling Data on the Quality of Health Care**

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Part 1

**ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION/
HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE

The poll was conducted for Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health via telephone (landline and cell phone) by SSRS, an independent research company. Interviews were conducted from March 9-18, 2011, among a representative sample of 1,034 respondents age 18 or older, including a sample of 104 African Americans and 101 Latinos or Hispanic Americans. The margin of error for total respondents is +/-3.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

QH-1 Using an A, B, C, D and F grading scale like they do in school, how would you grade each of the following? How about...?

	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know/ Refused
a. The quality of health care in the country as a whole	11	22	38	17	11	2
b. The quality of health care YOU receive	31	34	19	6	7	3
c. The quality of HOSPITAL care in the country as a whole	15	34	34	9	4	5

QH-2 Thinking about both the cost and quality of the health care that you receive, do you think that you get good value for the money that you spend on health care, or not?

Yes	No	Don't know/ Refused
56	41	3

QH-3 Based on what you've heard, read, or experienced yourself, do you think there are big differences, small differences, or no differences in the quality of care among local hospitals where you live?

Big Differences	Small Differences	No Differences	Don't know/ Refused
35	36	23	6

QH-4 Suppose you had to choose between two different hospitals. The first one is the hospital you and your family have used for many years without any problems, but the second hospital is rated much higher in quality by the experts. Which hospital would you be more likely to choose?

The hospital you and your family have used for many years	The hospital rated much higher in quality by the experts	Don't know/ Refused
57	38	5

QH-5 Suppose you had to choose between two surgeons at a hospital. The first surgeon has treated a friend or family member without any problems, but his or her ratings are not as high as those of other surgeons at the hospital. The second surgeon's ratings are much higher, but no one you know personally has ever been one of his or her patients. Which surgeon would you be more likely to choose?

Surgeon who treated a friend or family member without any problems	Surgeon whose ratings are much higher, but no one you know personally has ever been one of his patients	Don't know/ Refused
48	47	5

QH-6/6a When African Americans are hospitalized, do you think they get the same quality of health care as white Americans get, or not? (*If not*) Do African Americans get better or worse quality health care than whites when they are hospitalized?

African Americans get better quality health care	African Americans get the same quality	African Americans get worse quality	Don't know/ Refused
2	60	24	14

QH-7/7a When Latinos or Hispanic Americans are hospitalized, do you think they get the same quality of health care as white Americans get, or not? (*If not*) Do Latinos or Hispanic Americans get better or worse quality health care than whites when they are hospitalized?

Latinos or Hispanic Americans get better quality health care	Latinos or Hispanic Americans get the same quality	Latinos or Hispanic Americans get worse quality	Don't know/ Refused
3	56	26	16

Part 2

**Quality of Health Care Poll
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health
March 9-18, 2011**

Responses by Race/Ethnicity and Household Income

Sample sizes (unweighted n's):

Total sample	1034
Whites (non-Hispanic)	764
Blacks (non-Hispanic)	104
Hispanics	101
Less than \$25,000	235
\$25,000-49,999	256
\$50,000-74,999	127
\$75,000 or more	250

Quality of Health Care Poll: Responses by Race/Ethnicity
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health

a = Statistically significant different compared to whites (non-Hispanic), p<.05.

b = Statistically significant different compared to blacks (non-Hispanic), p<.05.

b = Statistically significant different compared to Hispanics, p<.05.

1. Using an A, B, C, D and F grading scale like they do in school, how would you grade each of the following? How about...?

a. The quality of health care in the country as a whole

	Total	Whites (non-Hispanic) (a)	Blacks (non-Hispanic) (b)	Hispanics (c)
A	11%	10%	9%	15%
B	22%	22%	22%	27%
C	38%	38%	40%	37%
D	17%	17%	15%	13%
F	11%	12% ^c	12%	4%
Don't know/ Refused	2%	1%	2%	5%

b. The quality of health care YOU receive

	Total	Whites (non-Hispanic) (a)	Blacks (non-Hispanic) (b)	Hispanics (c)
A	31%	33%	40% ^c	22%
B	34%	36% ^b	21%	33%
C	19%	17%	25%	20%
D	6%	6%	9%	8%
F	7%	6%	4%	13% ^{ab}
Don't know/ Refused	3%	2%	1%	5%

c. The quality of HOSPITAL care in the country as a whole

	Total	Whites (non-Hispanic) (a)	Blacks (non-Hispanic) (b)	Hispanics (c)
A	15%	13%	15%	18%
B	34%	34%	31%	34%
C	34%	35%	37%	28%
D	9%	9%	7%	13%
F	4%	3%	6%	4%
Don't know/ Refused	5%	5%	4%	3%

2. Thinking about both the cost and quality of the health care that you receive, do you think that you get good value for the money that you spend on health care, or not?

