



## COVID-19 Survey Summary: March 4, 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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Polls this week find optimism that the worst of the coronavirus is behind us, with seven in 10 Americans saying the country should move toward opening. Still, only a third see the pandemic as fully or mostly controlled, and views on lifting restrictions are conflicted.

One poll finds majority support for ending all government-imposed coronavirus mandates. In another, offering head-to-head alternatives, six in 10 prioritize efforts to control the virus over dropping all restrictions.

Six in 10 voice concern for immunocompromised people and half worry about death rates and hospital capacity if restrictions are lifted. At the same time, more than six in 10 are worried about the impact of continued mandates on children's mental health and local businesses alike.

On balance, about half continue to support mask mandates, down since January, while most now oppose businesses requiring customers to show proof of vaccination. Broader concerns about the virus have fallen and the number of Americans resuming normal pre-coronavirus activities has risen, with frequent mask wearing its lowest since the summer.

This week's summary also includes a modeling study estimating that more than five million children worldwide have lost parents or caregivers to the disease.

State results from New Hampshire and Wisconsin are included, as are polls from Bulgaria, Canada, Chile and Mexico.

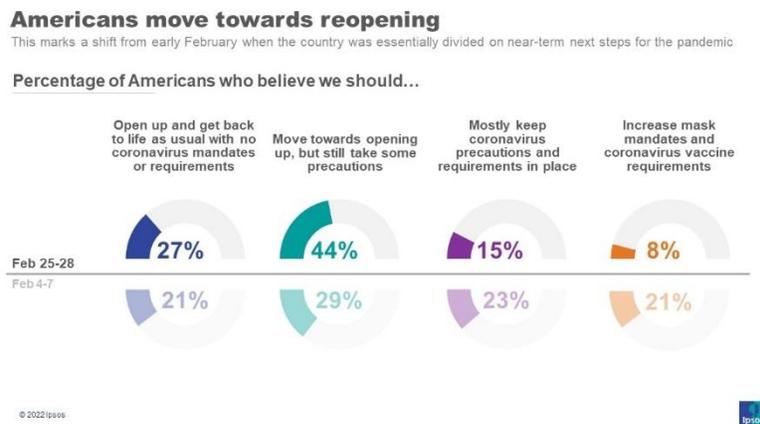
### Transitions & Pandemic Policy

Lifting restrictions poses perceived risks and benefits alike. Sixty-one percent are very or somewhat worried that immunocompromised people will be left behind because of their increased risk, 49 percent worry about increased deaths in their community and 48 percent worry they'll be unable to get needed medical care because local hospitals will be overwhelmed.

On the other hand, 65 percent express worry that if mask and testing requirements are not lifted, children’s mental health will suffer; 63 percent see harm to local business. Thirty-eight percent are worried that their family’s personal financial situation will worsen ([KFF 2/9-2/21](#)).

Caution wins out in a question that pits controlling the virus against eliminating all restrictions: Fifty-eight percent say it’s more important to control the spread even if it means having some restrictions on normal activities, while 38 percent prefer no restrictions on normal activities even if it hurts efforts to control the spread ([ABC News/Washington Post 2/20-2/24](#)). Results are more closely divided in a question that allows for some continued precautions: Forty-four percent pick “controlling COVID with vaccinations, masking, and other measures, even if that delays a return to normal life,” while 48 percent prefer “resuming our normal lives, even if that means not taking some COVID precautions” ([USA Today-Suffolk 2/16-2/20](#)).

In another poll, seven in 10 support moving toward opening, up from half a month ago. Forty-four percent say this should be done with “some precautions,” 27 percent with “no mandates or requirements.” The rest want either to keep current requirements in place (15 percent) or increase mask and vaccine rules (8 percent).



The same poll finds 54 percent support for federal, state and local governments lifting all coronavirus restrictions, up from 44 percent in early February. That said, 51 percent also support their state or local government requiring masks in all public places, down from 67 percent in early January. Fifty-five percent of workers support their employer requiring all customers and guests to be masked at their workplace, down from 71 percent.

Fifty-eight percent oppose businesses requiring customers to show proof of vaccination before being allowed into stores or restaurants, up 10 percentage points since early February. Employed adults split 52-47 percent on whether their employer should require vaccinations for all staff, vs. 57-43 percent support in early January ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)).

Half in another poll favored requiring masks when around people outside of one’s home, down from 55 percent in August and as many as three-quarters in the first year of the pandemic. This poll was conducted before the CDC relaxed its mask guidelines Feb. 25 ([AP-NORC 2/18-2/21](#)).

