

January 28, 2008

Making Healthy Americans a Priority in 2008

To: Trust for America's Health

From: Al Quinlan and Missy Egelsky

A new survey commissioned by the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) finds that Americans place a high value on preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles. At a time when the rising costs of health care has become the central economic issue, Americans are eager to invest in preventing diseases and promoting healthy lifestyles as a way of helping to reduce long term health care costs in the country.

They believe that addressing this issue now will help cut health care costs in the long run, and voters strongly support a greater commitment to this goal, through both increased federal funding and a better dialogue with voters on this issue in 2008 and beyond. Some of the key findings from the survey include:

- A strong majority of Americans (57 percent) believe that investing in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles, in tandem with diagnosis and treatment, is the best way to make Americans healthier.
- Americans believe that investing now in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles is an important step in reducing the costs of health care in the United States.
- Seven-in-ten Americans want the federal government to invest more in disease prevention and healthy living, with nearly half (46 percent) saying they want "much more" spending.
- Americans display strong support for legislative proposals that will help to bring government, businesses, and individuals together to prevent disease and promote healthy lifestyles.

The poll was conducted between January 18th and 22nd, 2008 among 1,005 adults, ages 18 and older. These findings only include the subset of 878 registered voters responding to the survey.¹

¹ This survey of 1,005 adults is subject to a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percent. The margin of error for the 878 registered voters is +/- 3.3 percent.

Voters believe investment in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles is critical in making Americans healthier

Americans are eager to move beyond the traditional emphasis on diagnosis and treatment to a course of action that also provides a strong investment in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles that stop illnesses from occurring. Fifty-seven percent of American voters say the best way to make Americans healthier is to combine preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles with diagnosis and treatment, compared to just 38 percent who think the focus should be solely on diagnosis and treatment of disease.

The best way to make Americans healthier is to focus primarily on diagnosing and treating illnesses and disease.

OR

The best way to make Americans healthier is to diagnose and treat those who are already ill, but also invest in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles to stop illnesses from occurring.

Voters Seek Comprehensive Approach

Focus on diagnosing and treating much more	20
Focus on diagnosing and treating somewhat more	18
Invest in prevention and promoting healthy lifestyles somewhat more	19
Invest in prevention and promoting healthy lifestyles much more	38
Total Focus on diagnosing and treating	38
Total Invest in prevention and promoting healthy lifestyles	57

Women indicate the strongest desire to prioritize preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles as a key to making Americans healthier. Fifty-nine percent of women favor an agenda of diagnosis and prevention, compared to 55 percent of men. This includes support from 63 percent of college-educated women, 62 percent of women with children, and 60 percent of unmarried women.

Americans believe that investing now in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles is critical to reducing health care costs in this country

Voters see the opportunity to cut down on the costs of health care as an extremely convincing reason for the next president and Congress to make a greater investment in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles. Voters rated the following argument an average of 7.2 on a 10-point scale.

Investing now in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles will save Americans billions of dollars in their own personal health care costs. Health issues like diabetes, cancer, and heart and lung disease cost billions of dollars each year in hospital bills, drug costs, and high insurance premiums. Preventing these diseases and promoting healthy lifestyles to help Americans from getting sick in the first place will save money on the costs of medical care and health insurance in the long run.

The ability to take real action that can impact the exploding costs of health care resonates strongly across the electorate (see Appendix C for more details about different demographic group support for increased funding).

- **Both men and women respond strongly to an argument linking investment in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles to reducing health care costs.** Women give this argument an average 7.5 rating on a 10-point scale, while men also find the argument very convincing, with an average rating of 6.8.
- **Voters at every income level see preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles as an important step towards reducing the costs of health care.** This argument resonates most strongly with voters with an annual household income of less than \$75,000 a year (7.4 rating on a 10-point scale), but is also convincing with higher-income voters (6.9 on a 10-point scale).
- **African Americans and Hispanics believe the goal of reducing health care costs is an extremely convincing reason to invest in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles.** Both groups rate this argument above a 7.5 on a 10-point scale, with African Americans at 7.9 and Hispanics at 7.6. Fully one-third of African Americans give this argument the highest rating of 10 on the 10-point scale.

Seven-in-ten Americans want the federal government to invest more in disease prevention and healthy living

The federal government spends approximately 94 percent of health dollars on diagnosis and treatment of disease, and six percent on preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Voters are providing a clear mandate for candidates and members of Congress on the need to increase our nation investment in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles. An overwhelming 70 percent express a desire for a greater federal effort to prevent disease and promote healthy lifestyles. Forty-six percent of voters believe the government should spend “much more” on these efforts. (See Appendix D for more details about different demographic group support for increased funding).

- **Younger voters want to invest in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles.** Three quarters of voters under the age of 50 say that government should spend more on

preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles, with half believing that government needs to spend “much more.” The strongest support comes from women under 50 (80 percent) and college-educated voters under the age of 50 (78 percent).

- **Seventy-seven percent of Americans with children want to see increased federal efforts to prevent disease and promote healthy lifestyles.** This compares to 67 percent among people without children.
- **Eighty percent of African Americans and 86 percent of Hispanics believe the government should spend more money on preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles.** This represents a 12-point increase among African Americans and a 17-point jump among Hispanics in the past year.
- **Voters in the Northeast are most supportive of additional spending.**² Eighty-one percent of Northeasterners support greater investment in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles, along with 73 percent of voters in the West and 70 percent of voters in the South. Sixty-one percent of Americans living in the Central region also support additional spending for disease prevention and health promotion.

