# Moving Into the Future

## A Communications Survey Supporting Technical Assistance for State, Local, Territorial, and Federal Communications

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Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

NPHIC

astho™

HORP
Harvard Opinion Research Program

# Strategic Data for Communications

**Collaboration**

- Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health
- ASTHO
- NPHIC
- CDC

**Goals**

- To provide robust evidence that can help guide communications strategy in the evolving COVID-19 context
    - Beyond publicly available polls
    - More than data to understand implications
    - Timely results for evolving issues
        - The future!

# Strategic Considerations

**Questions**

- How can we understand public views of the COVID vaccine?

**Implications**

→ Developing effective frames and approaches for vaccination now and going forward

- What are the key dimensions of public views related to public health moving out of COVID?
    - Where is trust?
    - What are their priorities?

→ Positioning public health programs for connection and success

# Methods Summary

| 2023 | Timing | Sample Size |
|---|---|---|
| Wave III | November 10 – 20, 2023 | n=1632 (1501 online, 131 phone), plus additional n=1031 for Q1-Q3 |
| Wave II | July 7 – 16, 2023 | n=1430 (1328 online, 102 phone) |
| Wave I | February 15 – March 6, 2023 | n=1936 (1786 online, 150 phone) |

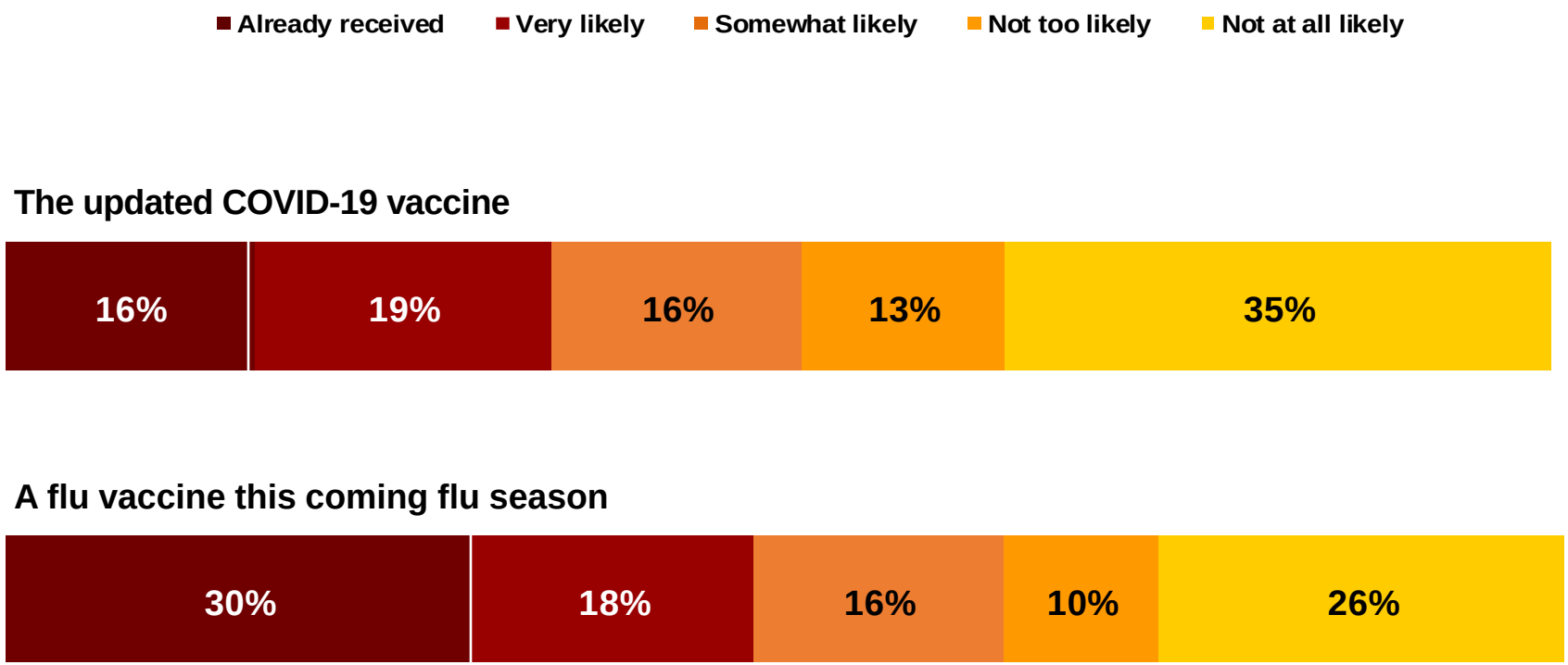
- *Design*: Nationally representative in each wave
- *Sampling*: Representative online and phone panel
- *Languages*: English and Spanish
- *Weighting*: Standard (Age, Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Education, Urban status) and Panel-specific (Internet access; Civic engagement)

