



## COVID-19 Survey Summary: October 2, 2020

*The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).*

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Coronavirus polls this week continue to show broad reluctance among Americans to get vaccinated as soon as possible, although the way in which a vaccine is presented may make a difference, with personal doctors' endorsements seemingly a key factor. CDC analyses reveal a rise in cases among young adults and a greater risk of infection among older school-age children compared with younger ones. In other results, visits with family and friends are at a pandemic high, trust in the federal government continues to erode and negative views of the economy have eased, though most Americans support additional federal stimulus spending.

All polls covered in this summary were conducted before last night's announcement of President Trump's COVID-19 diagnosis.

### Vaccines and Other Preventative Measures

Self-reported likelihood of getting "the first-generation COVID-19 vaccine, as soon as it's available" differs greatly depending on the scenario. Overall, just 37 percent of Americans say they're at least somewhat likely to get vaccinated quickly, essentially unchanged since last week while down 10 percentage points since the end of August. However:

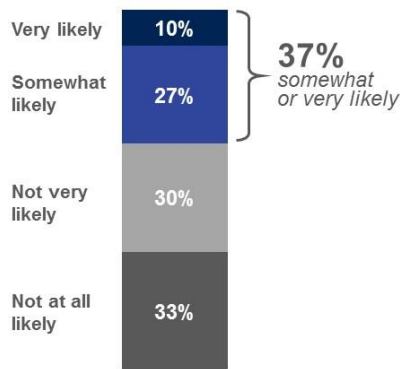
- Sixty-two percent say they'd be at least somewhat likely to get a first-generation vaccine right away if their doctor said it was safe. Fifty-four percent say the same if the FDA declared it safe. Just 19 percent take this position if President Trump said it was safe.
- Fifty-six percent say it's at least somewhat likely they'd get the vaccine if the cost were completely covered by insurance.
- A paid incentive shows less effect: Forty-four percent say they'd likely get it if they were paid \$100 to do so. And just a quarter say it's at least somewhat likely they'd get the vaccine if they had to pay \$100 for it.

- Half say it's at least somewhat likely they would get the vaccine if they could get it easily from a walk-in or drive-thru clinic. Just 37 percent say they'd be likely to get it if they had to make an appointment and go to a hospital ([Axios/Ipsos 9/24-9/27](#)).

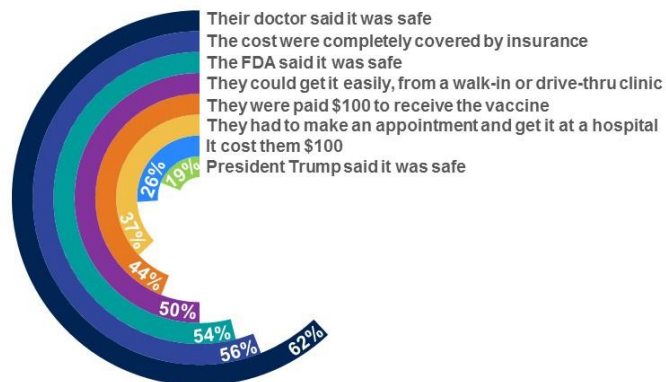
### Americans look to their own doctors to deem vaccine "safe"

Most are likely to get a COVID-19 vaccine if their doctor says it is safe, are least likely to if Trump says it is safe

How likely are you to get the first generation COVID-19 vaccine, as soon as it's available?



Percentage of Americans who would be *somewhat* or *very likely* to get the first generation COVID-19 vaccine if...



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In another study, among 18- to 29-year-olds only, 47 percent say they definitely or probably would get vaccinated, including 57 percent of Democrats compared with 34 percent of young Republicans ([Harvard Youth Poll 8/28-9/9](#)).

Two-thirds of Americans overall say it's highly important (1 or 2 on a 7-point scale from most to least important) for healthcare workers to get a first-generation vaccine as soon as it's available. Fifty-six percent say the same for people living in nursing or assisted-living facilities. This drops to a third who say it's highly important for people older than 65 to get the vaccine quickly. Fewer say so for teachers (16 percent), politicians (13 percent), people under age 30 (4 percent) and themselves (4 percent) ([Axios/Ipsos 9/24-9/27](#)).

A recently released analysis of an April survey also finds a focus on vaccinating health care workers. If there were not enough vaccines to go around initially, 92 percent rated front-line medical workers as high priority. Eighty-one percent said the same for high-risk children and high-risk older adults alike. It was three-quarters for high-risk middle-aged people, 72 percent for non-medical essential workers and 64 percent for pregnant women ([Gollust et al., 2020](#)).