	Total	Whites (non-Hispanic) (a)	Blacks (non-Hispanic) (b)	Hispanics (c)
Yes, get good value	56%	55%	60%	58%
No, don't get good value	41%	43%	38%	37%
Don't know/ Refused	3%	2%	2%	5%

3. Based on what you've heard, read, or experienced yourself, do you think there are big differences, small differences, or no differences in the quality of care among local hospitals where you live?

	Total	Whites (non-Hispanic) (a)	Blacks (non-Hispanic) (b)	Hispanics (c)
Big differences	35%	34%	33%	38%
Small differences	36%	38%	34%	29%
No differences	23%	21%	28%	27%
Don't know/ Refused	6%	7%	5%	6%

4. Suppose you had to choose between two different hospitals. The first one is the hospital you and your family have used for many years without any problems, but the second hospital is rated much higher in quality by the experts. Which hospital would you be more likely to choose?

	Total	Whites (non-Hispanic) (a)	Blacks (non-Hispanic) (b)	Hispanics (c)
Hospital you and your family have used for many years	57%	56%	70% ^a	55%
Hospital rated much higher by experts	38%	39% ^b	27%	42% ^b
Don't know/ Refused	5%	6%	3%	3%

5. Suppose you had to choose between two surgeons at a hospital. The first surgeon has treated a friend or family member without any problems, but his or her ratings are not as high as those of other surgeons at the hospital. The second surgeon's ratings are much higher, but no one you know personally has ever been one of his or her patients. Which surgeon would you be more likely to choose?

	Total	Whites (non-Hispanic) (a)	Blacks (non-Hispanic) (b)	Hispanics (c)
Surgeon who treated friend of family member without any problems	48%	46%	60% ^a	49%
Surgeon whose ratings are much higher	47%	49% ^b	35%	49%
Don't know/ Refused	5%	5%	6%	2%

6/6a. When African Americans are hospitalized, do you think they get the same quality of health care as white Americans get, or not? (If not) Do African Americans get better or worse quality health care than whites when they are hospitalized?

	Total	Whites (non-Hispanic) (a)	Blacks (non-Hispanic) (b)	Hispanics (c)
African Americans get worse quality health care	24%	18%	48% ^a	38% ^a
African Americans get the same quality	60%	64% ^{bc}	45%	48%
African Americans get better quality	2%	3%	0%	4%
Don't know/ Refused	14%	15%	7%	10%

7/7a. When Latinos or Hispanic Americans are hospitalized, do you think they get the same quality of health care as white Americans get, or not? (If not) Do Latinos or Hispanic Americans get better or worse quality health care than whites when they are hospitalized?

	Total	Whites (non-Hispanic) (a)	Blacks (non-Hispanic) (b)	Hispanics (c)
Latinos get worse quality health care	26%	21%	42% ^a	46% ^a
Latinos get the same quality	56%	60% ^{bc}	42%	42%
Latinos get better quality	3%	2%	2%	1%
Don't know/ Refused	16%	17%	15%	11%

Quality of Health Care Poll: Responses by Household Income
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health

a = Statistically significant different compared to <\$25,000, p<.05.

b = Statistically significant different compared to \$25,000-\$49,999, p<.05.

b = Statistically significant different compared to \$50,000-74,999, p<.05.

d = Statistically significant different compared to \$75,000+, p<.05.

1. Using an A, B, C, D and F grading scale like they do in school, how would you grade each of the following? How about...?