*NOTES:*
*For presentation purposes, Don't Know and Refused responses not always shown unless >5%*
*±3.1 percentage points for total respondents at the 95% confidence level*

# Understanding the COVID Vaccine Reaction

# You Know This:
# Limited Interest in Respiratory Virus Vaccines, Particularly COVID

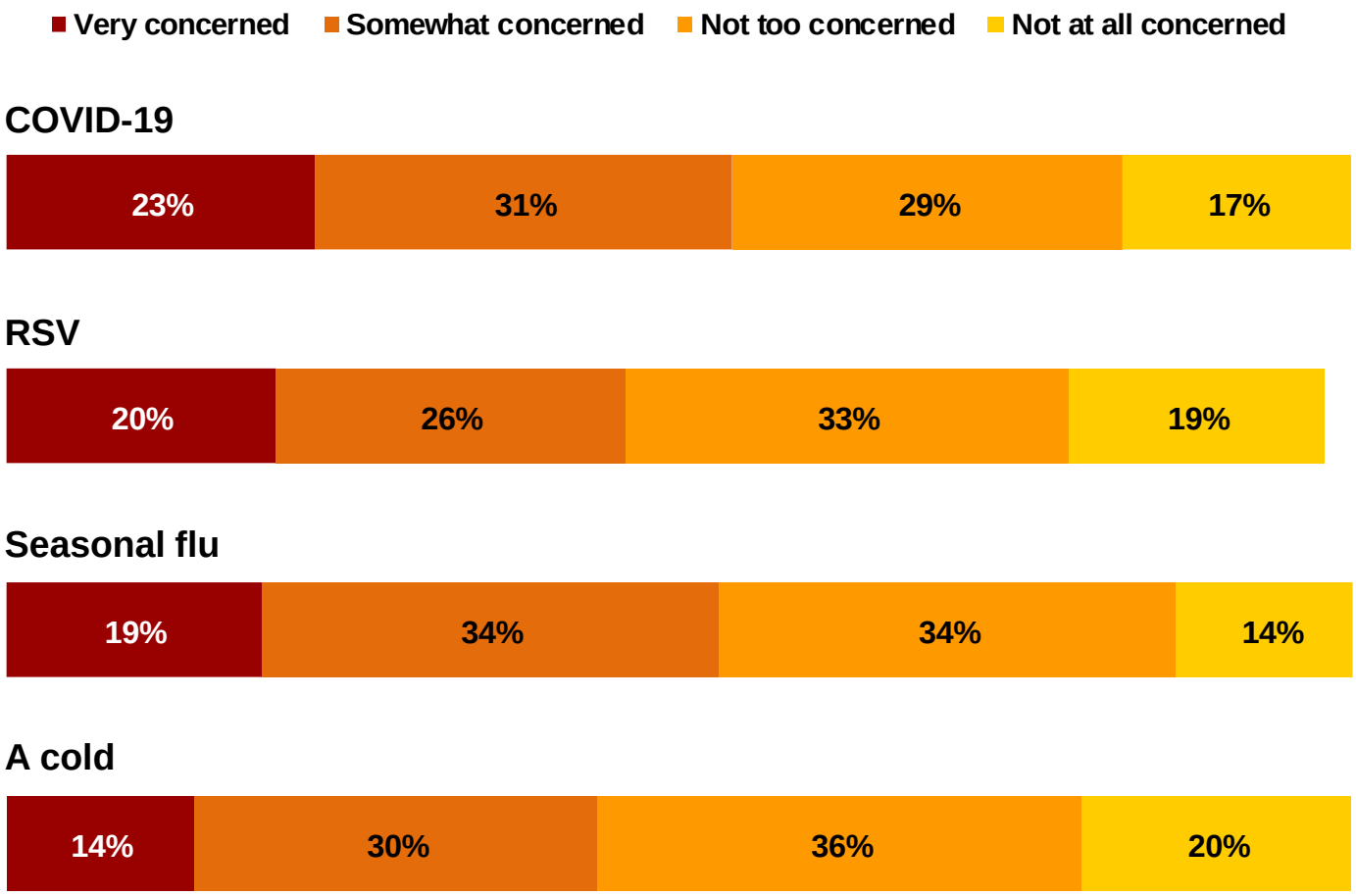
***% saying they would be likely or not likely to get…***




