



Muhlenberg College Public Health Program

2021 Pennsylvania Health Poll

The following report provides findings from the annual Muhlenberg College Public Health Program Poll of Pennsylvanians on public health issues. This year’s survey examined topics that included the COVID-19 outbreak and the performance of President Biden’s handling of the pandemic; health care reform; heroin addiction; immunizations; and marijuana legalization. The survey marks the 9th year of this initiative that is a partnership between the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion and the Muhlenberg College Public Health Program.

Key Findings

1. Over 1 year into the COVID-19 pandemic, a majority of Pennsylvanians remain “extremely” or “very” concerned about the public health situation, yet 6 in 10 agree that the worst of the pandemic is behind us.
2. As of late March 2021, about 2 out of 3 Pennsylvanians who had not yet received at least one COVID-19 immunization plan to become immunized. However, about 3 in 10 adult residents of the Commonwealth who were not immunized indicated they do not plan to receive the vaccine. Among Pennsylvania Republicans that had not received the vaccine, half (50%) don’t plan to ever get immunized.
3. A majority (54%) of Pennsylvanians approve of President Joe Biden’s handling of the pandemic, but opinion is highly divided on Governor Tom Wolf’s work in this area, with 40% approving, and 41% disapproving of Wolf’s performance on this issue.
4. A record level (58%) of adult Pennsylvanians support the legalization of marijuana in the Commonwealth, marking the 8th consecutive wave of this survey that support for legalization has increased in the state.
5. About 6 out of 10 adult Pennsylvanians (61%) believe it is the responsibility of the federal government to make sure all Americans have health care coverage.
6. Just under 1 in 5 adult Pennsylvanians reported that during the past two months they had problems with their work or regular daily activities as a result of emotional problems, such as feeling depressed or anxious

Methodological Statement

The following report contains the results of a telephone survey of 421 adults in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania between March 15 and 29, 2021. Respondents were interviewed in English on both landlines (85) and cell phones (336). With a randomly selected sample of respondents, the margin of error for the surveys is +/- 5.5% at a 95% level of confidence. Margins of error for questions with a smaller sample size will be larger. In addition to sampling error, one should consider that question wording and other fielding issues could introduce error or bias into survey results. The sample data has been weighted by gender, race, age, income and educational attainment to reflect those Pennsylvania population characteristics as reported by the United States Census Bureau in 2020. The calculation of sampling error takes into account design effects due to the weighting identified above. In order to reach a representative sample of adult Pennsylvanians both land lines and cell phones are called up to 5 times. The response rate for this survey as calculated using the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) RRII formula is approximately 6%. Due to rounding the totals provided in the frequency report may not total 100%. The survey instrument was designed by Dr. Christopher P. Borick, Director of the MCIPO and Professor in the Public Health Program, in conjunction with students in the Public Health Program at Muhlenberg College. The survey was funded exclusively by Muhlenberg College. For more detailed information on the methods employed please contact the MCIPO at 484-664-3444 or email Dr. Borick at cborick@muhlenberg.edu.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT AND FREQUENCY REPORT

SCREENER: Thank you. Just to confirm are you a resident of Pennsylvania who is age 18 or older?

1. Yes.....CONTINUE
2. No.....THANK AND DISCONTINUE
3. Not Sure..... THANK AND DISCONTINUE

(HEALTH INSURANCE/GENERAL HEALTH CARE)

Q1: In general, would you describe the quality of health care in Pennsylvania as excellent, good, fair or poor?

1. Excellent.....14%
2. Good.....48%
3. Fair..... 23%
4. Poor..... 12%
98. Not Sure (VOL)...4%

	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Excellent	20%	17%	14%
Good	47%	42%	48%
Fair	25%	24%	23%
Poor	5%	16%	12%
Not Sure (VOL)	3%	<1%	4%

Q2: Do you think it is the responsibility of the federal government to make sure all Americans have health care coverage, or is that not the responsibility of the federal government?