Americans show strong support for legislative proposals to prevent disease and promote healthy lifestyles

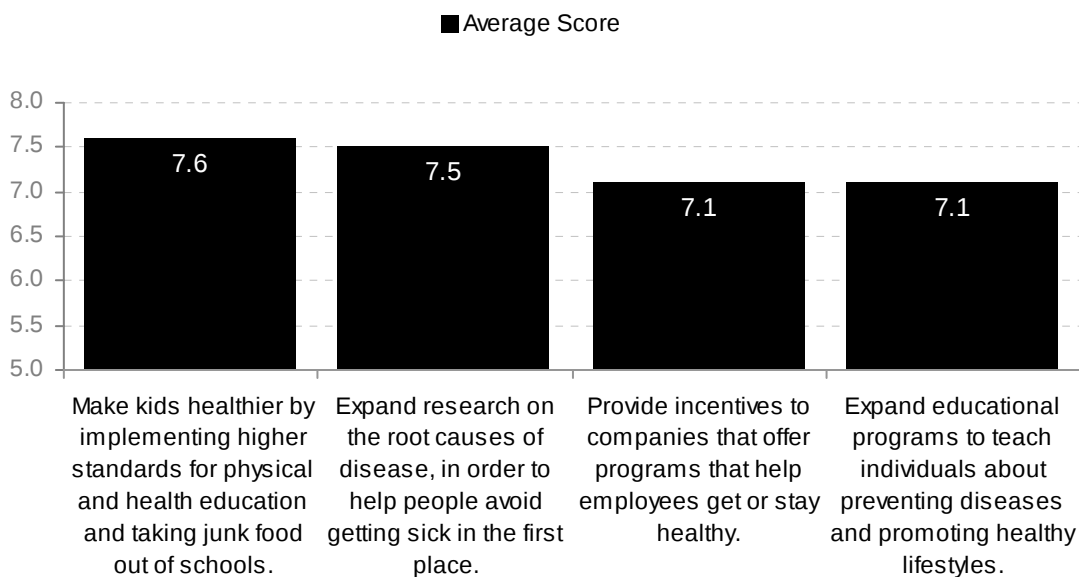
Americans strongly favor ideas that bring government, businesses, and individuals together to support disease prevention and healthier lifestyles. Voters give every proposal tested high ratings that fall between 7.1 and 7.6 on a 10-point scale. These initiatives include increased health and physical education in schools, incentives for companies to offer wellness programs to employees, expanded research to determine the root causes of diseases, and expanding education to help people learn more about preventing disease and leading healthy lifestyles.

These proposals receive strong support across the board, and several groups stand out with high support for each of the initiatives.

- **African American and Hispanic voters.** These groups rate each of the initiatives very strongly. Among African Americans, each proposal receives a rating above an 8.0 on the 10-point scale.
- **Women.** Women, particularly Democratic and independent women and women with less than a college degree, show the strongest support for the proposals.
- **Voters with annual household incomes of less than \$50,000.** These voters strongly support all of the proposals.
- **Northeastern voters.** Voters living in New England and the Mid-Atlantic states express a strong desire for government to implement the proposals.

² Definitions of regions are available in Appendix B.

Making Kids Healthier Tops List of Strong Proposals



Now, I am going to read you a list of some things the next president and Congress could do to help prevent diseases and promote healthy lifestyles in the United States. For each, please tell me, on a scale of 0 to 10, how useful each proposal would be to prevent diseases and promote healthy lifestyles in the United States, with 10 being an extremely useful proposal and 0 being a not at all useful proposal.

Appendix A: Methodology

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, Inc. designed this telephone survey. Interviewing was conducted by professional interviewers. The survey reached 1,005 adults ages 18 and older. The survey was conducted January 18-22, 2008. Among these adults, 878 responded that they were registered to vote. The data were weighted by gender, age, race, region, and party identification to ensure an accurate reflection of the population. The sample size with these weights applied is 1,005 adults and 878 registered voters.

Appendix B: Regional Definitions

Northeast: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania.

Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska.

South: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, Tennessee, West Virginia.

West: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Oregon, Hawaii, Washington.

Appendix C: Convincing Reason to invest in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles – Reduce health care costs argument

Average rating on a 10-point scale	
Total	7.2
White	7.1
African American	7.9
Hispanic	7.6
Men	6.8
Women	7.5
Ages 18-29	7.0
Ages 30-39	7.2
Ages 40-49	7.1
Ages 50-64	7.3
Ages 65+	7.1
High School or less	7.2
Post High School	7.1
College graduate	7.2
Less than \$30K	7.3
\$30K to \$50K	7.5
\$50K to \$75K	7.4
\$75K to \$100K	6.9
Liberal	8.0
Moderate	7.5
Conservative	6.5
Democrat	7.6
Independent	7.2
Republican	6.6
Northeast	7.5
Central	6.9
South	7.1
West	7.2

Appendix D: Support for Increased Funding by Key Demographic Groups

	Spend much/somewhat more on preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles
Total	70
White	68
African American	80
Hispanic	86
Men	67
Women	73
Ages 18-29	67
Ages 30-39	80
Ages 40-49	76
Ages 50-64	66
Ages 65+	65
High School or less	67
Post High School	70
College graduate	73
Less than \$30K	72
\$30K to \$50K	75
\$50K to \$75K	73
\$75K to \$100K	68
Liberal	85
Moderate	75
Conservative	60
Democrat	78
Independent	75
Republican	57
Northeast	81
Central	61
South	70
West	73