Forty-three percent favored requiring all students and staff in K-12 schools to wear masks in another study conducted before the CDC revised its guidelines, down from 56 percent in September. An additional 14 percent thought only unvaccinated students and staff should be required to wear masks. More said decisions on mask and testing rules should be left to states and communities, rather than federal guidance, 57 vs. 39 percent ([KFF 2/9-2/21](#)).

## Concerns & Outlooks

New average daily cases have returned to their pre-Omicron level and hospitalizations are down more than [40 percent](#) in two weeks. Deaths linked to the virus are 40 percent off their Omicron peak, though still averaging about [1,600](#) per day.

A third of Americans are extremely or very concerned about the coronavirus, down from half in early January; an additional 31 percent are somewhat concerned ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)). A quarter are extremely or very worried that they or someone in their family will be infected, down 12 points since mid-January to its lowest since June, with an additional 34 percent somewhat worried ([AP-NORC 2/18-2/21](#)).

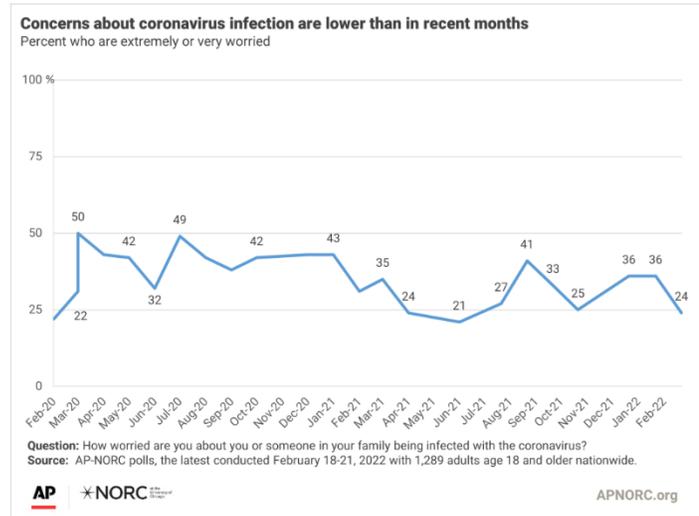
Even as concerns ease, only a third see the coronavirus outbreak in the United States as completely or mostly under control; half say it's "somewhat" controlled and 15 percent, not at all controlled. The latter is down from 41 percent in a poll of registered voters in January ([ABC News/Washington Post 2/20-2/24](#)).

In another gauge, 59 percent say the country's pandemic response these days is not so good or poor ([KFF 2/9-2/21](#)).

Still, 72 percent are generally optimistic that the United States is nearing the end of the pandemic ([NPR/PBS/Marist 2/15-2/21](#)). Most, 62 percent, think the worst of the pandemic is behind us; 17 percent think the worst is yet to come. (An additional 17 percent don't see it as a problem.) [KFF 2/9-2/21](#). Nearly eight in 10 agree we're in a better place than a year ago and two-thirds agree we're moving toward a time when the virus won't disrupt our daily lives ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)).

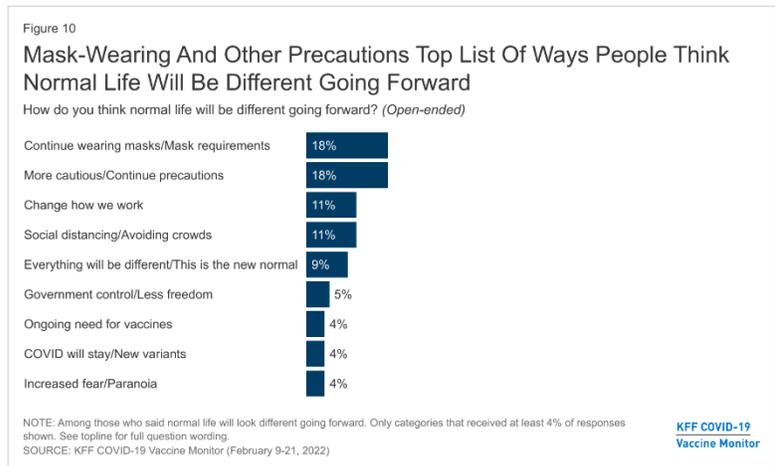
Three in 10 think it will take more than a year for them to return to their normal life (if ever), down from 52 percent in early January. Forty-four percent think this will occur within the next year; 25 percent say they're back to normal now, up from 18 percent in early February ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)).

