



COVID-19 Survey Summary: November 6, 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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Vote counting has been slow but the pandemic has moved fast, with the United States surpassing 120,000 daily COVID-19 cases Thursday. Views that the coronavirus is not at all under control have grown and many continue to feel the worst is yet to come. Newly released polling also shows reluctance to share information with public health officials, a challenge to contact tracing.

Exit poll results in the presidential election show that the pandemic caused financial hardship for more than half of 2020 voters, more prioritize containing the virus over restarting the economy and two-thirds view mask wearing as a public health responsibility.

Coronavirus Concerns

Half of registered voters think the coronavirus is not at all under control in the United States, up 7 percentage points since early October and 10 points since September. Just 5 percent say the virus is completely under control, down from 11 percent in September.

Views that the coronavirus is not at all under control have increased broadly across groups since September, most sharply among political moderates (from 46 to 66 percent) and suburban women (from 41 to 57 percent), both groups that broke for Joe Biden in exit poll results ([Fox News 10/27-10/29](#), [Edison Research/ABC](#)).

Fifty-five percent of registered voters think the worst of the pandemic is yet to come – near what it was back in March, 60 percent. Of the rest, 25 percent say the worst is behind us (vs. 6 percent in March) and 15 percent say it isn't a major problem (31 percent previously) ([NBC/WSJ 10/29-10/31](#)).

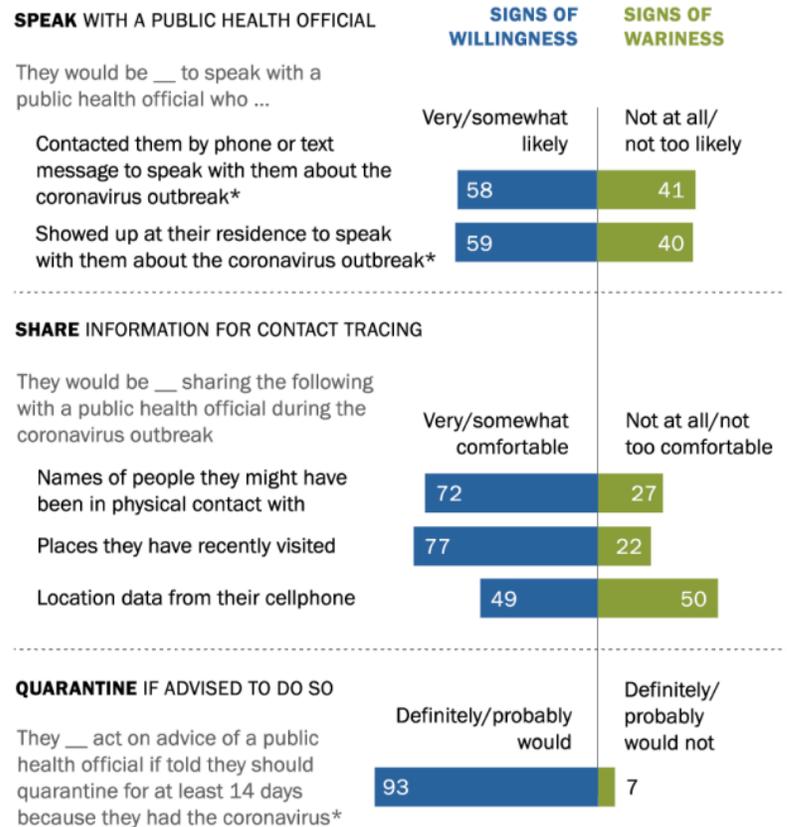
Contact Tracing

In newly released results from a July poll, 70 percent of adults had seen or heard about public health officials using contact tracing to try to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Many were wary about personally engaging in at least some key steps in the process. Among the results:

- Four in 10 said they would be not at all or not too likely to speak with a public health official who showed up at their residence to talk with them about the outbreak. It was essentially the same if contacted by phone or text.
- Just two in 10 said they normally answer calls from an unknown number. Two-thirds wait to check voicemail; 14 percent just disregard the call.
- Despite those challenges for tracers, more than three-quarters said they'd be at least somewhat comfortable sharing information with a public health official about places they had recently visited and 72 percent said they'd be comfortable sharing the names of people they might have been in physical contact with. Fewer, 49 percent, would be comfortable sharing location data from their cell phone.
- Privacy is a concern – half were not too or at all confident that the federal government would keep their personal records safe. Forty-one percent said the same of public health organizations.

