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Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab Poll: Most Iowans interested in COVID-19 vaccinations

According to a recent Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab Poll — conducted on behalf of University of Iowa faculty and students between January 13 and February 3 — a large majority of Iowans are interested in receiving a vaccine against COVID-19. When asked if they would be interested in receiving a vaccine that was approved as safe and effective, 50.2% of respondents indicated they would definitely be interested in receiving it, 21.3% said they would probably be interested in receiving it. In contrast, 10.7% of respondents would probably not and 11.4% would definitely not want to receive it yet. A modest proportion, 6.4%, of respondents were not sure or declined to answer.

Interest in receiving the vaccine was highest among older Iowans with five out of six reporting that they would definitely (71.3%) or probably (12.1%) receive the vaccine. This dropped to three in four among respondents age 55 to 69 (52.5% definitely and 23.3% probably would get) and three in four among respondents ages 18-34 (44.5% definitely and 23.6% probably would get) and 35-54 (44.1% definitely and 21.8% probably would get). Interest was also higher among men compared to women. Among men 55.1% said they would definitely get it and 21.1% said they would probably get it and among women 45.4% said they would definitely get it and 21.6% said they would probably get it.

Differences also appeared based on respondent by self-reported partisan identification, though in all cases no fewer than three in five responded that they were definitely or probably interested in getting a vaccine. Democrats were more likely to express interest, with 69.5% responding they would definitely get it and 17.4% that they would probably get it. Among Independents these numbers dropped to 44.6% and 25.7%, respectively; among Republicans they decreased a bit more, to 42.2% and 19.1%, respectively.

Respondents were also asked about their sources of news and information about vaccines. The largest percentage (77.6%) reported that they received information on television news, followed by social media (55.7%), friends and family (49.0%), and the newspaper (28.9%). Only 1.8% reported seeing no information about vaccines and 3.3% didn't know or declined to answer.

Finally, respondents were asked to prioritize which groups would receive the vaccine. They were presented with a list of six groups and asked to put them in order of priority, from highest to lowest. The groups to rank were as follows: essential workers, people with underlying conditions that medical risk factors, those 65 and older, those from racial and ethnic minority groups, people living in rural communities, and those without health insurance or inadequate insurance. The groups were presented to respondents in a random order. Responses indicated a consensus of two tiers. Essential workers, Iowans over 65, and those with medical risk factors forming the top three groups, with at least 80% of respondents putting each among their top three groups. Those with medical risk factors were placed

slightly higher among these three, with 65.9% of respondents ranking them first or second, compared to 54.2% for essential workers and 55.0% of those 65 and over. The second tier consisted of minority groups, rural communities, and those lacking sufficient insurance coverage. Among these three, a slight preference was given to minority groups and those lacking insurance. 37.3% of respondents put those in rural communities last compared to 24.4% for minorities and 26.6% for those lacking sufficient insurance coverage.

The items comprising the two tiers showed no variation across various demographic groups (including urban/rural residence), though the priorities within tiers moved slightly in some cases. For example, self-identified Democrats placed slightly higher priority on those with medical risk factors within the first tier, with 74.0% placing them first or second compared to 62.5% among Republicans and 62.7% among Independents. In contrast, Republicans put slightly higher priority on those 65 and older, with 58.9% putting them first or second, compared to 51.0% among Democrats and 58.2% among Independents. Among the second tier, Republicans put a higher priority on rural communities, with 29.6% placing them fourth overall compared to 13.1% of Democrats and 20.4% of Independents. Democrats placed greater priority on minority groups, with 43.4% ranking them fourth overall, compared to 23.0% among Republicans and 29.0% among Independents.

Respondent Identification: The Iowa Social Science Research Center (ISRC) contracted with a web panel vendor, Ipsos Observer, to field the survey to a demographically representative sample of 1,000 respondents. Respondents invited to complete the web survey were Iowa adults, aged 18-120 years, recruited for participation via web panel. To obtain a census-representative sample, quotas were set on the following demographics: sex, age, and urbanicity.

Sample: 1000 voting-age resident in Iowa, margin of error +/-3.2%

Weighting: Reported results are weighted by age, sex, and party identification. Alternate weighting schemes, such as by age, sex, and education produced substantively similar results.

About the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab

The poll was designed by the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab, comprised of University of Iowa faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab is co-directed by Profs. Fred Boehmke in Political Science and Kaja Dalrymple in Journalism and Mass Communication. The poll is a teaching, research, and service project, and was implemented in collaboration with the Iowa Social Science Research Center directed by Frederick J. Boehmke. The University of Iowa Public Policy Center provided support for this poll as part of its PolicyRISE initiative to expand experiential research for UI students.

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