



COVID-19 Survey Summary: February 25, 2022

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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Few healthcare workers view the pandemic as largely under control and six in 10 don't think people are taking enough precautions against the coronavirus. Americans overall mainly favor lifting mask requirements in restaurants and businesses, but split on mask mandates in public schools and oppose lifting them for travel on airplanes, trains and buses.

Nearly two years into the pandemic, job satisfaction among healthcare workers has declined and a quarter agree they're likely to leave the profession in the near future. Four in 10 agree that the health care system is "on the verge of collapse." More than half of nurses who've treated coronavirus patients say at least one of those patients has died.

In other released results this week, a quarter of private businesses reported providing higher pay or bonuses because of the coronavirus, affecting nearly half of private-sector workers. Pay bumps were highest in the accommodation and food services sector, industries that have struggled to hire employees.

Another newly released study examines efforts by K-12 schools to adapt to the pandemic last spring, finding public schools substantially less prepared than private schools to shift to distance learning.

Among others, one survey finds differences in pandemic attitudes by news consumption; a report documents a rise in emergency department visits for eating and tic disorders among teenage girls; another finds an elevated rate of mental health disorders among coronavirus survivors one year after infection; and a fourth finds new prescriptions of ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine were higher in counties with the largest Republican vote share in 2020.

State results from Florida, Vermont and Virginia are included this week, as are international polls from Chile, Great Britain, Japan, the Netherlands and Russia.

[Outlooks & Policy Priorities](#)

New daily coronavirus cases have returned to their pre-Omicron level, down more than [90 percent](#) from their mid-January peak. Deaths tied to the virus remain elevated but are down nearly 40 percent from their recent high, averaging about [1,700](#) per day in the past week.

Still only 21 percent of healthcare workers in a mid-February survey saw the pandemic as mostly or completely under control ([USA Today/Ipsos 2/9-2/16](#)). More registered voters overall, albeit still only 36 percent, consider the pandemic completely or mostly controlled, the most since May ([Fox News 2/19-2/22](#)).

Healthcare workers are largely critical of how the general public has responded to the virus. As of mid-February, six in 10 did not think Americans were taking enough precautions to prevent the spread of the virus and 68 percent disapproved of how the public has responded to the pandemic generally. In an [agree/disagree](#) question, four in 10 agreed that “the American health care system is on the verge of collapse” ([USA Today/Ipsos 2/9-2/16](#)).

This comes as mask mandates are being dropped in [all but one state](#) and surveys [covered](#) earlier this month document substantial coronavirus fatigue. Fifty-three percent of registered voters say it’s time to remove mask mandates for employees and customers in restaurants and businesses; 44 percent think these should remain. It’s a close 50-46 percent on eliminating mask mandates for students in public schools. In contrast, most oppose removing mask requirements on airplanes, trains and buses, 58 vs. 39 percent ([Fox News 2/19-2/22](#)).

When it comes to policies on coronavirus vaccinations, voters divide on whether the priority should be to protect the freedom of Americans to choose, 51 percent, or requiring the vaccine to protect the safety of the public generally, 46 percent.

Priorities are shifting. Asked the most important issue facing the country, more registered voters pick inflation and jobs/economic growth than the pandemic, 38 vs. 15 percent ([Fox News 2/19-2/22](#)). Even in mid-January, with Omicron still prevalent, the number of Americans overall calling the coronavirus a top priority for the president and Congress was down 18 percentage points from a year earlier, to 60 percent. More, 71 percent, were focused on strengthening the economy ([Pew 1/10-1/17](#)).

Experiences of Healthcare Workers

Almost two years into the pandemic, two-thirds of healthcare workers say they’ve treated or provided assistance to coronavirus patients, rising to 84 percent of nurses and 86 percent of hospital workers. Among those who’ve treated coronavirus patients, 47 percent say one or more died, including 53 percent of nurses and 55 percent of those working in hospitals.