Some say they would be comfortable or likely to engage with key steps of contact tracing programs during COVID-19, but others are wary or resistant

% of U.S. adults who say ...



*Based on the half sample of respondents randomly assigned to receive these questions. Respondents received one of the two questions about speaking. They were also randomly assigned to receive this quarantine question or a question about the difficulty they would have if advised to quarantine.

Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 13-19, 2020.
 "The Challenges of Contact Tracing as U.S. Battles COVID-19"

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- Nonetheless, nearly all (93 percent) said they definitely or probably would quarantine themselves for at least 14 days if they were told to do so by a public health official. That's though a third said doing so would be very or somewhat difficult.
- But when looking across all three steps in the process – speaking with public health officials, sharing information and quarantining – just about half of Americans, 48 percent, indicated comfort or likely compliance with all three ([Pew 7/13-7/19](#)).

Stress

Thirty-six percent in a mid-October poll had high psychological stress, using a standard gauge; 35 percent had moderate stress and 29 percent low stress. The mean on a 0-16 scale was 5.4, which is in line with previous, pre-pandemic results.

Forty-three percent of parents had high stress vs. 34 percent of non-parents; it rose to 51 percent among parents who reported having to help their children with virtual school at least once a day. High stress also was more prevalent among those following news about the pandemic very closely, 37 percent, vs. 27 percent among those following it not at all closely ([FDU 10/9-10/19](#)).

Government Response

Fifty-seven percent of registered voters disapprove of President Trump's handling of the coronavirus, unchanged in recent months ([NBC/WSJ 10/29-10/31](#)).

By a 25-point margin, more registered voters say the federal government's top priority should be to limit the spread of the coronavirus, even if it hurts the economy, than to restart the economy, even if it increases the risk to public health, 61-36 percent ([Fox News 10/27-10/29](#)).

The Presidential Election

The network exit poll found a narrower margin in pandemic priorities – 51 percent of voters prioritized stopping the spread of the virus while 42 percent emphasized rebuilding the economy. By a similar 51-43 percent, more voters picked Joe Biden over Trump to do a better job handling the pandemic.

Voters divided closely on whether the U.S. response to the pandemic has gone well or badly, though twice as many said it's gone very badly (34 percent) as very well (17 percent). (This question asked about the "U.S. response," not Trump's or his administration's.)

More than half of voters said the pandemic has caused them financial hardship, including 17 percent who said it's been severe. Two-thirds said they consider wearing a mask a public health responsibility, more than double the share who called it a personal choice.

A record 64 percent of voters cast their ballots early, including 34 percent by mail ([Edison Research/ABC](#)).

State Results

Exit polls found differences by state in pandemic priorities. In Iowa, Montana, Nevada and Ohio, voters split essentially evenly on whether it was more important to contain the coronavirus or rebuild the economy. At the other extreme, almost twice as many voters in California prioritized containing the virus as rebuilding the economy, 63-32 percent.

In terms of battleground states: in Arizona, the split was 50-44 percent, in Florida, it was 52-42 percent, in Georgia, it was 50-43 percent, in Michigan, 51-44 percent, in Pennsylvania, 54-43 percent and Wisconsin, 52-44 percent ([Edison Research/Washington Post](#)).

	Containing the Coronavirus	Restarting Economy
Arizona	50%	44%
California	63%	32%
Colorado	54%	39%
Florida	52%	42%
Georgia	50%	45%
Iowa	48%	47%
Maine	53%	42%
Michigan	51%	44%
Minnesota	54%	40%
Montana	45%	47%
Nevada	47%	49%
New Hampshire	55%	40%
North Carolina	51%	44%
Ohio	49%	46%
Pennsylvania	54%	43%
South Carolina	46%	48%
Texas	47%	46%
Virginia	54%	42%
Wisconsin	52%	44%

Source: [Edison Research/Washington Post](#)

In other exit poll results, in Wisconsin, battling one of the worse surges in coronavirus cases, 53 percent of voters said the U.S. response to the pandemic is going badly. By 52-44 percent, more picked Biden over Trump to do a better job handling the pandemic.

