Muhlenberg College Public Health Program

2019 Pennsylvania Health Poll

The following report provides findings from the annual Muhlenberg College Public Health Program survey of Pennsylvanians on public health issues. This year's survey examined topics that included the Affordable Care Act, heroin addiction, e-cigarettes, immunizations, marijuana legalization, and the performance of President Trump's handling of health care matters. The survey marks the 7th 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. A majority (51%) of Pennsylvania residents disapprove of the way that President Donald Trump is handling the issue of health care, with only 28% approving of the President's work in this area.

2. About 6 out of 10 Commonwealth residents want to either let the Affordable Care Act (ACA) stand (14%) or strengthen it to do more (47%) compared with only about 3 in 10 that either want the ACA repealed (21%) or changed to do less (11%).

3. Nearly 2 out of 3 residents (64%) of the Keystone State support the federal government offering a "Medicare type" health insurance plan to all Americans that would compete with private insurance plans.

4. Over 7 out of 10 Pennsylvanians (72%) agree that E-cigarettes and vaping are a public health concern.

5. For the first time in the history of this poll a majority (51%) of Commonwealth residents favor the complete legalization of marijuana in the state.

6. Nearly 2 out of 3 Pennsylvania residents (64%) indicate that they personally know a person who is addicted to heroin or another opiate.

7. Pennsylvanians remain evenly divided on the use of taxes on junk food to finance efforts to fight obesity with 49% in support of such a tax and 49% opposed to the option.

8. A record 55% of Keystone State adults now strongly disagree that a child's chance of having autism is increased my receiving recommended childhood immunizations.

9. Over 3 out of 4 Pennsylvanians (77%) agree that immunization pose little risk to those that receive them.

10. A majority (51%) of Commonwealth residents indicate that climate change poses a major risk to the public health of Pennsylvanians.

11. Nearly half of Pennsylvanians (48%) identified loneliness as a major public health threat to residents of the Commonwealth.

Methodological Statement

The following report contains the results of a telephone survey of 405 adults in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania between March 18 and April 5, 2019. Respondents were interviewed in English on both landlines (104) and cell phones (301) by the staff of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion (MCIPO) in Allentown, Pennsylvania on the Institute's Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. With a randomly selected sample of 405 respondents the margin of error for the surveys is +/- 6% at a 95% level of confidence. Margins of error for questions with 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 and educational attainment to reflect those Pennsylvania population characteristics as reported by the United States Census Bureau in 2018. 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 (presented in its entirety below) was designed by Dr. Christopher P. Borick of the MCIPO, in conjunction with students in the Public Health Program at Muhlenberg College. The survey was funded exclusively by the MCIPO. For more detailed information on the methods employed please contact the MCIPO at 484-664-3444 or email Dr. Borick at cborick@muhlenberg.edu.

INSTRUMENT

Q1: 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)

Q2: In general would you describe the quality of health care in Pennsylvania as excellent, good, fair or poor?

1. Excellent………..20%
2. Good……..……..47%
3. Fair…………….. 25%
4. Poor……………. 5%
5. Not Sure (VOL)... 3%

Q3: Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Donald Trump is handling the issue of health care?

1. Approve……….. 28%
2. Disapprove…….. 51%
3. Not Sure (VOL)...20%

	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	**Spring 2019**
Approve	34%	31%	**28%**
Disapprove	47%	51%	**51%**
Not Sure	20%	19%	**20%**

Q4: Which one of the following comes closest to your opinion about what Congress should do with the Affordable Care Act known as Obamacare? Let it stand. Change it so it does more. Change it so it does less. Repeal it completely.

1. Let it Stand……………………….. 14%
2. Change it so it Does More…………47%
3. Change it so it Does Less………….11%
4. Repeal it Completely………………21%
5. Not Sure (VOL)…………………… 7%

	Spring 2018	**Spring 2019**
Let it Stand	11%	**14%**
Change it so it Does More	47%	**47%**
Change it so it Does Less	3%	**11%**
Repeal it Completely	29%	**21%**
Not Sure (VOL)	10%	**7%**

Q5: 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…………….54%
2. Is not a federal responsibility……….. 38%
3. Not Sure (VOL)……..……………… 9%

Q6: "Would you favor or oppose the government offering everyone a government-administered health insurance plan -- something like the Medicare coverage that people 65 and older get -- that would compete with private health insurance plans?"

