

Kelly Gullo
585.214.7172
kgullo@harrisinteractive.com

Vast Majorities of U.S. Adults Believe Federal, State and Local Governments Should Have Been Better Prepared to Look After Sick and Frail Residents in New Orleans in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina

A new Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll shows that vast majorities of U.S. adults believe the governments at the federal, state and local levels should have been better prepared to look after the sick and frail residents of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Majorities also believe the government was not very or not at all prepared on several accounts to handle these residents staying in hospitals, nursing homes and private homes. Furthermore, nearly half (47%) of adults are not very or not at all confident that the U.S. government will learn from this experience and be better prepared for the healthcare problems that will arise with future disasters or terrorist attacks.

Below are the results of the online survey of 2,421 U.S. adults conducted by Harris Interactive between Sept. 20 and 22, 2005 for The Wall Street Journal Online's Health Industry Edition.

Who Should Have Been Better Prepared and In What Ways

The American public seems to be pointing the finger at several different levels of government when it comes to who they believe should have been more prepared to look after the sick and frail residents of New Orleans. Adults were most likely to think that the State of Louisiana (76%) and the City of New Orleans (76%) should have been better prepared to look after these residents, followed closely by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (69%). More than half (54%) think the local hospitals and nursing homes should have been better prepared, while 45% think President Bush should have been.

The public does not believe the government, overall, was prepared to care for sick and frail individuals in hospitals, nursing homes and private homes on several accounts. Specifically, adults thought the government was not very or not at all prepared when it came to:

- Evacuating them from the city (82%)
- Tracking them when they were moved out of the city (79%)
- Helping them get the medical care they needed (76%)
- Protecting their medical records (73%).

Health-Care Poll

Contributing Factors

Large majorities of the public seem to think there were several issues that contributed somewhat or a great deal to the problems that occurred when caring for the sick and frail residents of New Orleans. They include:

- Incompetent government agencies (85%)
- Poor communication between the U.S. government and local officials in New Orleans (84%)
- Lack of preparedness by local hospitals and nursing homes (83%)
- Slow response by Washington, D.C. (69%)
- Not enough funding to plan for natural disasters (68%)
- The fractured nature of our healthcare system (62%).

Democrats vs. Republicans

Notably Democrats are much more negative and skeptical in their views about this healthcare situation in New Orleans compared to Republicans.

- Seven in 10 (70%) Democrats compared to 19% of Republicans think that President Bush should have been better prepared to look after sick and frail people in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.
- Democrats are less likely than Republicans to think the government was very or somewhat prepared when it came to evacuating the city (7% vs. 20%) and helping them get the medical care they needed (10% vs. 28%).
- Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to believe that the slow response by Washington, D.C. (90% vs. 42%), not enough funding to plan for natural disasters (83% vs. 53%) and the fractured nature of our healthcare system (72% vs. 50%) contributed to the problems a great deal or somewhat
- Less than two in five (37%) Democrats compared to 73% of Republicans are very or somewhat confident that the U.S. government will learn from this experience and be better prepared for future disasters.

Health-Care Poll

TABLE 1
Being Better Prepared

“Thinking about Hurricane Katrina, which of the following, if any, should have been better prepared to look after sick and frail people in New Orleans?”

Base: All Adults

	All Adults	Party Affiliation	
		Republican	Democrat
	%	%	%
President Bush	45	19	70
FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency)	69	50	85
The State of Louisiana	76	79	76
The City of New Orleans	76	85	72
Local hospitals and nursing homes	54	53	58
None of these	3	2	1

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 2-A
Preparedness for Caring for Sick and Frail Residents

“In your opinion, how well prepared was the government to care for sick and frail people in New Orleans – in hospitals, nursing homes and private homes – when it came to...?”

Base: All Adults

		Very/ Somewhat Prepared (NET)	Very Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Not Very/ Not At All Prepared (NET)	Not Very Prepared	Not at All Prepared	Not Sure
Evacuating them from the city	%	14	2	11	82	30	52	4
Tracking them when they were moved out of the city	%	13	2	11	79	29	50	8
Protecting their medical records	%	9	1	8	73	24	49	18
Helping them get the medical care they needed	%	19	2	16	76	33	43	5

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Health-Care Poll

TABLE 2-B

Preparedness for Caring for Sick and Frail Residents – by Party Affiliation

“In your opinion, how well prepared was the government to care for sick and frail people in New Orleans – in hospitals, nursing homes and private homes – when it came to...?”

Percent saying “Very/Somewhat Prepared”

Base: All Adults

	All Adults	Party Affiliation	
		Republican	Democrat
	%	%	%
Evacuating them from the city	14	20	7
Tracking them when they were moved out of the city	13	17	9
Protecting their medical records	9	14	5
Helping them get the medical care they needed	19	28	10

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 3-A

Problems That Occurred When Caring for Sick and Frail Residents

“To what extent do you believe each of the following led to the problems that occurred when caring for sick and frail people in New Orleans?”

Base: All Adults

		A Great Deal/ Somewhat (NET)	A Great Deal	Somewhat	Not Much/ Not at All (NET)	Not Much	Not at All
Poor communication between the U.S. government and local officials in New Orleans	%	84	57	27	16	9	6
Lack of preparedness by local hospitals and nursing homes	%	83	44	38	17	13	5
The fractured nature of our healthcare system	%	62	28	35	38	24	13
Not enough funding to plan for natural disasters	%	68	37	31	32	20	12
Incompetent government agencies	%	85	54	31	15	10	6
Slow response by Washington, D.C.	%	69	47	23	31	17	14

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Health-Care Poll

TABLE 3-B

Problems That Occurred When Caring for Sick and Frail Residents – by Party Affiliation

“To what extent do you believe each of the following led to the problems that occurred when caring for sick and frail people in New Orleans?”