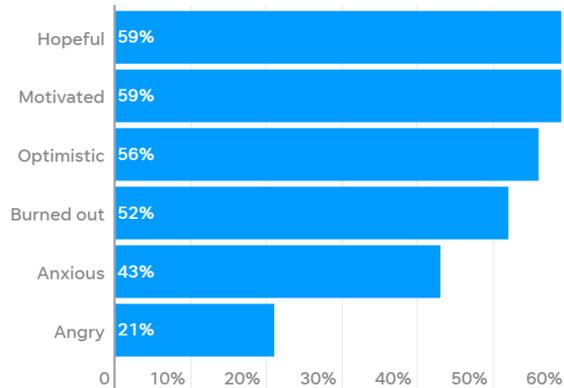
Eight in 10 healthcare workers who’ve treated a coronavirus patient say they’ve treated someone who was unvaccinated. Among this group, 67 percent had at least one unvaccinated patient who continued to express skepticism about the vaccine, while 38 percent had at least one patient who expressed regret about not getting a shot. Fewer healthcare workers who have treated

unvaccinated patients say their patients asked for unproven coronavirus treatments (26 percent) or that the patient or family criticized the care provided (30 percent).

Job satisfaction has waned over the course of the pandemic, with 80 percent of healthcare workers very or somewhat satisfied with their job, down 9 points from a comparable survey in spring 2021. Twenty-three percent agree that they're likely to leave the health care field in the near future.

Compared to spring 2021, fewer are hopeful (-17 points to 59 percent) or optimistic (-11 points to 56 percent) about coming into work these days. Similar shares report being motivated (59 percent) and burned out (52 percent) as did previously. Forty-three percent are anxious; 21 percent, angry ([USA Today/Ipsos 2/9-2/16](#)).

How health care workers feel about going to work these days:



Source: USA TODAY/Ipsos Poll of 1,170 health care workers conducted Feb. 9-16 online by the Ipsos probability-based KnowledgePanel. Margin of error +/-3.8 percentage points.

Coronavirus Response

The study of healthcare workers also finds them evenly split on Joe Biden's response to the coronavirus, 41-40 percent, approve-disapprove. Two of his administration's recent initiatives fare better: Eighty-three support mailing free at-home coronavirus tests to anyone who wants one and 85 percent support the distribution of free N95 masks through pharmacies and health clinics.

When it comes to the CDC's coronavirus response, healthcare workers approve rather than disapprove by a 20-point margin, 54 vs. 34 percent ([USA Today/Ipsos 2/9-2/16](#)).

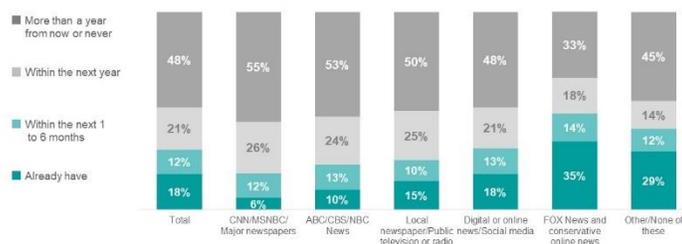
Among the general public, Biden holds a 47-52 percent approval rating for his response to the coronavirus, steady since November in this survey ([Gallup 2/1-2/17](#)). That's matched in another survey among registered voters, 47-51 percent, also essentially steady since November ([Fox News 2/19-2/22](#)).

News Consumption

A new analysis finds starkly different coronavirus-related attitudes and behavior by one's main source of news, including within partisan groups. In one example, people who mainly use Fox News and conservative news outlets are six times as likely to say they've returned to their normal pre-coronavirus life than those who mainly get their news from CNN, MSNBC or major newspapers, 35 vs. 6 percent.

Belief about when we will return to pre-COVID life varies by news consumption

When do you expect to be able to return to something like your normal, pre-COVID life?
By primary source of news



Source: Axios-Ipsos Coronavirus Index, waves 56-62. Data collected between Dec. 10, 2021 and Feb. 7, 2022.

Among other gaps, vaccine uptake is 87 percent among those who get their news from ABC, CBS or NBC, and 86 percent from CNN, MSNBC or major newspapers, compared with 70 percent of those who mostly turn to Fox News and conservative outlets and 61 percent of those who do not consume news from one of the 10 sources listed in the survey.

Differences emerge even among partisans. A quarter of Republicans who get news from Fox News or conservative outlets see returning to their normal pre-coronavirus life as a large or moderate risk, compared with 56 percent of Republicans who mostly get their news from ABC, CBS or NBC. Differences among Democrats are more subdued. Results are based on combined data from five survey waves this winter ([Axios-Ipsos 12/10-2/7](#)).