A newly released survey conducted in August found a third of parents saying they were unlikely to have their child vaccinated for the seasonal flu this year. Top reasons included concerns about side effects (cited by 42 percent) and belief that the vaccine is not necessary (40 percent) or effective (32 percent). Fourteen percent said it was because they were staying away from health care sites because of COVID-19. Contrary to the advice of public health experts, just a third of parents said it's more important for their child to get vaccinated this year than in other years ([C.S. Mott Children's Hospital](#)).

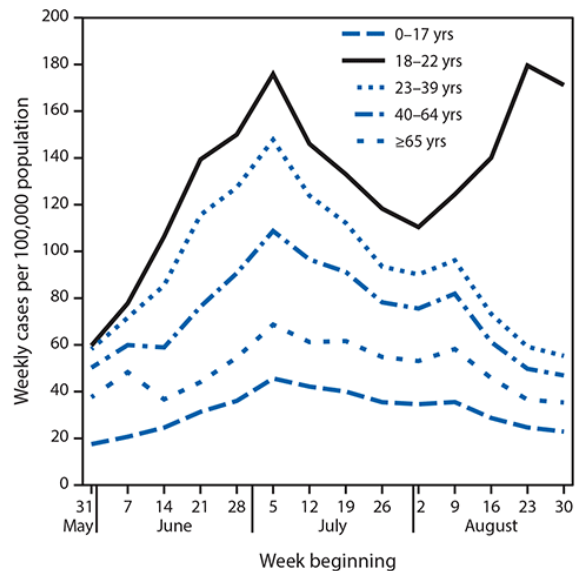
A poll among likely voters in the November election found that eight in 10 oppose “the distribution of a coronavirus vaccine before the completion of clinical trials,” including 88 percent of Democrats and 75 percent of Republicans. In terms of other preventive measures:

- Two-thirds support a “national mandate for every American to wear a mask when they expect to come within six feet of another person in public.” That includes 93 percent of Democrats compared with four in 10 Republicans.
- Sixty-three percent support reinstating lockdowns if public health experts recommend it during a second wave of the coronavirus. Again, Democrats are far more likely to support this than Republicans, 91 vs. 31 percent ([NYT/Siena 9/22-9/24](#)).

### Age Distribution of Coronavirus Cases

A new CDC report finds that the median age of patients with confirmed COVID-19 cases declined from 46 in May to 37 in July and 38 in August. From June to August, incidence was highest in adults age 20-29, accounting for more than 20 percent of all cases. Data from outbreaks in the South indicate that increases in positive tests among 20- to 39-year-olds preceded increases among adults age 60 and older by an average of 8.7 days, suggesting that younger adults may be contributing to community spread ([CDC 5/1-8/31](#)).

A separate analysis finds that in August and early September, when many young adults were returning to college campuses, weekly COVID-19 cases among 18- to 22-year-olds increased by 55 percent nationally (from 110 to 171 cases per 100,000). Among other age groups, weekly cases generally declined. The rise in cases in the 18-22 age group included a 144 percent increase in the Northeast (from 53 to 130 per 100,000) and a 123 percent increase in the Midwest (from 111 to 247 per 100,000).



Increased testing helps to account for at least some of the increase in positive cases.

Weekly tests among people age 18-22 increased 49 percent in this period, including a 171 percent increase in the Northeast and a 65 percent increase in the Midwest ([CDC 8/2-9/5](#)).

A third CDC report analyzing laboratory-confirmed cases in school-age children found that from May to mid-September the average weekly incidence of positive test results among adolescents age 12-17 was roughly twice that of children age 5-11 (37.4 vs. 19 per 100,000), suggesting that middle- and high-school students may be at greater risk of catching and spreading the virus than elementary school students.

As in the adult population, children with underlying health conditions were at greater risk than those without them for severe COVID-19 outcomes including hospitalization, admittance to the intensive care unit and death. Among the 58 percent of cases for which race/ethnicity information was available, 42 percent of the children were Hispanic/Latino, 32 percent were white and 17 percent were Black ([CDC 3/1-9/19](#)).

