



COVID-19 Survey Summary: October 14, 2022

Editor's note: This, our 125th report since April 3, 2020, marks the final installment of our SEAN COVID-19 survey summaries. We're also discontinuing updates of the SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive, which now includes nearly 1,750 probability-based surveys conducted worldwide, with more than 24,000 individual questions and hundreds of datasets and related research materials.

While no longer updated, the current collection will remain available at <https://covid-19.parc.us.com>. We're grateful to the more than 100 survey organizations that have shared their data for this project, and doubly grateful for their critical efforts to further our understanding of public attitudes and behavior in the coronavirus pandemic.

New polling shows a sharp divide in pandemic realities. Most Americans have moved on, with two-thirds feeling safe enough to carry out their normal, pre-pandemic life, even as half say the pandemic never will be over. Among those who still see a high risk, however, a large majority will continue to take precautions moving forward, with no end in sight.

Just a third say it's important for the federal government to address the pandemic, down from about seven in 10 at this time last year. And large majorities oppose instituting new mask or social distancing guidelines or employee vaccine mandates.

Polling this week also gauges attitudes toward the country's coronavirus response, finding mixed approval of figures including Joe Biden, Dr. Anthony Fauci and public health officials. Separately, majorities point to misinformation about vaccines and partisan disagreements as major contributing factors in the country's difficulties handling the pandemic.

Despite pleas by health officials, just 6 percent of the fully vaccinated in one poll and 1 percent of all adults in another have received an updated booster shot targeting new variants. In one measure, six in 10 of the fully vaccinated say they are likely to get a shot but have not yet done so, despite being eligible since Labor Day weekend. And a longitudinal study finds that formerly held acceptance of misinformation about non-coronavirus vaccines corresponds with coronavirus vaccine hesitancy.

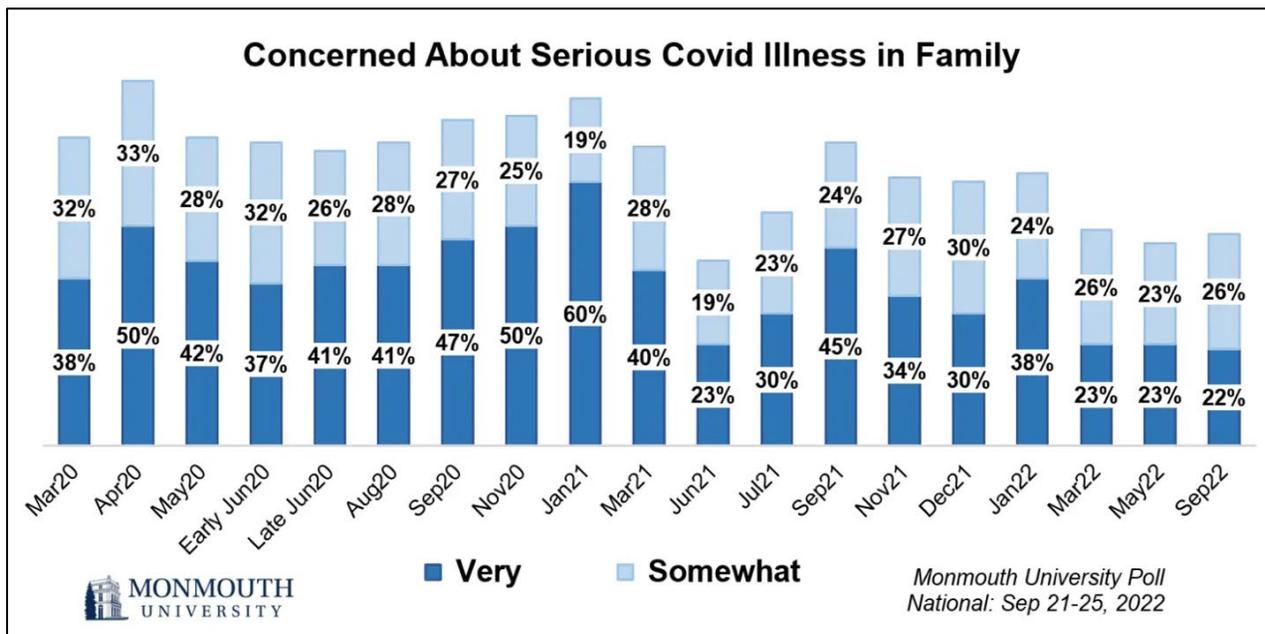
Other polling finds Americans expressing high-level concern over the impacts of the pandemic on teenager mental health and wellbeing, and shows the pandemic is a low-tier issue in the upcoming midterm elections.

