Majorities Believe Taking Steps to Prepare for Avian Flu is Important

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Despite the Fact That Many U.S. Adults Are Unfamiliar with Avian (or Bird) Flu and Are Only Moderately Concerned about the Potential of a Future Pandemic, Majorities Believe Taking Steps to Prepare is Important
ROCHESTER, N.Y. â€“ August 18, 2005 â€“ In the wake of recent reports confirming that avian flu (also known as bird flu) has spread from Siberia into other parts of Russia, a new poll has found that a majority (53%) of U.S. adults are either not very or not at all familiar with this virus and that a large number (41%) are not very or not at all concerned that the United States might be part of an avian flu pandemic in the near future. Despite this lack of familiarity and concern, majorities of adults believe that particular steps should be taken to prepare for a potential pandemic.
These are some of the results of a Harris Interactive? online survey of 2,236 U.S. adults conducted between August 3 and 5, 2005 for The Wall Street Journal Onlineâ€™s Health Industry Edition.
Preparing for an avian flu pandemicWhile half (51%) of adults say they are very or somewhat concerned that the United States might be part of an avian flu pandemic in the near future (this increases to 60 percent for those who are familiar with avian flu), similar or larger numbers say it will be important to take certain steps in an effort to prepare for a pandemic. Majorities of all adults say it will be absolutely essential or very important to:

Develop plans to quickly provide critical medical supplies to areas of the globe that experience outbreaks of avian flu (71%)
Develop plans to limit the spread of avian flu via quarantines, travel restrictions, etc. (65%)
Invest government dollars in the development and production of avian flu vaccines (61%)
Stockpile antiviral drugs that might slow an outbreak of avian flu (62%)
Stockpile critical medical supplies (like surgical masks and gloves) that can help slow the spread of avian flu (55%).

While majorities believe taking these steps is important, the public is split on how prepared they think the United States is to deal with an avian flu pandemic should it occur. Two in five (40%) adults think the United States is very or somewhat prepared to deal with a pandemic of this type while 44 percent think it is not very or at all prepared. A further 16 percent do not know enough to have an opinion.
However, among those who are familiar with avian flu, the percentage who thinks the United States is not very or not at all prepared to deal with a flu pandemic increases to 51 percent.
Downloadable PDFs of Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Polls are posted at http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_wsj.asp.
MethodologyHarris Interactive conducted the online survey within the United States between August 3 and 5, 2005 among a nationwide cross section of 2,236 adults, ages 18 years and over. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.
Though this online sample is not a probability sample, in theory, with probability samples of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. Sampling error for the sub-sample results of adults who say they are somewhat or very familiar with avian flu (1,107) is plus or minus 4 percentage points. Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. This includes refusals to be interviewed (nonresponse), question wording and question order, and weighting. It is impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors.
The Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll is an exclusive poll that is published in the award-winning Health Industry Edition of The Wall Street Journal Online at www.wsj.com/health.
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About Harris Interactive?Harris Interactive Inc. (http://www.harrisinteractive.com/), the 13th largest market research firm in the world, is a Rochester, NY-based global research company that blends premier strategic consulting with innovative and efficient methods of investigation, analysis and application. Known for The Harris Poll? and for pioneering Internet-

based research methods, Harris Interactive conducts proprietary and public research to help its clients achieve clear, material and enduring results.
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