Thirty-five percent in another survey think it's currently safe for most people to resume their normal pre-pandemic activities and three in 10 think this will be the case by mid-fall. A quarter say it'll be another year, if ever ([KFF 2/9-2/21](#)). A question with different response options produces more conservative estimates: Thirty-one percent think the pandemic will end in the



United States by the end of 2022, including 14 percent within the next few months; 25 percent in a few years and 32 percent never ([USA Today-Suffolk 2/16-2/20](#)).

The line between the end of the pandemic and “normal” life is blurred. Eighty-four percent agree that the coronavirus has changed Americans’ lives forever ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)). Seventy-one percent think normality will look different than before the pandemic. In an open-ended question, 18 percent say they’ll continue to wear masks or think mask mandates will endure; as many say they’ll be more cautious and continue to take precautions. Eleven percent apiece say they’ll continue to social distance or people will work differently ([KFF 2/9-2/21](#)).



### Daily Life

Forty percent now view returning to their pre-coronavirus life as a large or moderate risk to their health and well-being, down 18 points since early January. Fewer see large risks from in-person gatherings with friends and family (-15 points to 10 percent), dining in at a restaurant (-13 points to 8 percent) or traveling on an airplane or mass transit (-16 points to 24 percent).

Precautionary behaviors similarly have fallen and social activities have resumed:

- Sixty-one percent say they’ve gone out to eat in the past week, up 15 points since early January to the most since June.
- Sixty-three percent have visited friends or family, up 13 points since early January to the most since July.
- Forty-one percent have social distanced (i.e., stayed at home and avoided others as much as possible), down 16 points since early January to the fewest since June.
- Thirty-two percent report wearing a mask at all times when outside the home, down 11 points since early February to the fewest since early August ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)).

Most, 54 percent, say their day-to-day life is largely (22 percent) or almost (31 percent) back to normal, while four in 10 say their life still is disrupted by the pandemic ([KFF 2/9-2/21](#)). About as many, 56 percent, say they’ve fully or mostly returned to their normal, pre-coronavirus life, though that’s 10 points fewer than in July ([ABC News/Washington Post 2/20-2/24](#)).

## Vaccines

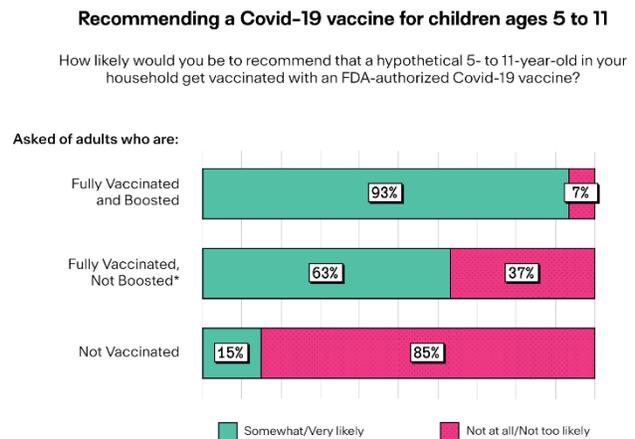
Poll estimates of the share of adults who have received at least one vaccine dose range from 73 to 78 percent ([KFF 2/9-2/21](#), [USA Today-Suffolk 2/16-2/20](#), [Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#), [AP-NORC 2/18-2/21](#)). In three, uptake is roughly steady since late September ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#), [AP-NORC 2/18-2/21](#), [KFF 2/9-2/21](#)).

Booster uptake has stabilized after sharp increases in late 2021. Estimates of the share of vaccinated adults who've gotten a booster range from 60 to 70 percent ([KFF 2/9-2/21](#), [USA Today-Suffolk 2/16-2/20](#), [Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)).

The [CDC](#) continues to have a higher estimate of the share of adults who have received at least one dose, now 88 percent, and a lower estimate of booster uptake among fully vaccinated adults, 47 percent. As noted [previously](#), the agency acknowledges challenges in its estimates.

A newly released survey in January found a link between misinformation and vaccination status. Nearly three-quarters of adults who had not been fully vaccinated were in a high misinformation group, as were 39 percent of fully vaccinated adults without a booster, compared with 14 percent of those with a booster.

Among those who were not fully vaccinated, just 15 percent were likely to recommend vaccination for a 5- to 11-year-old. This rose to 63 percent of those fully vaccinated but not boosted and 93 percent of those who'd received a booster. ([Annenberg 1/11-1/17](#)).