1. Favor…………………..64%
2. Oppose……………… 29%
3. Not Sure (VOL…………6%

(E-CIGARETTES)

Q7: Next I have a few questions about e-cigarettes which is also know as vaping. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements about e-cigarettes. First:

E-cigarettes are safer to sue than regular cigarettes

1. Strongly agree………………………11%
2. Somewhat agree……………………..15%
3. Somewhat disagree…………………23%
4. Strongly disagree…………………..41%
5. Not sure………………………… 10%

Q8: E-cigarettes are a helpful aid to those trying to quit smoking traditional cigarettes

1. Strongly agree………………………12%
2. Somewhat agree……………………..27%
3. Somewhat disagree…………………19%
4. Strongly disagree…………………..32%
5. Not sure…………………………….. 9%

Q9: E-cigarettes use is a public health concern.

1. Strongly agree……………………….49%
2. Somewhat agree……………………. 23%
3. Somewhat disagree…………………13%
4. Strongly disagree…………………… 8%
5. Not sure……………………………….7%

Q10: E-cigarettes should be regulated like other tobacco products.

1. Strongly agree……………………… 62%
2. Somewhat agree……………………. 23%
3. Somewhat disagree…………………. 4%
4. Strongly disagree…………………… 8%
5. Not sure…………………………….3%

(MARIJUANA AND HEROIN)

Q11: Next, I would like to ask you a few questions 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……………………………….51%
2. Oppose…………………………….28%
3. Neither Favor or Oppose………….18%
4. Not Sure (VOL)………..…………. 3%

	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	**Spring 2019**
Favor	33%	38%	34%	39%	45%	49%	**51%**
Oppose	40%	35%	36%	38%	29%	30%	**28%**
Neither Favor Or Oppose	24%	22%	29%	20%	23%	19%	**18%**
Not Sure	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	3%	**3%**

Q12 How serious of a problem do you think Heroin abuse in America is? (READ LIST)

1. Very Serious………………….…..81%
2. Somewhat Serious………………..17%
3. Not at all Serious…..……………… 1%
4. Not sure (VOL)………..…………….1%

	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	**Spring 2019**
Very Serious	75%	87%	84%	**81%**
Somewhat Serious	17%	10%	14%	**17%**
Not at All Serious	2%	1%	1%	**1%**
Not Sure	7%	2%	2%	**1%**

Q13: Do you personally know anyone who has been addicted to heroin or another opiate?

1. Yes………………………..64%
2. No………………................34%
3. Not Sure………………….. 2%

	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	**Spring 2019**
Yes	52%	58%	55%	**64%**
No	44%	40%	45%	**34%**
Not Sure	4%	2%	1%	**2%**

(OBESITY/NUTRITION)

Q14. Now we'd like to ask you some general questions about government policies. Please tell me if you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose each of the following. First, Putting a special tax on junk food—that is things like soda, chips, and candy—and using the money for programs to fight obesity.

1. Strongly Support……………..24%
2. Somewhat Support…………...25%
3. Somewhat Oppose………….... 20%
4. Strongly Oppose………………..29%
5. Not Sure (Vol)………………... 2%

	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	**Spring 2019**
Strongly Support	21%	25%	22%	24%	21%	**24%**
Somewhat Support	18%	21%	26%	27%	29%	**25%**
Somewhat Oppose	14%	22%	23%	19%	20%	**20%**
Strongly Oppose	46%	30%	26%	26%	26%	**29%**
Not Sure	2%	2%	2%	4%	5%	**2%**

Q15. Making a law requiring fast food restaurants to list nutrition information—such as calorie count—for all items on their menus.

1. Strongly Support……………..57%
2. Somewhat Support………….. 26%
3. Somewhat Oppose………….... 8%
4. Strongly Oppose……………... 8%
5. Not Sure (Vol)………………...2%

	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	**Spring 2019**
Strongly Support	53%	58%	61%	64%	60%	**57%**
Somewhat Support	23%	21%	24%	21%	19%	**26%**
Somewhat Oppose	7%	8%	6%	5%	10%	**8%**
Strongly Oppose	15%	11%	7%	8%	8%	**8%**
Not Sure	2%	1%	3%	2%	4%	**2%**

Q16. Requiring warning labels on packaged food about the health risks of being overweight, just like there are warning labels on cigarettes about the health risks of smoking.

