

As Education and Income Rise, Concern About Swine Flu Declines, According to Thomson Reuters Survey

October 23, 2009

Only About One-Third of Respondents Intend to Have Members of Their Household Vaccinated

ANN ARBOR, Mich., Oct. 23 /PRNewswire/ -- Are Americans concerned about swine flu? About one-third say they are, one-third say they're not, and one-third say, well, maybe a little. Concern is greater among people with lower incomes and less education.

"It appears that people with more education believe that steps being taken will prevent an outbreak," said Gary Pickens, chief research officer for the Healthcare & Science business of Thomson Reuters

Do Americans intend to have everyone in their household vaccinated? About 36 percent say yes, and 47 percent say no. Older Americans are more likely to say members of their household will get swine flu shots.

"It's astounding, with all the information being distributed about swine flu, that only a third of the population expects to get vaccinated," Pickens said. "There is also a group of people who are very concerned about swine flu, but not likely to get the flu shot. Presumably, they experience some type of barrier to care. They are mostly young adults, less educated, lower income, and female."

These results are from a telephone survey of 3,003 households conducted from Oct. 5-15 -- a segment of the Thomson Reuters PULSE Healthcare Survey, the largest and longest-running survey of its kind. Each year, PULSE polls more than 100,000 U.S. households about healthcare behaviors, attitudes and utilization.

The survey asked respondents to rate their level of concern about swine flu (1 = not at all concerned; 5 = very concerned):

- 36 percent rated it a 1 or 2.
- 29.6 percent rated it a 3.
- 34.4 percent rated it a 4 or 5.

Half of people with a high school diploma or less education (49.8 percent) rated their concern 4 or 5, compared with 29 percent of people with at least a four-year college degree.

At the same time, 43.3 percent of people earning under \$25,000 annually rated their concern at 4 or 5. This compares with 33.3 percent of those earning \$25,000 to \$49,999, 30 percent of those earning \$50,000 to \$99,999, and 31 percent of those earning \$100,000 or more.

Respondents also were asked to rate the likelihood that everyone in their household would get the swine flu vaccination (1 = not at all likely; 5 = very likely):

- Almost half (47 percent) chose 1 or 2.
- 16.3 percent chose 3.
- 36.7 selected 4 or 5.

Demographic groups most likely to say they will get flu shots are those age 65 and older (46.5 percent selected 4 or 5) and those with a high school diploma or less education (47.5 percent selected 4 or 5).

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David Wilkins, +1-734-913-3397, David.wilkins@thomsonreuters.com