a. The quality of health care in the country as a whole

	Total	<\$25,000 (a)	\$25,000- \$49,999 (b)	\$50,000- \$74,999 (c)	\$75,000+ (d)
A	11%	14% ^b	5%	12%	9%
B	22%	21%	15%	23%	26% ^b
C	38%	37%	40%	38%	40%
D	17%	12%	23% ^a	18%	15%
F	11%	13%	16% ^d	9%	8%
Don't know/ Refused	2%	3%	1%	0%	2%

b. The quality of health care YOU receive

	Total	<\$25,000 (a)	\$25,000- \$49,999 (b)	\$50,000- \$74,999 (c)	\$75,000+ (d)
A	31%	25%	21%	41% ^{ab}	38% ^{ab}
B	34%	25%	34%	36%	40% ^a
C	19%	24% ^d	23% ^d	16%	13%
D	6%	9%	7%	4%	6%
F	7%	10% ^{cd}	13% ^{cd}	0%	2%
Don't know/ Refused	3%	7%	1%	3%	1%

c. The quality of HOSPITAL care in the country as a whole

	Total	<\$25,000 (a)	\$25,000- \$49,999 (b)	\$50,000- \$74,999 (c)	\$75,000+ (d)
A	15%	20% ^{bd}	11%	14%	12%
B	34%	32%	31%	36%	39%
C	34%	27%	34%	45% ^a	36%
D	9%	9%	14% ^c	2%	8%
F	4%	6%	5%	1%	2%
Don't know/ Refused	5%	6%	4%	3%	3%

2. Thinking about both the cost and quality of the health care that you receive, do you think that you get good value for the money that you spend on health care, or not?

	Total	<\$25,000 (a)	\$25,000- \$49,999 (b)	\$50,000- \$74,999 (c)	\$75,000+ (d)
Yes, get good value	56%	59%	54%	55%	59%
No, don't get good value	41%	37%	46%	43%	40%
Don't know/ Refused	3%	4%	1%	2%	2%

3. Based on what you've heard, read, or experienced yourself, do you think there are big differences, small differences, or no differences in the quality of care among local hospitals where you live?

	Total	<\$25,000 (a)	\$25,000- \$49,999 (b)	\$50,000- \$74,999 (c)	\$75,000+ (d)
Big differences	35%	32%	32%	36%	40%
Small differences	36%	30%	37%	39%	41% ^a
No differences	23%	30% ^d	24% ^d	20%	16%
Don't know/ Refused	6%	8%	7%	5%	4%

4. Suppose you had to choose between two different hospitals. The first one is the hospital you and your family have used for many years without any problems, but the second hospital is rated much higher in quality by the experts. Which hospital would you be more likely to choose?

	Total	<\$25,000 (a)	\$25,000- \$49,999 (b)	\$50,000- \$74,999 (c)	\$75,000+ (d)
Hospital you and your family have used for many years	57%	62% ^d	57%	69% ^d	51%
Hospital rated much higher by experts	38%	34%	40% ^c	25%	43% ^c
Don't know/ Refused	5%	4%	3%	6%	6%

5. Suppose you had to choose between two surgeons at a hospital. The first surgeon has treated a friend or family member without any problems, but his or her ratings are not as high as those of other surgeons at the hospital. The second surgeon's ratings are much higher, but no one you know personally has ever been one of his or her patients. Which surgeon would you be more likely to choose?

	Total	<\$25,000 (a)	\$25,000- \$49,999 (b)	\$50,000- \$74,999 (c)	\$75,000+ (d)
Surgeon who treated friend of family member without any problems	48%	58% ^{cd}	48%	44%	45%
Surgeon whose ratings are much higher	47%	36%	50% ^a	50% ^a	51% ^a
Don't know/ Refused	5%	5%	2%	6%	4%

6/6a. When African Americans are hospitalized, do you think they get the same quality of health care as white Americans get, or not? (If not) Do African Americans get better or worse quality health care than whites when they are hospitalized?

	Total	<\$25,000 (a)	\$25,000- \$49,999 (b)	\$50,000- \$74,999 (c)	\$75,000+ (d)
African Americans get worse quality health care	24%	38%	26%	24%	23%
African Americans get the same quality	60%	57%	62%	57%	62%
African Americans get better quality	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Don't know/ Refused	14%	13%	9%	16%	12%

7/7a. When Latinos or Hispanic Americans are hospitalized, do you think they get the same quality of health care as white Americans get, or not? (If not) Do Latinos or Hispanic Americans get better or worse quality health care than whites when they are hospitalized?

	Total	<\$25,000 (a)	\$25,000- \$49,999 (b)	\$50,000- \$74,999 (c)	\$75,000+ (d)
Latinos get worse quality health care	26%	29%	31%	25%	25%
Latinos get the same quality	56%	56%	56%	53%	59%
Latinos get better quality	3%	1%	4%	3%	2%
Don't know/ Refused	16%	13%	9%	19%	14%

Part 3

Preliminary Synthesis of Existing Polling Data on the Quality of Health Care

Are you generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of care in this country?

