



New Poll Finds Dramatic Rise in Public Concern About Biological and Chemical Terrorism; Americans Continue to Rate Cancer as #1 Health Threat

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Washington, D. C. February 2, 2007 – Trust for America’s Health (TFAH) today issued results from a new survey that finds concern about biological and chemical terrorism and food contamination have grown significantly in the past year.

Seventy percent of Americans ranked chemical terrorism as a major concern in 2007, which is an 18-point jump from the level of concern expressed in 2006. Fears about a biological attack like anthrax or smallpox increased 14 points from last year to 64 percent in 2007. The largest increase in concern about biological and chemical terrorism was evident in self-identified ideological conservatives, whose concern about chemical and biological terrorism increased 19 and 17 percentage points respectively.

Forty-five percent of Americans believe the government is not prepared for a bioterror attack.

Worries about food contamination grew 16 points from 2006, with 67 percent listing it as a serious concern in 2007. And 61 percent of Americans are worried about the possibility of a pandemic flu outbreak and over half (53 percent) believe the government is not prepared to deal with a global pandemic.

While levels of concern about bioterror, food contamination, and pandemic flu increased over the past year, Americans continued to rank cancer as their top health concern for the fourth consecutive year that TFAH has conducted its annual health concerns poll. Eighty-four percent of Americans listed cancer as a serious health concern, with 27 percent saying it is their top health concern. Heart disease was the second highest ranked concern with 80 percent ranking it as a major concern.

“Americans’ concerns over health issues that impact their daily lives, like cancer and heart disease, are perennially high. And the increased apprehension about emergency health issues like bioterrorism and food contamination demonstrate how central health is to our national sense of well-being,” said Jeff Levi, PhD, Executive Director of TFAH. “We hope that the President’s budget that will be released on Monday will provide sufficient funds to address the range of health threats our country faces and reflect the high levels of concern Americans feel about our nation’s health.”

The poll finds nearly two-thirds of Americans believe the federal government should increase funding for disease research and preventive measures, with four-in-ten saying the government should spend “much more” than current spending levels.

The poll findings, which reflect the responses from 856 registered voters, was conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research on January 18-22, 2007 and is available at www.healthyamericans.org. The margin of error was +/- 3.4 percent.

Trust for America's Health is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority.
www.healthyamericans.org and www.pandemicfluandyou.org

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