### Contact and Concern

Contact with and personal worry about the coronavirus is little changed this week:

- Six in 10 Americans know someone in the United States who has tested positive for the virus and two in 10 know someone who has died of it, both have been relatively stable since mid-August ([Axios/Ipsos 9/24-9/27](#)).
- Sixty-two percent are concerned that they or an immediate family member may catch the coronavirus, essentially unchanged since late May ([ABC/Post 9/21-9/24](#)).

However, slightly more likely voters think the worst of the pandemic is still to come than think it is over, 49 vs. 43 percent ([NYT/Siena 9/22-9/24](#)). In late August/early September, a similar question found a more optimistic view among all Americans, with 51 percent saying the worst was behind us compared with 43 percent who said the worst is yet to come ([CNN 8/28-9/1](#)).

### Daily Life

For the first time in data since mid-March, a slim majority of Americans (51 percent) say they've visited with friends and relatives in the past week. Amid the initial surge in cases last April, just two in 10 said the same. Four in 10 now say they've gone out to eat in the past week, also a numerical high, and roughly quadruple as many as said so in April ([Axios-Ipsos 9/24-9/27](#)).

### Economic Impacts

Views of the national economy have improved; four in 10 now describe it as excellent or good, up from 31 percent in August, though well below the recent peak of 65 percent in November 2018 ([ABC/Post 9/21-9/24](#)).

More than half of likely voters think President Trump is mainly (26 percent) or somewhat (29 percent) responsible for the recession. Half think the federal government is not doing enough to support the economy during the pandemic, while 37 percent say it's doing about the right amount and 9 percent think it's doing too much ([NYT/Siena 9/22-9/24](#)).

### Trust in Coronavirus Information

Trust in the federal government, the White House and President Trump to provide accurate information about the coronavirus all hit numerical lows this week. Thirty-two percent trust the federal government a great deal or fair amount, 28 percent trust the White House and 27 percent

trust Trump. More continue to trust their state government (56 percent), national public health officials (67 percent) and the CDC (68 percent) to provide accurate information on the virus.

In another indicator of public trust, just 27 percent of Americans think the actual number of Americans dying from the coronavirus is about the same as the number of deaths that have been reported, down 5 points from mid-September. The rest divide, 37-36 percent, on whether the actual number who have died is more or less than what's been reported ([Axios/Ipsos 9/24-9/27](#)).

### Government Response

Fifty-six percent of likely voters think the federal government's priority should be to limit the spread of the coronavirus, even if it hurts the economy, while a third think the federal government should prioritize restarting the economy, even if it increases the risk to public health. Partisan differences are vast – nine in 10 Democrats prioritize limiting the spread of the virus while two-thirds of Republicans emphasize restarting the economy.

Seventy-two percent support a “new 2-trillion-dollar stimulus package to extend increased unemployment insurance, send stimulus checks to most Americans and provide financial support to state and local governments.” Ninety-two percent of Democrats back such a measure, compared with a smaller majority of Republicans, 57 percent ([NYT/Siena 9/22-9/24](#)).

Most (56 or 58 percent) continue to disapprove of how Trump is handling the outbreak ([ABC/Post 9/21-9/24](#); [NYT/Siena 9/22-9/24](#)). By an 11-point margin, more trust Joe Biden over Trump to better handle the pandemic, 51-40 percent, but that's narrowed from a 20-point lead, 54-34 percent, in mid-July ([ABC/Post 9/21-9/24](#)).

### Health Care Issues

A survey among likely voters nationally and in 10 states (Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin) finds an even split between addressing the pandemic and maintaining insurance coverage for pre-existing conditions as voting issues.

Specifically, asked the most important health care issue in their vote for president, four in 10 nationally say it's addressing the “public health needs and economic costs of COVID-19” while essentially as many, 39 percent, say it's protecting “health insurance for people with pre-existing conditions.” Two in 10 say it's lowering the cost of healthcare, the third option offered. Young, Black and Hispanic likely voters are particularly likely to prioritize COVID-19.