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't know
1993	51%	46%	3%
2000	54%	44%	2%
2003	44%	55%	1%
2004	50%	47%	3%
2006	45%	54%	1%
2007	38%	57%	5%
2009	48%	48%	4%

Sources: Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* Poll, May 10-12, 1993; Gallup Poll, September 11-13, 2000; ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll, October 9-13, 2003; Kaiser Family Foundation Poll, June 4-8, 2004; ABC News/Kaiser Family Foundation/*USA Today* Poll, September 7-12, 2006; CBS News/*New York Times* Poll, February 23-27, 2007; CBS News/*New York Times* Poll, June 12-16, 2009.

Are you generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of health care you receive?

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't know
2007	77%	20%	3%
2009	77%	20%	3%

Sources: CBS News/*New York Times* Poll, February 23-27, 2007; CBS News/*New York Times* Poll, June 12-16, 2009.

Suppose you had to choose between two different hospitals. The first one is the hospital you and your family have used for many years without any problems, but the second hospital is rated much higher in quality by the experts. Which hospital would you be more likely to choose?

	1996	2000	2004	2008	2011
Hospital you and your family have used for many years	72%	62%	61%	59%	57%
Hospital rated much higher by experts	25%	32%	33%	35%	38%
Don't know/Refused	3%	6%	6%	6%	5%

Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Health Care Policy and Research Poll, July 26-September 5, 1996; Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Poll, July 31-October 9, 2000; Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality/Harvard School of Public Health Poll, July 7-September 5, 2004; Kaiser Family Foundation Poll, July 29-August 6, 2008; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health Poll, March 9-18, 2011.

Suppose you had to choose between two surgeons at a hospital. The first surgeon has treated a friend or family member without any problems, but his or her ratings are not as high as those of other surgeons at the hospital. The second surgeon's ratings are much higher, but no one you know personally has ever been one of his or her patients. Which surgeon would you be more likely to choose?

	2000	2004	2008	2011
Surgeon who treated friend of family member without any problems	50%	48%	44%	48%
Surgeon whose ratings are much higher	38%	46%	47%	47%
Don't know/Refused	11%	7%	9%	5%

Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Poll, July 31-October 9, 2000; Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality/Harvard School of Public Health Poll, July 7-September 5, 2004; Kaiser Family Foundation Poll, July 29-August 6, 2008; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health Poll, March 9-18, 2011.

In the past two years, when getting care for a medical problem, was there ever a time when you (*insert item*), or not?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Had to bring an X-ray, MRI, or other type of test result with you to a doctor's appointment	29%	70%	1%
Had to wait for test results longer than you thought reasonable	19%	80%	1%
Received conflicting information from different doctors or health care professionals	17%	82%	1%
Had to redo a test or procedure because the doctor didn't have the earlier test results	12%	88%	*
Had to come back for another appointment because a health professional did not have your medical information available	10%	90%	*
Tried to get two of your doctors to talk to each other and failed	8%	91%	1%

Note: * = less than .5%.

Source: NPR/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health Poll, March 12-22, 2009.

Please tell me how effective you think each one of the following would be in reducing preventable medical errors that result in serious harm. (*Read item*) Do you think this would be very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, or not effective at all?

% saying “very effective”

Giving doctors more time to spend with patients	79%
Better training of health professionals	72%
Requiring hospitals to develop systems to avoid medical errors	72%
Requiring hospitals to report all serious medical errors to a state agency	71%
Increasing the number of hospital nurses	67%
Reducing the work hours of doctors in training to avoid fatigue	66%
Using ONLY doctors specially trained in intensive care medicine on intensive care units	66%
Fining and suspending the license of health professionals who make medical errors	54%
More use of computerized medical records and computers instead of paper records for ordering of drugs and medical tests	51%
Limiting certain high-risk medical procedures to hospitals that do a lot of these procedures	49%
Including a pharmacist on hospital rounds when doctors review the progress of patients	42%
Having hospitalized patients be taken care of by hospital doctors rather than their regular doctors	21%
More lawsuits for malpractice	21%

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality/Harvard School of Public Health Poll, July 7-September 5, 2004.