1. Strongly Support……………..39%
2. Somewhat Support…………...22%
3. Somewhat Oppose…………....18%
4. Strongly Oppose……………...18%
5. Not Sure (Vol)……………….. 4%

	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	**Spring 2019**
Strongly Support	34%	34%	38%	38%	33%	**39%**
Somewhat Support	18%	23%	28%	27%	30%	**22%**
Somewhat Oppose	17%	19%	16%	11%	16%	**18%**
Strongly Oppose	28%	23%	14%	22%	16%	**18%**
Not Sure	3%	2%	4%	2%	5%	**4%**

(IMMUNIZATION)

Q17: 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………………… 9%
2. Somewhat Agree……………. 9%
3. Somewhat Disagree…………. 16%
4. Strongly Disagree…………… 55%
5. Not Sure (Vol)………………. 11%

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

Q18: Immunizations pose little health risks to those that receive them.

1. Strongly Agree………..…54%
2. Somewhat Agree………. 23%
3. Somewhat Disagree……. 9%
4. Strongly Disagree……… 9%
5. Not Sure (Vol)…………. 4%

Q19:   In general, children in the United States receive too many immunizations.

1. Strongly Agree………..…12%
2. Somewhat Agree………. 10%
3. Somewhat Disagree……. 23%
4. Strongly Disagree……… 48%
5. Not Sure (Vol)…………. 8%

	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	**Spring 2019**
Strongly Agree	8%	12%	10%	11%	11%	20%	**12%**
Somewhat Agree	9%	10%	13%	11%	15%	12%	**10%**
Somewhat Disagree	20%	22%	18%	21%	20%	19%	**23%**
Strongly Disagree	53%	47%	56%	49%	47%	41%	**48%**
Not Sure	10%	9%	3%	8%	7%	8%	**8%**

(THREATS TO PUBLIC HEALTH)

Q20: 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 of you think that factor poses a major risk, minor risk or no risk to public health in Pennsylvania. First, radon gases in homes and other buildings.

1. Major Risk………………43%
2. Minor Risk………………43%
3. No Risk………………….. 3%
4. Not sure…………………11%

Q21: Next, fracking for natural gas and oil.

1. Major Risk………………38%
2. Minor Risk………………39%
3. No Risk………………….. 3%
4. Not sure…………………11%

Q22: Climate change

1. Major Risk………………51%
2. Minor Risk………………26%
3. No Risk…………………. 20%
4. Not sure…………………. 4%

Q23: Texting while driving

1. Major Risk………………87%
2. Minor Risk………………13%
3. No Risk…………………<1%
4. Not sure…………………<1%

Q24. Loneliness among individuals

1. Major Risk………………48%
2. Minor Risk………………41%
3. No Risk………………….. 6%
4. Not sure…………………. 5%

Q25: During an average year which of the following best describes how often you get a checkup with a family physician? (READ LIST)

1. Once every year……………………………………………………64%.
2. Once very two years……………………………………………18%
3. Once very three to five years……………………………………. 7%
4. Once very five to ten years……………………………………….4%
5. Or you never get a checkup with a family physician……………… 7%

(DEMOGRAPHICS)

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

Single	28%
Married	48%
Separated	2%
Divorced	8%
Widowed	6%
Partnered	7%
Not sure	<1%

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

Less Than High School	3%
High School Graduate	21%
Some College Or Technical School	39%
College Graduate (4 Yr Only)	22%
Graduate Or Professional Degree	14%

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

White/Caucasian	73%
African-American	11%
Hispanic	5%
Latino	3%
Asian	4%
Native American	<1%
Mixed Race	3%
Or Other	1%

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

Democrat	44%
Republican	36%
Independent	12%
Other Party	2%
Or Not Registered To Vote In Pennsylvania	5%
Not Sure	1%

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

Catholic	28%
Protestant	30%
Jewish	4%
Muslim	2%
Hindu	1%
Other Religion (Including Agnostic)	24%
Atheist	7%
Not Sure	3%

Q31. How many children do you have under 18? _____

Has Children Under 18	27%
No Children Under 18	73%

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

By A Plan Provided By Your Employer	49%
By A Plan That You Purchase Individually	13%
By Medicaid Coverage	6%
By Medicare Coverage	21%
Uninsured	5%
Other	4%
Not Sure	1%

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

18-29	23%
30-49	29%
50-65	26%
Over 65	21%

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

Under $20,000	9%
$20,000-$40,000	20%
$40,000-$60,000	23%
$60,000-$80,000	16%
$80,000-$100,000	9%
Over $100,000	20%
Not Sure	5%

Q35: What county do you currently reside in?
(CODED INTO REGIONS)

Southeast	37%
Southwest	18%
Remainder of PA	45%

Q36: Finally to which gender identity do you most identify? (READ LIST)

Male	49%
Female	51%
Transgender Male	0%
Transgender Female	<1%
Or you do not identify as male, female or transgender	<1%