Business Impacts

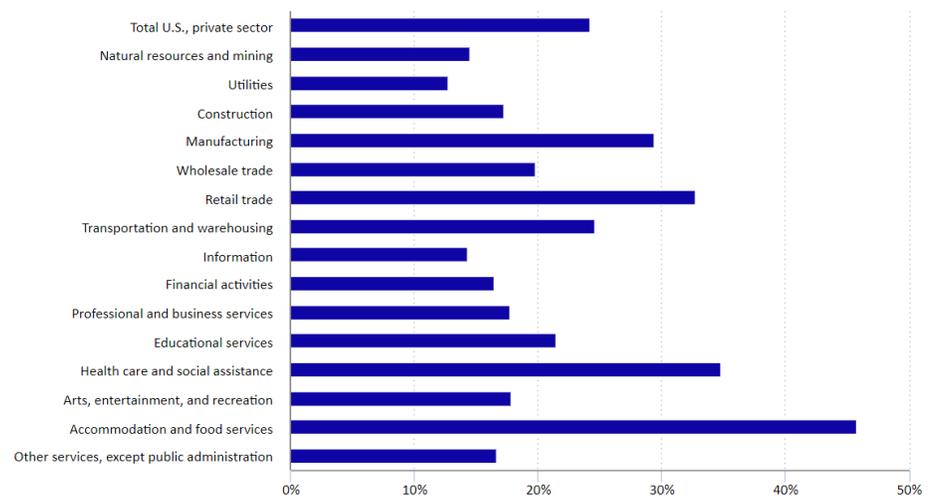
A newly released survey conducted in late June to September among private-sector businesses finds that a quarter increased pay or provided bonuses because of the pandemic, affecting an estimated 46 percent of private-sector workers.

Specifically, 15 percent of establishments (representing 21 percent of all private-sector employment) reported increasing base wages

because of the pandemic; 9 percent (representing 24 percent of private-sector employment) offered a one-time bonus for working during the pandemic and 6 percent (representing 16 percent of private-sector employment) offered temporary hazard pay or hourly bonuses. Businesses

in accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance, retail trade, and manufacturing increased pay or bonuses at higher rates than those in other sectors.

Establishments that made at least one of the changes in pay specified, by industry (percent)



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Among other shifts, 35 percent of all private businesses reported increased telework for some or all of their employees since the onset of the pandemic. Among them, six in 10 expected these changes to be permanent when the pandemic is over.

Eighteen percent overall said they required some or all of their employees to be vaccinated before working on-site last summer, corresponding to 15 percent of private-sector employees. About three in 10 businesses offered a financial incentive or paid time off for their employees to

get vaccinated, affecting 45 percent of private-sector workers ([U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 7/27-9/30](#)).

Comparatively, a February survey among businesses with fewer than 500 employees finds that 12 percent are requiring employees to have proof of vaccination before physically coming to work. Also in this study, 21 percent of businesses say the availability of current employees negatively affected their business in the previous week and 31 percent had difficulties hiring employees.

Difficulty hiring employees is highest in the accommodation and food sector (53 percent), followed by manufacturing and health care/social assistance, 40 percent apiece – some of the same sectors to report higher pay raises or bonuses last summer ([U.S. Census Bureau 2/14-2/20](#)).

K-12 Education

Preliminary data from the U.S. Department of Education shows the extent of disruptions to K-12 schools at the onset of the pandemic, particularly in public schools. In spring 2020, 77 percent of public schools reported moving to online learning, as did 73 percent of private schools.