Percent saying “A Great Deal/Somewhat”

Base: All Adults

	All Adults	Party Affiliation	
		Republican	Democrat
	%	%	%
Poor communication between the federal government and local officials in New Orleans	84	78	91
Lack of preparedness by local hospitals and nursing homes	83	85	84
The fractured nature of our healthcare system	62	50	72
Not enough funding to plan for natural disasters	68	53	83
Incompetent government agencies	85	76	93
Slow response by Washington, D.C.	69	42	90

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 4

Confidence That Government Will Learn from the Experience

“How confident are you that the U.S. government will learn from this experience and be better prepared for the healthcare problems that will arise with future disasters or terrorist attacks?”

Base: All Adults

	All Adults	Party Affiliation	
		Republican	Democrat
	%	%	%
Very/Somewhat confident (NET)	50	73	37
Very confident	16	33	6
Somewhat confident	34	40	30
Not very/Not at all confident	47	24	61
Not very confident	29	17	33
Not at all confident	18	7	28

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Health-Care Poll

Downloadable PDFs of Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Polls are posted at http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_wsj.asp.

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted this online survey within the United States between September 20 and 22, 2005 among a nationwide cross section of 2,421 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.

In theory, with probability samples of this size, one can say with 95% 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-samples of Republicans (777) and Democrats (730) is higher and varies. 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. This online sample is not a probability sample.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

About the Survey

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.

About The Wall Street Journal Online

The Wall Street Journal Online at WSJ.com, published by Dow Jones & Company (NYSE: DJ; www.dowjones.com), is the largest paid subscription news site on the Web. Launched in 1996, the Online Journal continues to attract quality subscribers that are at the top of their industries, with 744,000 subscribers world-wide as of Q2, 2005.

The Online Journal provides in-depth business news and financial information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with insight and analysis, including breaking business and technology news and analysis from around the world. It draws on the Dow Jones network of nearly 1,800 business and financial news staff—the largest network of business and financial journalists in the world. The Online Journal also features exclusive content, including interactive graphics on business and world news, and online-only columns about the automotive industry, technology, personal finance and more.

The Online Journal offers two industry-specific editions: the award-winning Health Industry Edition and the Media & Marketing Edition.



THE
WALL
STREET
JOURNAL
ONLINE

Health-Care Poll

4 | Volume
19 | Issue
October 6
2005

The Health Industry Edition offers authoritative analysis, breaking news and commentary from top industry journalists. The Media & Marketing Edition is designed for professionals in the advertising, marketing, entertainment and media industries. Subscribers to both online editions also get access to the full content of the Online Journal.

In 2005, the Online Journal was awarded a Codie Award for Best Online News Service for the second consecutive year, and its Health Industry Edition was awarded Best Online Science or Technology Service for the third consecutive year. In 2004, the Online Journal received an Eppy Award for Best Internet Business Service over 1 million monthly visitors. The Wall Street Journal Online network includes CareerJournal.com, OpinionJournal.com, StartupJournal.com, RealEstateJournal.com and CollegeJournal.com.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive Inc. (www.harrisinteractive.com) is the 13th largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world, perhaps best known for *The Harris Poll*[®] and for pioneering and engineering Internet-based research methods. The Rochester, New York-based global research company blends premier strategic consulting with innovative and efficient methods of investigation, analysis and application, conducting proprietary and public research globally to help clients achieve clear, material and enduring results.

Blending science and art, Harris Interactive combines its intellectual capital and one of the world's largest online panels of respondents, with premier Internet survey technology and sophisticated research methods to market leadership through its U.S., Europe (www.harrisinteractive.com/europe) and Asia offices, its wholly owned subsidiary, Novatris in Paris (www.novatris.com), and through an independent global network of affiliate market research companies. EOE M/F/D/V

To become a member of the Harris Poll OnlineSM and be invited to participate in future online surveys, go to www.harrispollonline.com.

Get Smart!

Did you know that Harris Interactive conducts up to five free webinars a month? Spanning a variety of business issues facing a handful of industries, these one-hour interactive sessions allow you to catch up on the latest research advancement, propriety industry findings, and best practices. Register for one or more sessions at <http://harrisinteractive.webex.com>. Visit often as our schedule changes weekly.

For a complete list of events, including webinars, where Harris Interactive thought leaders are presenting, exhibiting and sponsoring, visit <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/events.asp>.

To Subscribe

Please submit your contact information online at <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/healthcaresubscribe.asp>.

To Unsubscribe

Please send an email to Health_Care_News@harrisinteractive.net requesting to be removed from this newsletter distribution list.

For more information, please contact us at:

877.919.4765

or visit our healthcare webpage

www.harrisinteractive.com/healthcare

Media inquiries, contact:

Kelly Gullo 585.214.7172

kgullo@harrisinteractive.com

Nancy Wong 585.214.7316

nwong@harrisinteractive.com

©2005, Harris Interactive Inc. All rights reserved.
Other product and/or company names used herein
are trademarks of their respective owners.