State results in Wisconsin and international results in Great Britain and South Korea also are included in this, our final summary.

[Coronavirus Concerns & Precautions](#)

Public concern is steady in recent polling as new daily [cases](#) continue to trend down. In one gauge, 38 percent are at least moderately concerned about the coronavirus, steady in recent weeks but down 7 percentage points from an early-August peak ([CDC 9/18-9/24](#)). In another, about half are very (22 percent) or somewhat (26 percent) concerned about someone in their family becoming seriously ill from the coronavirus, steady since March ([Monmouth 9/21-9/25](#)).

In a third, three in 10 are at least somewhat concerned that they will contract the virus and require hospitalization, down from four in 10 in January. Half are concerned they might unwillingly spread the virus to others, down a similar 9 points. Although mostly steady since May, both are at pandemic lows ([Pew Research 9/13-9/18](#)). Just 8 percent say the coronavirus is one of the top three issues they find personally worrying, 14th out of 18 items and down from 14 percent in May ([NAMI-Ipsos 9/23-9/26](#)).



Pandemic resignation is widespread, with many Americans ready to live with it. In one poll, half say the pandemic never will end and we will have to live with it; the rest say it will end eventually (26 percent) or already is over (21 percent) ([Monmouth 9/21-9/25](#)). Even so, two-thirds feel safe enough to carry out their everyday life largely the way it was before the pandemic, while a third say they will continue to take extra precautions. Among those who will continue precautions, 78 percent expect to do so going forward with no end in sight, compared with 22 percent who think they'll eventually feel safe enough to carry out their pre-pandemic everyday life ([CNN 9/3-10/5](#)).

Government Response

A third say it is extremely or very important for the federal government to address the pandemic, down sharply from around seven in 10 a year ago. Americans place more importance on each of 12 tested issues except for student loan debt ([Monmouth 9/21-9/25](#)). Fifty-four percent say the federal government is doing the right amount to control the spread of the coronavirus; the rest divide between saying it's doing too little (24 percent) or too much (21 percent) ([CNN 9/3-10/5](#)).

Seven in 10 expect that the emergence of new coronavirus variants will not majorly impact the country’s efforts to contain the disease; three in 10 think new variants will lead to major setbacks. When last asked in February 2021, the public split evenly on this question, 48-51 percent ([Pew Research 9/13-9/18](#)).

Results differ on Biden’s handling of the pandemic. There’s a 50-47 percent support-oppose split in one, 55-44 percent approve-disapprove in another ([Monmouth 9/21-9/25](#), [CNN 9/3-10/5](#)). In both, his support or approval on the pandemic is his best among issues tested and the only one on which he is not underwater.

In another measure, 41 percent say Biden is doing an excellent (12 percent) or good (29 percent) job responding to the outbreak, mostly steady since January while down from 54 percent in February 2021. More evaluate his response negatively – 23 percent only fair and 34 percent poor.