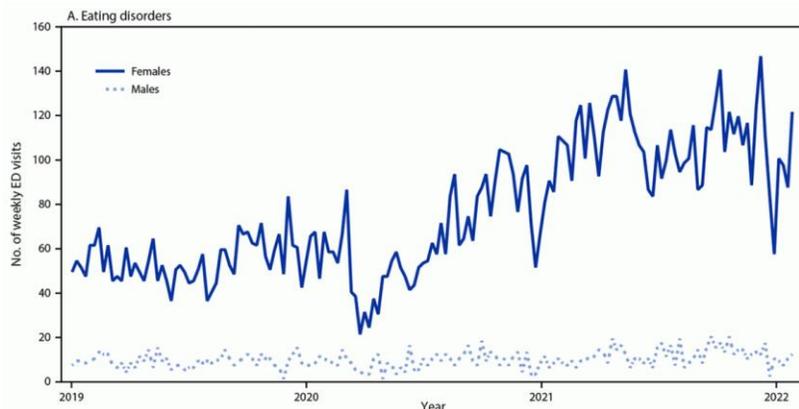
Private school teachers were twice as likely as public school teachers to say they had real-time interactions (e.g., real-time audio or video lessons in which students could ask questions) with more than three-quarters of their students in spring 2020, 61 vs. 32 percent. Seventy-six percent of private school teachers agreed that they had the support and resources needed to be effective, compared with 61 percent of public school teachers.

Fifty-eight percent of private school principals reported that all students in their school had home internet, far surpassing the 4 percent of public school principals who said the same. To address this, 61 percent of public school principals sent hotspots or other devices to students at home, compared with 9 percent of private school principals. Public school principals also were more apt to assign a computer or digital device to each student, 45 vs. 20 percent ([NTPS 2020](#)).

Adolescent Mental Health

A CDC analysis finds weekly emergency department visits for eating and tic disorders increased among girls age 12-17 in 2020, 2021 and January 2022 compared with 2019. Visits for depression and OCD

disorders similarly were higher among adolescent girls in 2021 than in 2019, as were visits for anxiety disorders, trauma- and stressor-related disorders and OCD in January 2022. Visits for tic disorders similarly increased among girls age 5-11 during 2020, 2021 and in January



2022 compared with 2019. The number of weekly visits for mental health conditions mostly decreased for boys under age 18 during this time.

The researchers say these mental health disorders may have been triggered by pandemic-related factors, such as lack of routine, emotional distress and changes in food availability. That said, they say increased visits for tic disorders among adolescent girls is “atypical” because these disorders typically present earlier in childhood and are more prevalent among boys. The authors theorize that exposure to severe tics on social media platforms might be associated with increases in tics and tic-like behavior among teenage girls ([CDC 2/18](#)).

Weekly visits for mental health conditions among teenage girls increased even as emergency department visits declined overall. According to a second CDC report, the total number of weekly emergency visits among children age 0-17 was down by 51 percent in 2020, 22 percent in 2021 and 23 percent in January 2022 vs. 2019. The declines occurred across all age groups, with little differences between boys and girls ([CDC 2/18](#)).

The [U.S. Surgeon General](#) and several [pediatric health organizations](#) announced a national emergency for youth mental health in 2021, partially because of pandemic-induced isolation. Studies have documented a sharp rise in [suicide attempts](#) among teenage girls and increases in [eating disorders](#), as covered in previous weekly summaries.

Long-COVID & Mental Health

A new study finds evidence that coronavirus survivors are at increased risk of mental health disorders one year after infection. Using data from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, a cohort of 153,848 people who survived the first 30 days of coronavirus infection was compared against contemporary and historical control groups, each with more than 5 million people. At roughly one year after infection, the authors found that the coronavirus group was at increased risk of anxiety disorders, risk difference, depressive disorders, stress and adjustment disorders, use of antidepressants and benzodiazepines, as well as opioid and substance use disorders, neurocognitive decline and sleep disorders than those in both the contemporary and historical control groups. The risk of mental health disorders was consistently higher among patients who survived the coronavirus than those who survived the seasonal flu ([Xie et al., 2022](#)).

Ivermectin & Hydroxychloroquine

A new study finds that rates of new prescriptions for ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine in late 2020 were higher in counties with the largest Republican vote share in the 2020 presidential election. New ivermectin prescriptions in December 2020 were 96 percent higher than a year previously, peaking in the top quartile of Republican counties (+80.9 per 100,000 healthcare enrollees, vs. the lowest quartile). From July-December 2020, prescriptions of hydroxychloroquine were 146 percent higher than in the same period in 2019 and also were higher in the top quartile of 2020 GOP counties (+42.4 per 100,000 vs the bottom quartile). There were no differences by county vote share apparent in 2019 data. (Data include medical claims for all outpatient visits by adults from January 2019-December 2020 in counties with at least 50 commercial and Medicare Advantage enrollees.) ([Barnett et al., 2022](#)).

