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NEW JERSEYANS CAN'T TURN AWAY FROM EBOLA COVERAGE

New Jerseyans are riveted to news coverage of Ebola, with 96 percent following it “somewhat closely” or “very closely.” Also, registered voters are more confident in the state’s ability to handle an Ebola outbreak than they are in the federal government response.

The most recent statewide survey of registered voters from Fairleigh Dickinson University’s PublicMind finds that two-thirds (66%) give the federal government a fair or poor rating in its handling of the few Ebola cases in the U.S. When it comes to faith that the state can do things better, a majority (53%) are more optimistic.

“The results seem to clearly point to the fact that a series of high profile missteps have created a fear and distrust in the eyes of the public,” said Michael Avaltroni, dean of FDU’s School of Pharmacy. “While Ebola transmissions have, to this point, been extremely isolated, the perception has been that the federal government has been caught off guard. That, mixed with a great deal of public misinformation about the disease and its transmission patterns, has led to a great deal of concern amidst a mainstream and social media frenzy.”

There are some differences, however, in how the public perceives the government’s response. Democrats and women give more credit to the federal government than men and Republicans do. Sixty-eight percent of women say the federal government has done an excellent or good job in responding to the crisis, and 45 percent of Democrats say the same. Only men (29%), Republicans (17%) and independents (23%) evaluate the federal government positively.

“If the benchmark for success is keeping the virus at bay and not letting it explode into more areas than Dallas, Democrats and women seem reasonably pleased. Maybe Republicans and men were looking for a response that kept the virus from entering the U.S. at all. If so, their less-than-satisfied response is justified,” said Krista Jenkins, associate professor and director of the poll.

The same poll finds that many are following the outbreak closely. Almost two-thirds (64%) say they’re following the news very closely, with another third (32%) following it somewhat closely.

“It’s rare to see the public paying such close attention to anything,” said Jenkins. “Although Ebola has so far afflicted only a handful of Americans – with a case in nearby New York, and no one in New Jersey, news of the outbreak dominates stories about events that are certain to happen and closer to

home. The November elections are being followed closely by one-in-seven, with a majority who barely know we're voting in a few weeks."

Ebola attentiveness is paying off, as 80 percent of respondents can correctly identify the way the virus is transmitted (direct contact), with a scant 12 percent who incorrectly believe it is similar to the flu with an airborne mechanism for transmission. Education helps to put to transmission in context, since those with a college degree (85%) are more likely to know it's difficult to transmit Ebola as compared with those with less than a college degree (75%).

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 1107 registered voters in New Jersey was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from October 13 through October 19, 2014, and has a margin of error of +/-2.9 percentage points.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032*

Methodology

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from October 13 through October 19, 2014 using a randomly selected sample of 1107 registered voters who reside in New Jersey. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/-2.9 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

The following tables are based on all registered voters in the sample.

Tables

How closely are you following the news about the Ebola virus in both the US and abroad? (READ LIST)

	All	PID			Gender		Race		Education		Age		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-white	HS/Some college	College +	18-34	35-59	60+
Very closely	64	61	61	70	64	64	65	62	66	63	44	65	77
Somewhat closely	32	36	33	28	33	32	33	32	29	34	51	32	21
Not at all closely	3	3	5	2	3	3	3	5	5	2	4	4	2
DK/Ref (vol)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0

In your opinion, how would you rate the job the US government is doing to keep Ebola from spreading in the United States?(READ LIST)

	All	PID			Gender		Race		Education		Age		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-white	HS/Some college	College +	18-34	35-59	60+
Excellent	6	9	6	2	7	28	5	8	4	7	6	5	6
Good	25	36	17	15	22	30	23	30	23	26	27	23	27
Fair	27	32	28	21	24	33	27	28	25	28	32	26	26
Poor	39	21	47	58	44	4	42	29	44	36	32	42	38
DK/Ref (vol)	3	2	2	4	2	0	2	5	4	3	4	3	3

If someone living in New Jersey were to be diagnosed with the Ebola virus, how much confidence do you have in the state's public health system to keep the virus from spreading? (READ LIST)

	All	PID			Gender		Race		Education		Age		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-white	HS/Some college	College +	18-34	35-59	60+
A lot	18	26	12	12	21	16	18	20	15	20	21	15	21
Some	35	36	32	35	31	38	36	34	35	35	33	37	34
Just a little	25	23	24	29	23	28	25	28	25	25	23	28	23
None at all	17	11	27	21	21	14	18	14	21	15	20	17	17
DK/Ref (vol)	4	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	6

Based on what you now about the virus, is Ebola spread through the air or through direct contact with someone who is showing the symptoms of Ebola? [rotate]

	All	PID			Gender		Race		Education		Age		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-white	HS/Some college	College +	18-34	35-59	60+
Airborne	12	9	12	15	12	13	12	13	16	10	12	14	11
Direct contact	80	85	81	75	78	82	79	83	72	85	85	79	78
DK/Ref (vol)	9	6	7	10	10	5	9	4	11	5	3	7	11

Exact Question Wording and Order

US1 and US2 released October 21

SEN1 and SEN2 released October 21

ID released October 21

BAIL1 and BAIL2 released October 21

GS1 and GS2 released October 21

ISSUES1 through ISSUES3 released October 21

NJ1 through NJ3 released October 23

*EB1 How closely are you following the news about the Ebola virus in both the US and abroad?
(READ LIST)*

- 1 Very closely
- 2 Somewhat closely
- 3 Not at all closely
- 8 DK/Refused (vol)

EB2 In your opinion, how would you rate the job the US government is doing to keep Ebola from spreading in the United States?(READ LIST)

- 1 Excellent
- 2 Good
- 3 Fair
- 4 Poor
- 8 DK/Refused (vol)

EB3 If someone living in New Jersey were to be diagnosed with the Ebola virus, how much confidence do you have in the state's public health system to keep the virus from spreading? (READ LIST)

- 1 A lot
- 2 Some
- 3 Just a little
- 4 None at all
- 8 DK/Refused (vol)

EB4 Based on what you now about the virus, is Ebola spread through the air or through direct contact with someone who is showing the symptoms of Ebola? [rotate]

- 1 Airborne
- 2 Direct contact
- 8 DK/Refused (vol)

Sample Characteristics

		Registered voters N = 1107; MoE = +/- 2.9
Gender	<i>Male</i>	49%
	<i>Female</i>	51%
Age	<i>18-34</i>	22%
	<i>35-59</i>	45%
	<i>60+</i>	31%
Race	<i>Refused</i>	2%
	<i>White</i>	68%
	<i>African American</i>	12%
	<i>Hispanic</i>	12%
	<i>Asian</i>	3%
	<i>Other/Refused</i>	4%
Party (with leaners)	<i>Dem</i>	46%
	<i>Ind/DK/Refused</i>	18%
	<i>Repub</i>	36%