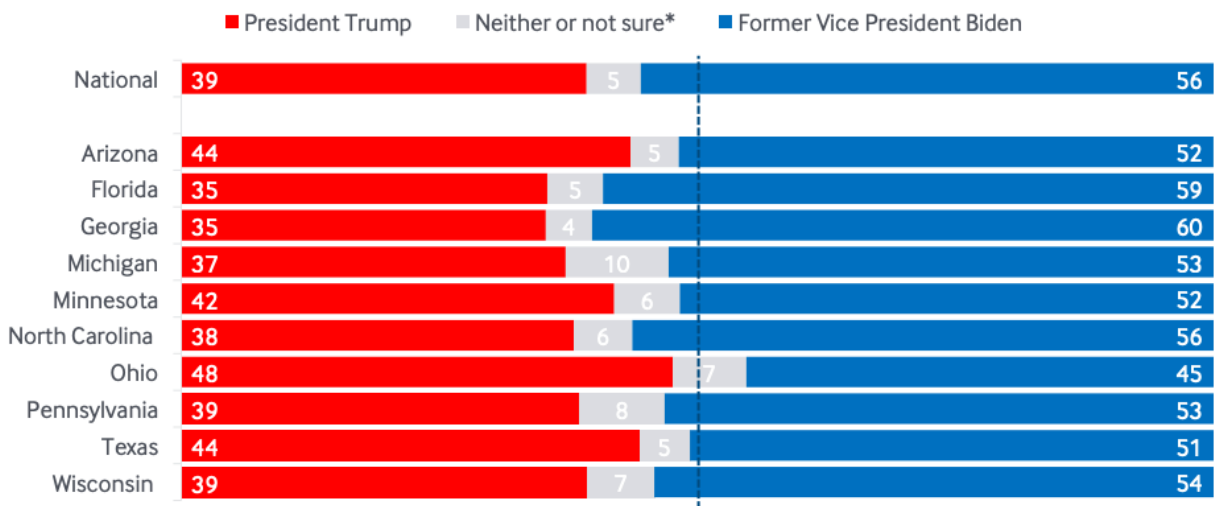
In nine out of the 10 states, Biden is viewed as more likely than Trump to address both the public health needs and economic costs of COVID-19. Biden's lead is widest in Florida (59-35 percent) and Georgia (60-35 percent) and narrowest in Texas (51-44 percent). Ohio is the exception – here likely voters split 48-45 percent, Trump-Biden.

Nationally, about half of likely voters (48 percent) say they'd feel very safe voting in person if the election were held today, ranging from 46 percent in Georgia to 55 percent in Wisconsin ([Commonwealth Fund 8/25-9/20](#)).



Based on what you are hearing from the presidential candidates so far, in your view, which candidate is the most likely to address both the public health needs and economic costs of COVID-19?

Percent of respondents age 18 and older who are likely voters



### Other State Results

In New York, 73 percent of likely voters approve of the job Gov. Andrew Cuomo is doing to address the pandemic, while 68 percent disapprove of the job Trump is doing on the virus. Fifty-four percent plan to vote in person on Election Day, 17 percent will vote in person before Election Day and 16 percent plan to vote by mail, with 13 percent undecided ([Siena 9/27-9/29](#)).

In New Hampshire, 80 percent approve of Gov. Chris Sununu's handling of the coronavirus situation, largely unchanged since June. Views of the federal government are less positive; 58 percent lack confidence in its ability to respond effectively to the outbreak and 57 percent disapprove of Trump's handling of the situation, though that's eased from 63 percent in July. About half (48 percent) say they trust science agencies like the CDC for information about the coronavirus, essentially unchanged since August but down from six in 10 in July ([UNH 9/24-9/28](#)).

In Georgia, 53 percent of likely voters disapprove of Trump's handling of the coronavirus response and it's 51-46 percent, Biden-Trump, in being seen as better able to handle it. Among those who have yet to vote, 42 percent plan to do so in person on Election Day, 32 percent plan to vote at an early voting location and 23 percent plan to vote by mail or absentee ballot ([Quinnipiac 9/23-9/27](#)).

In South Carolina, likely voters are more evenly split in views of Trump's response to the coronavirus – 48 percent approve, 50 percent disapprove. Seventy-one percent plan to vote in person on Election Day, far more than say so in Georgia ([Quinnipiac 9/23-9/27](#)).

In Pennsylvania, 62 percent of registered voters are at least somewhat worried that they or someone in their immediate family might catch the coronavirus. Fifty-seven percent disapprove of the way Trump is handling the outbreak and more trust Biden over Trump to handle it, 54-40 percent ([ABC/Post 9/21-9/26](#)). Another Pennsylvania poll finds a similar 55-38 percent split in who likely voters trust to do a better job handling the pandemic ([NYT/Siena 9/25-9/27](#)).

In Michigan and Wisconsin, more think Biden would be better than Trump when it comes to dealing with the coronavirus, 52-34 percent in Michigan ([NBC/Marist 9/19-9/23](#)) and 52-33 percent in Wisconsin ([NBC/Marist 9/20-9/24](#)).