- 1. Is a federal responsibility.....61%
- 2. Is not a federal responsibility.....31%
- 98. Not Sure (VOL)..... 8%

	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Is a federal responsibility	54%	59%	61%
Is not a federal responsibility	38%	33%	31%
Not Sure	9%	9%	8%

Q3: Next, I'm going to read you some different health care proposals. For each one, please let me know if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose it. First Having a national health plan, sometimes called Medicare-for-all, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan

- 1. Strongly Favor.....27%
- 2. Somewhat Favor.....18%
- 3. Somewhat Oppose.....12%
- 4. Strongly Oppose.....27%
- 98. Not Sure (Vol).....16%

	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Strongly Favor	27%	27%
Somewhat Favor	21%	18%
Somewhat Oppose	10%	12%
Strongly Oppose	30%	27%
Not Sure	12%	16%

Q4: Next, an optional government administered health plan similar to Medicare that would be open to anyone, but would allow people to keep the coverage they have if they prefer

- 1.Strongly Favor.....32%
- 2.Somewhat Favor.....46%
- 3. Somewhat Oppose.....8%
- 4. Strongly Oppose..... 8%
- 98. Not Sure (Vol).....6%

	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Strongly Favor	40%	32%
Somewhat Favor	35%	46%
Somewhat Oppose	6%	8%
Strongly Oppose	9%	8%
Not Sure	11%	6%

(MARIJUANA AND OPIOIDS)

Q5: Next, I would like to ask you a question about marijuana. First, do you favor, oppose or neither favor nor oppose the complete legalization of the use of marijuana for any purpose?

- 1. Favor.....58%
- 2. Oppose.....26%
- 3. Neither Favor or Oppose....14%
- 98. Not Sure (VOL)..... 3%

	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Favor	33%	38%	39%	45%	49%	51%	56%	58%
Oppose	40%	35%	38%	29%	30%	28%	26%	26%
Neither Favor or Oppose	24%	22%	20%	23%	19%	18%	12%	14%
Not Sure	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	6%	3%

Q6: How serious of a problem do you think Heroin abuse in America is? (READ LIST)

- 1. Very Serious.....81%
- 2. Somewhat Serious.....16%
- 3. Not at all Serious..... 1%
- 98. Not sure (VOL)..... 2%

	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Very Serious	75%	87%	84%	81%	82%	81%
Somewhat Serious	17%	10%	14%	17%	13%	16%
Not at All Serious	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Not Sure	7%	2%	2%	1%	4%	2%

Q7: Do you personally know anyone who has been addicted to heroin or another opiate?

- 1. Yes.....59%
- 2. No..... 41%
- 98. Not Sure.....<1%

	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Yes	52%	58%	55%	64%	63%	59%
No	44%	40%	45%	34%	37%	41%
Not Sure	4%	2%	1%	2%	<1%	<1%

(COVID-19_CORANAVIRUS)

Q8: Next I have a few questions about the coronavirus or COVID-19 outbreak. How concerned are you, if at all, about the coronavirus or COVID-19 outbreak? (READ LIST)

- 1. Extremely Concerned.....26%
- 2. Very Concerned.....31%
- 3. Somewhat Concerned.....28%
- 4. Not Concerned at All.....15%
- 98. Not Sure.....<1%

Q9: Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Joe Biden is handling the response to the coronavirus or COVID-19 outbreak?

- 1. Approve.....54%
- 2. Disapprove..... 28%
- 98. Not Sure.....19%

Q10: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Governor Tom Wolf is handling the response to the coronavirus or COVID-19 outbreak?

- 1. Approve.....40%
- 2. Disapprove..... 41%
- 98. Not Sure.....19%

Q11: Have you received at least 1 COVID-19 vaccine shot at this time?

- 1. Yes (**Skip to Q13**).....36%
- 2. No..... 64%
- 98. Not Sure..... 1%

(NOTE: Q12 ASKED ONLY TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE SHOT OF THE COVID-19 VACCINE)

Q12: After the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available to you, when, if at all, do you plan to get it?

- 1. As soon as it's available to me.....46%
- 2. A few weeks after its available to me.....5%
- 3. A month or more after its available to me.....13%
- 4. I do not plan to get the COVID-19 vaccine.....31%
- 98. Not Sure.....6%

(MENTAL HEALTH)

Q13: How would you describe your own mental health or emotional well-being at this time?
Would you say it is -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

- 1. Excellent.....33%
- 2. Good.....45%
- 3. Only Fair.....19%
- 4. Poor..... 3%
- 98 Not Sure..... 1%

Q14: Compared to 12 months ago, would you say your mental health or emotional well-being is much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, much worse or a about the same as a year ago?