State Results

In Florida, 11 percent of registered voters think the coronavirus is the most important problem facing the state, half the share who mentioned the economy, jobs and unemployment. Fifty-eight percent are against a requirement for politicians and elected officials to publicly disclose their coronavirus vaccination status; 38 percent support this ([University of North Florida 2/7-2/20](#)).

In Virginia, roughly six in 10 registered voters think coronavirus vaccines should be required for various groups, including medical providers such as doctors, nurses and lab techs (61 percent); members of the U.S. military (58 percent); first responders such as police officers or firefighters (58 percent); and people in jail or prison (57 percent). Half or fewer say the vaccines should be required for students in high school (49 percent), middle school (47 percent) or elementary school (42 percent). More think that the decision to require masks in public school should be based on health data and information from health experts than from parents, 56 vs. 41 percent ([Christopher Newport University 1/26-2/15](#)).

An early January poll in Vermont found mixed reactions to reports about people moving there from other states during the pandemic. Twenty-eight percent thought people moving to the state was good for Vermont, 33 percent bad and 34 percent neutral ([VPR/Vermont PBS 1/3-1/9](#)).

International Results

A third of Japanese voters think Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has shown leadership throughout the pandemic; 53 percent think he has not. Approval of his government's pandemic response is split, 45-44 percent, approve-disapprove. Eighty-one percent express worry that the latest surge in infections might interrupt public services because of missed work ([Asahi Shimbun 2/19-2/20](#)).

Sixty-four percent in that survey approve of the government's booster campaign, down 4 points from January. In another, though, three-quarters think the booster program is slow. Fifty-four percent in this study approve of the government's handling of the pandemic. Forty-six percent think the government's plan to [ease](#) border restrictions in March is happening too soon, while 35 percent think it's appropriate and 16 percent think it's happening too late ([Mainichi 2/18-2/20](#)).

In Chile, where daily cases are [dropping](#), 56 percent are highly worried about the coronavirus, compared with 61 percent three weeks ago. Sixty-three percent approve of the government's handling of the pandemic, 16 points from its high in mid-December ([Cadem 2/16-2/17](#)).

Half of Dutch adults support the government's approach to the coronavirus generally, up 6 points from January. Approval is higher for health policy, 54 percent, than for economic policy, 38 percent. A high of 85 percent support relaxing (47 percent) or eliminating (38 percent) precautionary measures. Still, 56 percent think the requirement for people to stay home and get tested if they experience symptoms should be maintained rather than dropped immediately, and 49 percent say the same for the requirement to wear masks on public transit. Sixty-two percent apiece think a 10 p.m. curfew on restaurants and places such as theaters, museums and stadiums should be eliminated immediately. About a fifth support mandatory vaccinations, down from 36

percent in December. The number who report feeling lonelier than they did before the pandemic fell 7 points in a month to 29 percent ([I&O Research 2/11-2/14](#)).

Forty-three percent of British adults are very or somewhat worried about the impact of the coronavirus on their lives, down from two-thirds in late December and early January to the fewest since October. Forty-nine percent report taking a rapid test in the past week, down a slight 4 points in two weeks; just 2 percent said they had difficulty finding a test, down 7 points. About a third always or often maintained social distancing, the fewest since the question first was asked in September 2020. Seventy-seven percent always or often wore face masks while in shops, down from 94 percent two weeks ago; 78 percent wore a face mask the entire time they were on public transit, down from 90 percent. These declines follow an [easing](#) of restrictions Jan. 27.

Three-quarters of Britons say their cost of living has increased, up 7 points in two weeks. Increases in the price of food (90 percent), gas and electricity bills (77 percent), and fuel (69 percent) were the most-reported reasons. To cope, half reduced spending on non-essential items, just over a third shopped around more or used less fuel at home and three in 10 reduced spending on food and essential items ([Office for National Statistics 2/3-2/13](#)).

Forty-six percent of Russians reported either testing positive for the coronavirus (26 percent), feeling sick but not getting tested (13 percent) or experiencing symptoms but testing negative (7 percent) in late January. Among those who felt ill, half reported loss of taste and smell and four in 10 mentioned fatigue ([VCIOM 1/25](#)).

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

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