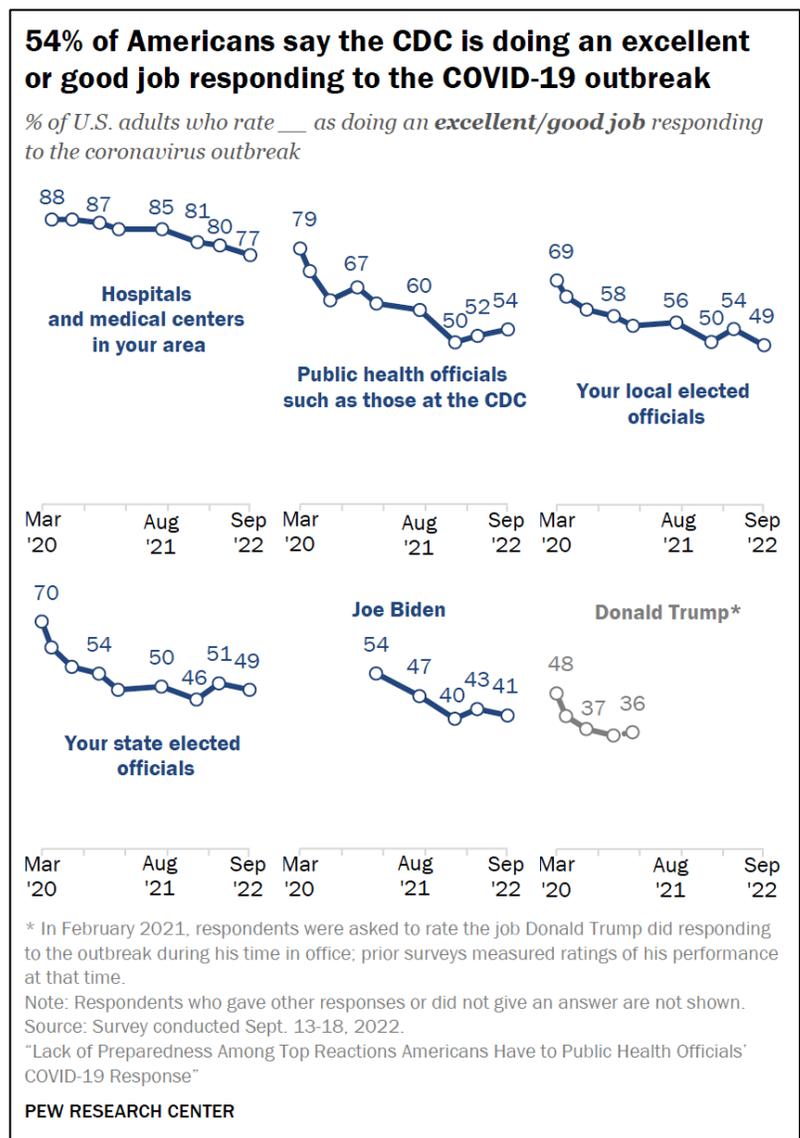
Thirty-seven percent say Dr. Anthony Fauci has had a mostly positive effect on the country’s response, 28 percent a negative effect and 21 percent a mixed effect.

Others get higher marks for their response, but each is off its early pandemic peak. Seventy-seven percent say local hospitals and medical centers are doing an excellent or good job responding to the pandemic, vs. a high of 88 percent in April and May 2020. About half say the same for state and local elected officials, whose ratings are mostly steady since January after falling sharply in the first year of the pandemic ([Pew Research 9/13-9/18](#)).

Public Health Officials

Fifty-four percent say public health officials such as those at the CDC are doing an excellent or good job in their overall coronavirus response. In rating the job these officials have done communicating with the public, the public splits: 51 percent excellent or good, 49 percent only fair or poor.

Forty-six percent say the statement “public health officials were unprepared for the outbreak” describes their views extremely or very well. A similar share says the same of the statement, “interference from elected officials hurt public health officials’ ability to respond to the outbreak.”