Did you see any information comparing the quality among different doctors, hospitals, or health insurance plans in the past 12 months, or not? *(If yes)* Did you personally use the information you saw comparing quality among doctors in making any decisions about doctors, or not? Did you personally use the information you saw comparing quality among hospitals in making any decisions about hospitals, or not? Did you personally use the information you saw comparing quality among health insurance plans in making any decisions about health plans, or not?

All %s based on total sample

	2000	2004	2006	2008
Total saw any quality information in past 12 months	27%	35%	36%	30%
Total used quality information to make a health care decisions	12%	19%	20%	14%
Used quality information about health plans	9%	13%	12%	9%
Used quality information about hospitals	4%	8%	10%	7%
Used quality information about doctors	4%	6%	7%	6%

Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Poll, July 31-October 9, 2000; Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality/Harvard School of Public Health Poll, July 7-September 5, 2004; Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Poll, August 3-8, 2006; Kaiser Family Foundation Poll, July 29-August 6, 2008.

When your doctor gives you important medical advice, which comes closer to your view—(*two statements rotated*) you usually feel confident in the accuracy of your doctor’s advice, or you usually feel it is necessary to check for second opinions or do your own research on the subject?

Feel confident in the accuracy of your doctor’s advice	70%
Feel it is necessary to check for second opinions or do your own research on the subject	29%
No opinion	1%

Source: Gallup Poll, November 4-7, 2010.

Please tell me how much you think each of the following kinds of information would tell you about the quality of a hospital, if you wanted to compare two or more hospitals. *(Insert item)* Would this tell you a lot, something, only a little, or nothing about the quality of a hospital?

% saying “a lot”

Reports of medical errors or mistakes that lead to harm for patients, such as a wrong dose or kind of medicine being given or the wrong operation being done	70%
How much experience the hospital has in performing a particular test or surgery you or your family may need	65%
How many patients die after having surgery at the hospital	57%
How patients who are surveyed rate the quality of care	52%
Whether the hospital has passed a review and been accredited by an independent organization that evaluates hospitals	50%
The number of patients who do NOT get the standard recommended treatments, such as aspirin after heart attack	47%
How long it takes the hospital lab to get test results back to you	47%
Whether the hospital is a teaching hospital and trains doctors, nurses and other health professionals	44%
Whether the hospital has been rated “the best” by a newspaper or magazine	28%

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality/Harvard School of Public Health Poll, July 7-September 4, 2004.

In your community, do you believe that there are enough high quality hospitals, or not?

Yes	66%
No	32%
Don't know	2%

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health Poll, March 26-30, 2008.

When African Americans are hospitalized, do you think they get the same quality of health care as white Americans get, or not? (*If not*) Do African Americans get better or worse quality health care than whites when they are hospitalized?

	2005	2011
African Americans get worse quality health care	21%	24%
African Americans get the same quality	59%	60%
African Americans get better quality	2%	2%
Don't know/ Refused	18%	14%

When Latinos or Hispanic Americans are hospitalized, do you think they get the same quality of health care as white Americans get, or not? (*If not*) Do Latinos or Hispanic Americans get better or worse quality health care than whites when they are hospitalized?

	2005	2011
Latinos get worse quality health care	23%	26%
Latinos get the same quality	60%	56%
Latinos get better quality	1%	3%
Don't know/ Refused	16%	16%

Sources: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health polls, March 26-30, 2008; March 9-18, 2011.

We'd like to read a list of several aspects of the U.S. healthcare system. For each, please tell me if you think the medical care or medical services they provide are generally excellent, good, only fair, or poor.

	Excellent	Good	Only fair	Poor	No opinion
Nurses	31%	57%	11%	1%	1%
Physicians	26%	58%	11%	4%	1%
Hospitals	16%	56%	20%	7%	1%
Hospital emergency rooms	17%	43%	27%	10%	3%
Pharmaceutical or drug companies	12%	42%	26%	18%	2%
Walk-in clinics	9%	45%	25%	7%	15%
Health Insurance companies	6%	36%	32%	24%	2%
Nursing homes	3%	30%	33%	16%	18%

Note: Rank-ordered by total excellent + good.

Source: Gallup Poll, November 4-7, 2010.

Do you think each of the following generally do a good job or bad job serving their consumers?...Hospitals

% saying “good job”

1998	73%
1999	71%
2000	72%
2001	67%
2002	73%
2003	73%
2004	70%
2005	79%
2006	74%
2007	78%
2008	75%
2009	78%

Source: Louis Harris and Associates polls (1998-1999); Harris Interactive polls (2000-2009).