\* Fully Vaccinated means two doses of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine  
Source: Annenberg Public Policy Center ASK survey, January 11-17, 2022  
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## Government Response

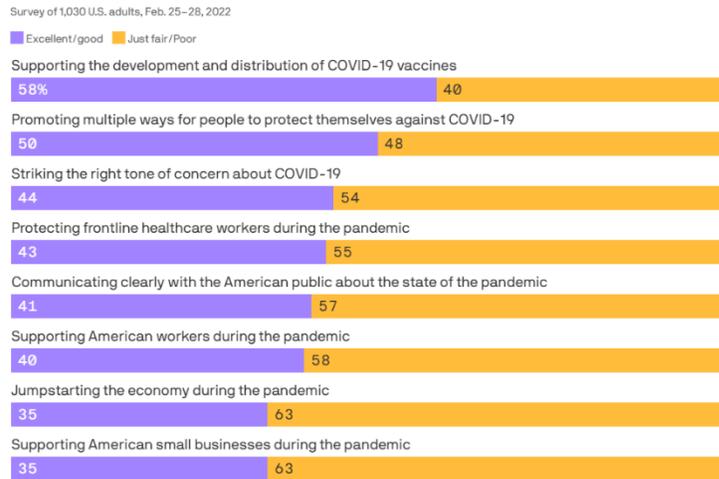
Americans are essentially split on Biden's handling of the pandemic in three polls (46-48, 47-49 and 50-49 percent, approve-disapprove; it's 44-50 percent in a fourth ([USA Today-Suffolk 2/16-2/20](#), [NPR/PBS/Marist 2/15-2/21](#), [AP-NORC 2/18-2/21](#), [ABC News/Washington Post 2/20-2/24](#)). After falling since the summer, one finds a moderate improvement in Biden's ratings since mid-January, up 5 points ([AP-NORC 2/18-2/21](#)).

Fifty-eight percent say Biden has done an excellent or good job supporting the development and distribution of vaccines. About six in 10 rate him negatively on other items – supporting small businesses during the pandemic, jumpstarting the economy, supporting workers and communicating clearly about the state of the pandemic. Fifty-five percent give him a negative score on protecting frontline healthcare workers ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)).

Nonetheless, 47 percent think Biden deserves credit for helping the country through the pandemic, vs. 40 percent who think he deserves blame for hurting the country amid the crisis ([KFF 2/9-2/21](#)). More think the federal government has made the country's recovery from the pandemic better rather than worse, albeit by a fairly close 53-45 percent ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)).

Among people who watched Biden's State of the Union address, 73 percent say the policies he proposed on the pandemic would move the country in the right direction, up from 64 percent in this group before the speech ([CNN 2/22-2/26, 3/1](#)).

How Americans rate Biden's performance on coronavirus issues



Data: Axios/ipsos poll; Chart: Will Chase/Axios

The pandemic continues to slip on Americans' list of priorities. In mid-February, 11 percent said it should be Biden's top priority ([NPR/PBS/Marist 2/15-2/21](#)). In another, 69 percent said it would be important in their midterm vote, vs. nine in 10 for the economy/inflation and about eight in 10 apiece for voting rights, foreign policy, health care costs and immigration ([KFF 2/9-2/21](#)). In an open-ended question, 13 percent mentioned the virus as the most important problem facing the country ([Gallup 2/1-2/17](#)).

## CDC

Six in 10 adults say they're very (16 percent) or somewhat (45 percent) familiar with the CDC's new guidelines on mask wearing. Sixty-one percent have a great deal or fair amount of trust in the CDC, essentially unchanged since early January. It was about seven in 10 last spring ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)).

In a three-category measure, 31 percent say they have a great deal of confidence in the agency, 43 percent only some confidence and 26 percent hardly any. It was similar when last asked in September 2020 ([AP-NORC 2/18-2/21](#)).

## Pandemic Impacts

Ninety-one percent of adults personally know someone who tested positive for the virus and 46 percent know someone who has died, highs in data since spring 2020. Black people are more apt than whites to know someone who died, 54 vs. 44 percent. (It's 50 percent among Hispanics.) It's 54 percent among rural residents, falling to 46 and 41 percent in suburban or urban areas ([Axios-Ipsos 2/25-2/28](#)).

An updated study estimates that 5.2 million children globally experienced coronavirus-associated orphanhood or a caregiver death from March 2020 through October 2021. This includes 3.5 million affected by orphanhood or the death of a primary caregiver and 1.7 million by the death of a secondary caregiver. Paternal orphans were far more prevalent than maternal orphans, 77 vs. 24 percent. The study defines orphanhood as the death of one or both parents, primary caregiver loss as the death of a parent or a custodial grandparent and secondary caregiver loss as the death of a co-residing grandparent or kin age 60 or older. Global estimates were extrapolated from data from 21 countries ([Unwin et al., 2022](#)).

Thirty-five percent of Americans say they or members of their family are facing more mental health challenges compared with before the pandemic, vs. 7 percent who say these challenges have lessened. Fifty-three percent report no change ([USA Today-Suffolk 2/16-2/20](#)).