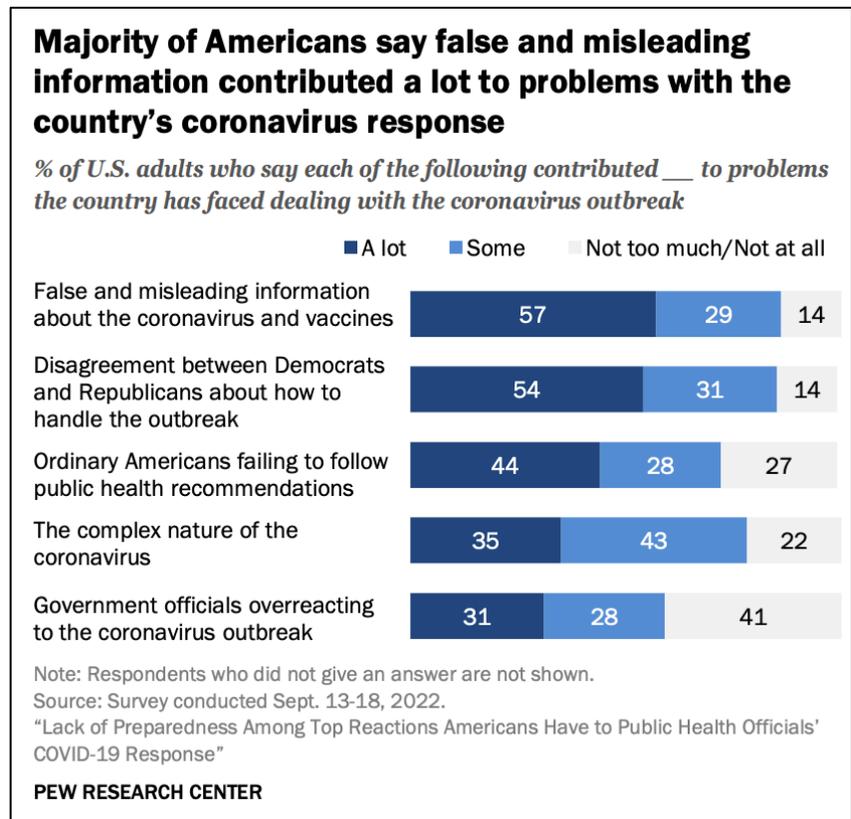


Other statements both critical and supportive of public health officials’ coronavirus response receive tepid agreement. Twenty-nine to 36 percent say statements critical of health officials align with their views at least very well – that they have had too much influence on policy, got facts wrong about the coronavirus or were too quick to dismiss new information and responded too slowly. Positive statements receive similar levels of agreement. Thirty-four percent endorse the statement “public health officials don’t get enough credit for the job they’ve done,” as do three in 10 for the statement “public health officials did as well as can be expected” in their response ([Pew Research 9/13-9/18](#)).

Response Factors

Majorities think false and misleading information about vaccines (57 percent) and disagreement between political parties about how to handle the outbreak (54 percent) contributed a lot to the country’s difficulties dealing with the pandemic. An additional three in 10 say each contributed some.

Fewer say other items were major factors – ordinary Americans failing to follow public health recommendations, 44 percent; the complex nature of the virus, 35 percent; and overreaction by government officials, 31 percent. The latter ranges from 53 percent of Republicans to 12 percent of Democrats ([Pew Research 9/13-9/18](#)).



Pandemic Policy & Impacts

Majorities oppose continued pandemic restrictions. Seven in 10 oppose instituting or reinstating mask and social distancing guidelines in their state, up from 65 percent in May and a low of 34 percent in September 2021. People of color and women are more apt than whites and men to support these.

Similarly, more overall oppose than support requiring people to show proof of vaccination to go to work in an office or in a setting where they are around other people, 63 vs. 35 percent. In May, the gap was tighter, 56-42 percent ([Monmouth 9/21-9/25](#)).

Six in 10 to seven in 10 agree that the pandemic has reshaped the way most people do their jobs, as well as the institutions of health care, education and the economy ([CNN 9/3-10/5](#)).