In Virginia, two in 10 or more registered voters say they or someone in their household has been laid off (20 percent), had their hours cut (28 percent), had wages or salary reduced (26 percent), filed for unemployment (24 percent) or taken unpaid time off (19 percent) because of the outbreak. Thirty-seven percent say K-12 schools where they live should open with major adjustments; about a quarter say should not open at all, while another quarter say they should open with minor adjustments. One in 10 says they should be open as usual. More think a Biden/Harris administration would handle the coronavirus outbreak extremely or very well than say the same of the Trump/Pence administration, 36 vs. 28 percent. Thirty-two percent expect to vote by mail, far more than the 5 percent who say they typically vote this way. Fifty-four percent intend to vote in person on Election Day, down from the typical 82 percent ([Hampton/AP-NORC 9/8-9/14](#)).

### International Results

In Chile, fewer than half (45 percent) approve of the government's management of the coronavirus crisis, but more think Chile has done a better job managing the outbreak than the United States (54 percent say so) and other Latin American countries (51 percent). Fewer say Chile has done a better job than Asian countries (32 percent), European nations (28 percent) and Australia and New Zealand (17 percent).

Majorities disagree with relaxing restrictions such as extending the curfew for the weekends until 1 a.m. (62 percent), delaying the curfew from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. (59 percent), reopening hotels to reactivate tourism (58 percent) and allowing second homes to be visited in other regions with special permits (51 percent). Just 5 percent agree that face-to-face classes should resume for students in October, although 54 percent agree that solutions should be sought so students in communities without coronavirus cases can return to school in person ([Cadem 9/23-9/25](#)).

In Greece, two-thirds are worried about the epidemic in their country, the most since April. Four in 10 are quite worried, up from 34 percent in July. Three-quarters think masks are definitely (56 percent) or probably (18 percent) necessary to limit the spread of the virus ([Pulse RC 9/21-9/23](#)).

In Turkey, 38 percent say the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus has resulted in a close family member losing a job, up 13 points since early April. Four in 10 say a close family member has taken a leave of absence, up 14 points, and the number who report that a close family member has lost income due to a decline in their own business has nearly tripled from 23 to 67 percent. However, the share reporting that someone in their family has had their wages cut has held relatively steady since April, at 42 percent. Two-thirds evaluate the Turkish economy negatively and more than half (52 percent) think the economy will be worse in a year. Twenty-two percent think it will be better and two in 10 think it won't change ([Istanbul Economic Research 9/15-9/16](#)).

In Brazil, the economic fallout from the coronavirus has been severe – 68 percent say they've failed to pay a bill in the past month because of the pandemic, up 7 points in two weeks. Nearly everyone (95 percent) says they've noticed an increase in the price of market purchases and bills in recent weeks and most (55 percent) say that if they had an emergency and needed \$200, they would not have the money available ([PoderData 9/14-9/16](#)).

In Ukraine, half say they would not agree to get vaccinated against the coronavirus for free; 35 percent would and 15 percent have not decided. That's even though two-thirds are fearful of a second wave, up 17 points since June. Six in 10 are afraid that they or someone in their family might get infected; however, the number who are very afraid of this has declined 15 points since April, to 25 percent.

The share who say they're engaging in a variety of preventative measures has decreased across the board, but majorities continue to say they wear a mask (72 percent) and wash their hands more often and more thoroughly (68 percent). Far fewer say they're avoiding crowded places (38 percent), practicing social distancing (37 percent), disinfecting surfaces (36 percent), ventilating their premises more often (29 percent), avoiding leaving their homes unnecessarily (27 percent), avoiding public transportation (16 percent), visiting grocery stores less often (11 percent), switching to work remotely (7 percent) or shopping online (3 percent). Just three in 10 say that those around them have been observing safety measures against coronavirus since quarantine measures eased, down 5 points since June ([R&B Group 9/5-9/15](#)).

In Mexico, views of the pandemic's trajectory have improved – 36 percent think the number of coronavirus infections in the country is decreasing, up 16 points in the past month. Thirty-nine percent think the infection rate still is increasing, down from 51 percent in mid-August, and a quarter think the country currently is at the peak, essentially unchanged. More than half (54 percent) continue to support maintaining restrictions and isolation measures, down 6 points. Fifty-six percent say they worry a lot about the coronavirus issue, largely unchanged since June ([El Financiero 9/11-9/12](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).