In Pennsylvania, more also picked Biden over Trump to better handle it, 54-43 percent. Forty-seven percent said they'd experienced financial hardship because of the pandemic ([Edison Research/ABC](#)).

International Results

In Chile, fears about the coronavirus continue to fade – 49 percent are worried about contracting it, down 6 points from last week and 10 points in two weeks to a low since mid-March. Forty-five percent approve of the government's management of the pandemic, up 10 points since last month. Sixty-three percent agree with the lifting of quarantine in their area and relaxation of confinement rules, a new high ([Cadem 10/28-10/30](#)).

In Russia, however, coronavirus worries have increased – 64 percent feel they're at danger of catching the virus, up from 49 percent in July. But just 36 percent say they're personally ready to get the coronavirus vaccine if it is free and voluntary, about the same as in August. In terms of protective measures, 92 percent say they're wearing a mask in public, 57 percent say they try to maintain social distance in public and 45 percent try not to visit public places or go to public events unnecessarily. Among less prevalent practices, a third are restricting their use of public transportation, three in 10 say they're trying to boost their immune system (e.g., by taking

vitamins), a quarter are avoiding travel to other regions or countries and 8 percent say they're working remotely or reducing the amount of time they spend in the office.

Three-quarters think government measures to restrict travel for seniors and people with chronic conditions are justified and 52 percent back a switch to distance learning for schoolchildren. Forty-eight percent say a temporary suspension of non-essential work is justified. Fewer, 39 percent, think a system of penalties for violation of restrictions is warranted; a third favor restrictions on movement in general. Sixty-two percent approve of the measures taken by the leadership in their region to combat the pandemic, unchanged since May, although the share who totally approve has dropped from 31 to 20 percent. Just 27 percent trust official information about the number of cases. Similar to the United States, the rest divide between thinking the numbers are understated (33 percent) or overstated (28 percent) ([Levada 10/22-10/28](#)).

In Brazil, the share who say they definitely would get a vaccine against COVID-19 has dropped from 82 percent in mid-August to 63 percent. Twenty-two percent now say they certainly will not get one, up from 7 percent. Fifty-six percent think a vaccine should be mandatory for all Brazilians. If several vaccines are available, four in 10 say the country of manufacture doesn't matter to them. Of the rest, 29 percent would prefer one made in the United States, two in 10 in Europe, 9 percent in China and 3 percent in Russia.

Fifty-two percent feel safe to vote in person in Brazil's mid-November municipal elections, up from 43 percent in late August/early September. Forty-three percent think this would be risky because of COVID-19, down from 49 percent. Three-quarters do not intend to travel for Christmas or New Years; 14 percent do and 11 percent are unsure. Sixty-five percent say their source of income has been harmed and 55 percent say they have failed to pay any bills in the past month because of the pandemic, largely unchanged in recent months ([PoderData 10/26-10/28](#)).

The British government has created a three-tier system of restrictions. In England, nearly half say their local area is at tier 1, the least restrictive; 37 percent are at tier 2; and 10 percent at tier 3, the most restrictive. Those in higher-tier areas report less socializing than those in tier 1 – for example, 24 percent in tier 3 and 20 percent in tier 2 have not met up with anyone indoors in the past week, compared with one in 10 in tier 1. And a third of employed adults in tier 2 and tier 3 say they've worked exclusively from home, compared with a quarter in tier 1 ([Office for National Statistics 10/21-10/25](#)).

In Germany, which is also dealing with a recent surge, half say current restrictions are sufficient, down 8 points since the beginning of October. A third think the restrictions do not go far enough, up 5 points, while 15 percent think they go too far, up 4 points. Half think efforts to enforce the current restrictions are insufficient, while a third think they're sufficient and 10 percent think they go too far, essentially unchanged since August. Three-quarters think their own, everyday behavior can strongly contribute to containing the pandemic. Nineteen percent think it can have a lesser impact and 6 percent don't think it can help at all ([ARD/Infratest Dimap 10/22-10/24](#)).

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

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