Midterm Elections

The pandemic doesn't register in two open-ended questions regarding factors driving midterm turnout. In one, fewer than 1 percent identify the coronavirus as the reason they are more motivated than usual to vote. In another, a similar share mentions the coronavirus as the top issue they'd like to hear candidates talk about in the run-up to the election ([KFF 9/15-9/26](#)).

Vaccines & Boosters

Despite recent public health [messaging](#) promoting uptake of updated booster shots that target new omicron variants, just 6 percent of fully vaccinated people say they have received an updated booster. About six in 10 say they probably will do so; a third, probably not ([Pew Research 9/13-9/18](#)). Among all adults, just 1 percent say they have received an updated booster shot. About half are very (33 percent) or somewhat (15 percent) likely to do so, the other half unlikely ([Monmouth 9/21-9/25](#)).

Initial vaccine uptake remains stalled. In one poll, 71 percent are fully vaccinated, 6 percent partially. That's steady since January. Thirty-eight percent have received a booster shot in the past 6 months, corresponding to just more than half of the fully vaccinated ([Pew Research 9/13-9/18](#)). In another, 72 percent say they have received at least one dose of the vaccine; 51 percent overall (corresponding to around seven in 10 of the vaccinated) received a booster shot before September ([Monmouth 9/21-9/25](#)).

Death Rates & Party Affiliation

A working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research suggests that, in two states studied, excess death rates among registered Republicans far exceeded those among registered Democrats during the pandemic. ("Excess deaths" refers to the percentage increase in deaths above expected level.) The study connects voter registration data from 2017 in Ohio and Florida to subsequent mortality data from 2018 through 2021. It estimates that from March 2020 to December 2021, excess death rates among Republicans were 5.4 points higher on average than were excess death rates among Democrats. The gap expanded considerably from the pre- to the post-vaccine period. From March 2020 to March 2021, average excess death rates among Republicans exceeded those among Democrats by 1.6 points; this widened to 10.4 points after early April 2021, when vaccine eligibility was expanded to all adults. The authors stress that these results represent an association, not a causation ([NBER](#)).

Vaccine Uptake Factors

A longitudinal study finds that people who agreed with non-coronavirus related vaccine misinformation in April 2021 were less likely than others to get a coronavirus vaccine. For those with the least belief in misinformation, 96 percent were vaccinated, compared with four in 10 of those with the highest level of misinformation. Further, in modeling, acceptance of non-coronavirus vaccine misinformation was the strongest predictor of depressed likelihood of recommending that a child get vaccinated ([Vaccine 04/2021-01/2022](#)).

Youth Mental Health

In a late July and August survey, Americans were highly worried about the effects of the pandemic on the mental health and well-being of children. Three-quarters were at least somewhat worried that pandemic-caused loneliness and isolation was negatively impacting teenagers' lives, including 36 percent very worried. Among parents of minors, 47 percent said the pandemic had a negative impact on

their child's mental health; 48 percent, no impact; 3 percent; a positive impact. Among those who said the pandemic had a negative impact, more said it was a minor impact than major, 64 vs. 36 percent ([KFF-CNN 7/28-8/9](#)).

State Results

In Wisconsin, 47 percent of registered voters are somewhat (33 percent) or very (13 percent) concerned about the coronavirus pandemic in the state, down from 55 percent in August. Women are twice as apt as men to say they're very concerned ([Marquette Law School 10/3-10/9](#)).

International Results

In Great Britain, one in four wore a mask while outside the home in the past week, a pandemic low and down from about half in late May and early June. A similar share always or often maintained social distance when meeting with people outside their home. A third are at least somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their life, with little clear trend since summer. More, 43 percent, are worried about new coronavirus variants ([Office for National Statistics 9/14-9/25](#)).

There is broad support for a recent [measure](#) to lift South Korea's outdoor mask mandate for large gatherings. Seven in 10 view the decision as appropriate; just a quarter, inappropriate. Despite approval, six in 10 say they will continue to wear a mask outdoors. South Korea maintains an indoor mask mandate for all public places ([Gallup Korea 9/27-9/29](#)).

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