### Employment

The U.S. economy added 678,000 jobs in February, according to preliminary data, lowering the unemployment rate to 3.8 percent. While the economy consistently has posted strong job gains since May, there are still roughly two million fewer jobs than in pre-pandemic February 2020.

There's improvement on other fronts. In February, 4.2 million people reported that they had been unable to work because their employer closed or lost business due to the pandemic, down from 6.0 million in January. Fewer employed people teleworked because of the coronavirus in February, down 2.4 points in a month to 13.0 percent. And 1.2 million people not in the labor force were prevented from looking for work because of the pandemic, down from 1.8 million in January ([BLS 3/4](#)).

### Child Care

In mid-February, 51 percent of parents with children younger than 12 at home said it's been very or somewhat difficult to handle child-care responsibilities in recent weeks because of the coronavirus outbreak, similar to results in October. More mothers reported difficulties than fathers, 58 vs. 43 percent.

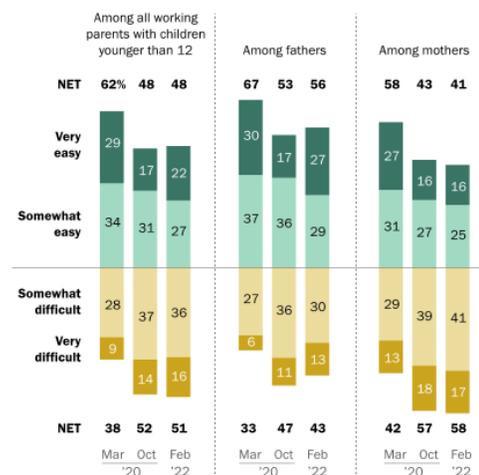
Eight in 10 parents who rely on outside child care for children younger than six said it would be difficult to find backup care if needed ([Pew 2/7-2/13](#)).

### State Results

About six in 10 Wisconsin registered voters are very or somewhat concerned about the pandemic in the state. As many call the decision to close businesses and schools in 2020 appropriate, essentially

#### Shares of working parents who report difficulty handling child care responsibilities have changed little since 2020

Among employed parents with children under age 12 at home, % saying it has been \_\_\_ to handle child care responsibilities in recent weeks due to the coronavirus outbreak



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Figures may not add up to subtotals due to rounding. February 2022 and March 2020 numbers based on employed adults; October 2020 numbers based on employed adults with one job or who have more than one job but consider one to be their primary job. March and October 2020 question wording asked about handling child care responsibilities "during the coronavirus outbreak." February question asked about "in recent weeks due to the coronavirus outbreak." Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 7-13, 2022.

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unchanged since August while down from 86 percent in March 2020; about a third now call it an overreaction. Fifty-three percent trust Gov. Tony Evers for information about the pandemic, steady since October ([Marquette Law School 2/22-2/27](#)).

In New Hampshire, 9 percent of adults call the pandemic the most important problem facing the state, third of eight items behind jobs/economy and housing ([UNH 2/18-2/22](#)). Twenty-seven percent have tested positive for the coronavirus at least once, including 3 percent in the past month and 18 percent in the past three months. Forty-seven percent trust science agencies such as the CDC for pandemic information; 35 percent don't trust them and 18 percent aren't sure.

Roughly eight in 10 have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine and 61 percent overall have received a booster dose. Among those fully vaccinated but without a booster, three in 10 are likely to get one. Fewer than 1 percent of the unvaccinated are likely to get a shot; 76 percent of the vaccine hesitant don't believe it's effective ([UNH 2/18-2/22](#)).

### International Results

In Bulgaria, 61 percent agree with the statement, "I doubt that the coronavirus vaccines are really effective." Forty-seven percent agree that they're willing to give up some rights to slow the pandemic's spread, down from 83 percent in March 2020 ([Gallup Bulgaria 10-12/2021](#)).

Two-thirds of Canadian adults think the [trucker convoy protests](#) were not effective in getting governments to reconsider coronavirus restrictions ([Nanos 2/23-2/24](#)).

In Chile, 53 percent are highly worried about catching the coronavirus, relatively steady since the end of January. Sixty-three percent approve of President Sebastián Piñera's handling of the pandemic ([Cadem 2/23-2/25](#)).

Seven in 10 Mexicans give the government high marks for its management of vaccines, compared with negative ratings on corruption, the economy and security. Seventeen percent say the coronavirus is the country's most important issue, last of three issues ([El Financiero 2/11-13, 2/18-19, 2/25-26](#)).

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

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