- 1. Much Better..... 9%
- 2. Somewhat Better..... 17%
- 3. Somewhat Worse..... 18%
- 4. Much Worse..... 4%
- 5. About the Same as a Year Ago.....53%
- 98. Not Sure..... <1%

Q15: During the past two months, have you had any problems with your work or other regular daily activities as a result of any emotional problems, such as feeling depressed or anxious?

- 1. Yes.....17%
- 2. No.....82%
- 3. Not Sure..... 1%

(PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES)

Q16: Please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements. First, the chances of a child getting autism are increased if they receive the recommended childhood immunizations.

- 1. Strongly Agree..... 5%
- 2. Somewhat Agree..... 6%
- 3. Somewhat Disagree..... 12%
- 4. Strongly Disagree..... 52%
- 98. Not Sure (Vol).....25%

	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Strongly Agree	5%	8%	7%	6%	4%	8%	9%	8%	5%
Somewhat Agree	13%	13%	10%	13%	13%	13%	9%	8%	6%
Somewhat Disagree	22%	21%	22%	16%	14%	14%	16%	13%	12%
Strongly Disagree	35%	39%	48%	51%	48%	49%	55%	57%	52%
Not Sure	26%	19%	12%	14%	21%	16%	11%	15%	25%

Q17: Immunizations pose little health risks to those that receive them.

- 1. Strongly Agree.....41%
- 2. Somewhat Agree..... 30%
- 3. Somewhat Disagree..... 9%
- 4. Strongly Disagree..... 3%
- 98. Not Sure (Vol).....17%

	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Strongly Agree	54%	49%	41%
Somewhat Agree	23%	25%	30%
Somewhat Disagree	9%	8%	9%
Strongly Disagree	9%	8%	3%
Not Sure	4%	10%	17%

Q18: People of color have less access to quality health care than white individuals.

- 1. Strongly Agree.....30%
- 2. Somewhat Agree.....19%
- 3. Somewhat Disagree.....11%
- 4. Strongly Disagree.....26%
- 5. Not Sure (Vol).....13%

Q19: The worst of the COVID-19 pandemic is behind us.

- 1. Strongly Agree.....14%
- 2. Somewhat Agree..... 46%
- 3. Somewhat Disagree..... 16%
- 4. Strongly Disagree..... 9%
- 98. Not Sure (Vol).....16%

(THREATS TO PUBLIC HEALTH)

Q:20 Next I'm going to read you a list of factors that may or may not affect the health of the public in Pennsylvania. For each factor that I note please indicate if you think that factor poses a major risk, minor risk or no risk to public health in Pennsylvania. First, (ROTATE QUESTIONS)

Obesity

- 1. Major Risk.....71%
- 2. Minor Risk.....23%
- 3. No Risk..... 3%
- 98. Not sure.....4%

Q21: Next, fracking for natural gas and oil

- 1. Major Risk.....27%
- 2. Minor Risk.....32%
- 3. No Risk.....16%
- 98. Not sure.....25%

	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Major Risk	38%	36%	27%
Minor Risk	39%	31%	32%
No Risk	3%	9%	16%
Not Sure	11%	24%	25%

Q22: Climate change

- 1. Major Risk.....48%
- 2. Minor Risk.....24%
- 3. No Risk.....20%
- 98. Not sure..... 9%

	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021
Major Risk	51%	51%	48%
Minor Risk	26%	28%	24%
No Risk	20%	14%	20%
Not Sure	4%	8%	9%

Q23: Lyme disease from tick bites

- 1. Major Risk..... 38%
- 2. Minor Risk..... 48%
- 3. No Risk..... 4%
- 98. Not sure.....10%

Q24. Radon gases in home basements

- 1. Major Risk..... 28%
- 2. Minor Risk..... 37%
- 3. No Risk..... 7%
- 98. Not sure.....28%

Q25: Contaminated drinking water

- 1. Major Risk.....53%
- 2. Minor Risk.....37%
- 3. No Risk..... 6%
- 98. Not sure..... 4%

(DEMOGRAPHICS)

Q26. Finally, I have a few questions about yourself. First, what is your current marital status?

Single	39%
Married	44%
Separated	1%
Divorced	7%
Widowed	7%
Partnered	2%
Not sure	1%

Q27. What is your highest level of education? Is it (READ LIST)?

Less Than High School	3%
High School Graduate	32%
Some College Or Technical School	29%
College Graduate (4 Year Only)	23%
Graduate Or Professional Degree	13%

Q28. Which of the following categories best describes your racial identity? (READ LIST)

White/Caucasian	73%
African-American	12%
Hispanic/Latino	7%
Asian	3%
Native American	<1%
Mixed Race	2%
Or Other	3%

Q29: Which of the following categories best describes your current voting status? Are you registered as a (READ LIST)?

Democrat	39%
Republican	32%
Independent	17%
Other Party	3%
Or Not Registered To Vote In Pennsylvania	2%
Not Sure	6%

Q30. Which of the following categories best describes your religious affiliation? Are you (READ LIST)?

Catholic	23%
Protestant	27%
Jewish	2%
Muslim	1%
Hindu	1%
Other Religion (Including Agnostic)	24%
Atheist	8%
Not Sure	14%

Q31. Do you have children under the age of 18?

Has Children Under 18	24%
No Children Under 18	76%

Q32: Which of the following best describes your health care insurance status. Are you primarily insured:

By A Plan Provided By Your Employer	42%
By A Plan That You Purchase Individually	10%
By Medicaid Coverage	10%
By Medicare Coverage	23%
Uninsured	4%
Other	7%
Not Sure	3%

Q33: In which of the following age categories does your current age fall. READ LIST

18-29	22%
30-49	30%
50-65	26%
Or Over 65	23%

Q34. Which of the following categories best describes your family income? (READ LIST)

Under \$20,000	16%
\$20,000-\$40,000	18%
\$40,000-\$60,000	18%
\$60,000-\$80,000	15%
\$80,000-\$100,000	11%
Over \$100,000	22%

Q35: Finally to which gender identity do you most identify? (READ LIST)

Male	49%
Female	50%
Transgender Male	<1%
Transgender Female	0%
Or you do not identify as male, female or transgender	<1%

SELECTED CROSSTABS

Have you received at least 1 COVID-19 vaccine shot at this time?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
OVERALL	36%	64%	1%
White	38%	61%	1%
Non-White	27%	72%	1%
No College Degree	34%	65%	1%
College Degree	38%	61%	1%
Male	33%	66%	1%
Female	39%	60%	1%
18-29	15%	85%	0%
30-49	26%	72%	2%
50-65	38%	62%	0%
Over 65	65%	34%	1%
Democrat	43%	56%	1%
Republican	33%	67%	1%
Independent	29%	71%	0%

After the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available to you, when, if at all, do you plan to get it?
(Asked only to respondent who said they had not received at least 1 does of a COVID-19 vaccine)

	As soon as it's available to me	A few weeks after it's available to me	A month or more after its available to me	I do not plan to get the COVID-19 Vaccine	Not Sure
OVERALL	46%	5%	13%	31%	6%
White	47%	4%	11%	33%	5%
Non-White	46%	6%	18%	25%	6%
No College Degree	37%	6%	15%	36%	6%
College Degree	63%	3%	9%	20%	5%
Male	45%	4%	11%	34%	7%
Female	48%	5%	15%	27%	5%
18-29	44%	9%	18%	24%	5%
30-49	43%	4%	13%	34%	6%
50-65	48%	2%	10%	34%	6%
Over 65	61%	3%	3%	27%	6%
Democrat	67%	5%	12%	14%	2%
Republican	27%	5%	11%	50%	8%
Independent	42%	6%	14%	33%	6%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Joe Biden is handling the response to the coronavirus or COVID-19 outbreak?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
OVERALL	54%	28%	19%
White	48%	33%	19%
Non-White	67%	14%	19%
No College Degree	46%	33%	21%
College Degree	67%	20%	14%
Male	52%	32%	16%
Female	56%	24%	20%
18-29	55%	17%	28%
30-49	60%	24%	16%
50-65	49%	32%	19%
Over 65	50%	39%	12%
Democrat	84%	5%	11%
Republican	19%	61%	21%
Independent	46%	24%	30%