n=1632

# Limited Concern about Infection

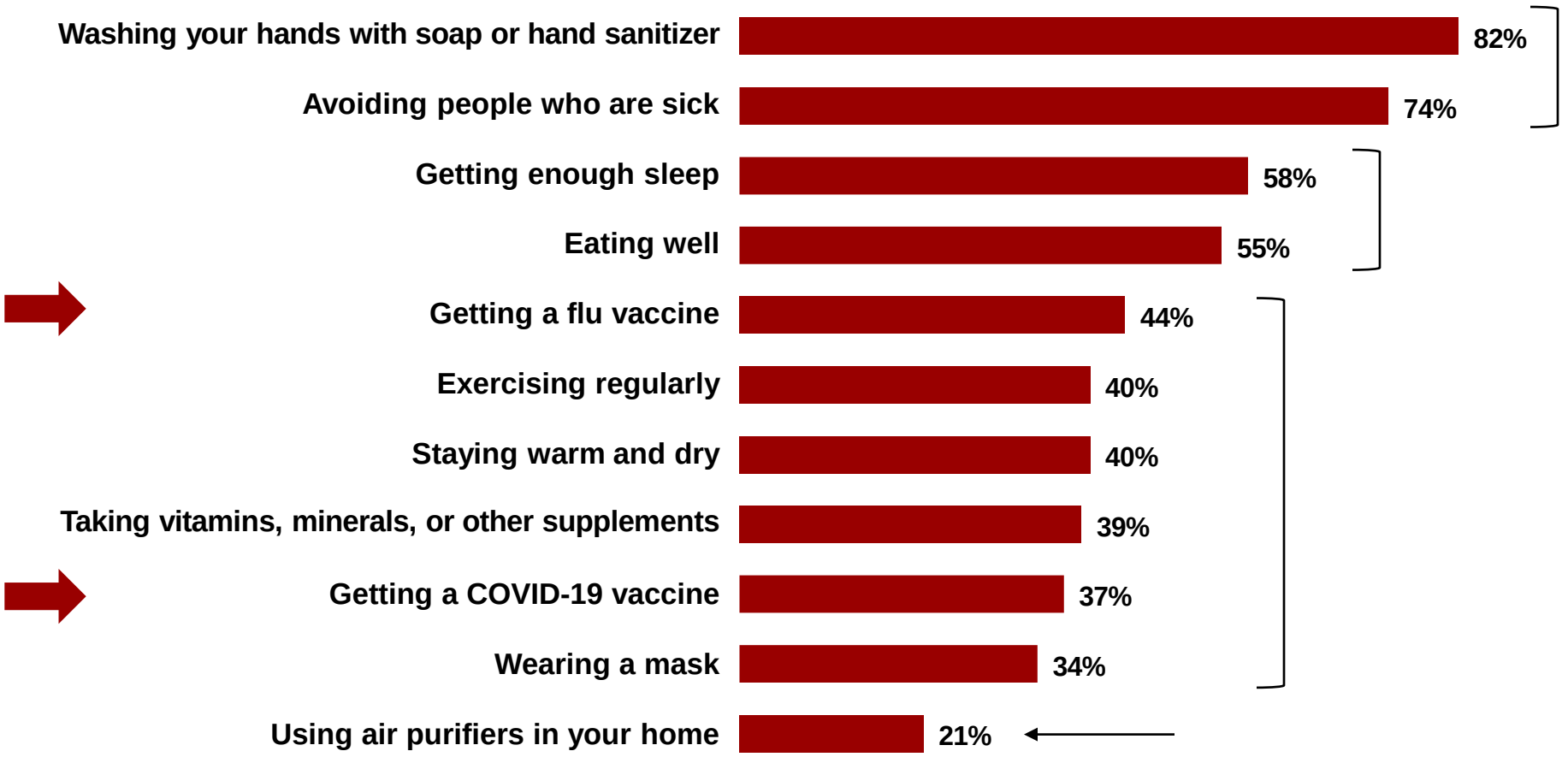
***% saying that they are <u>concerned or not concerned</u> about getting infected with each of the following during this cold and flu season***




n=1632

# Other Behaviors More Commonly Seen as Very Effective Compared to Vaccines

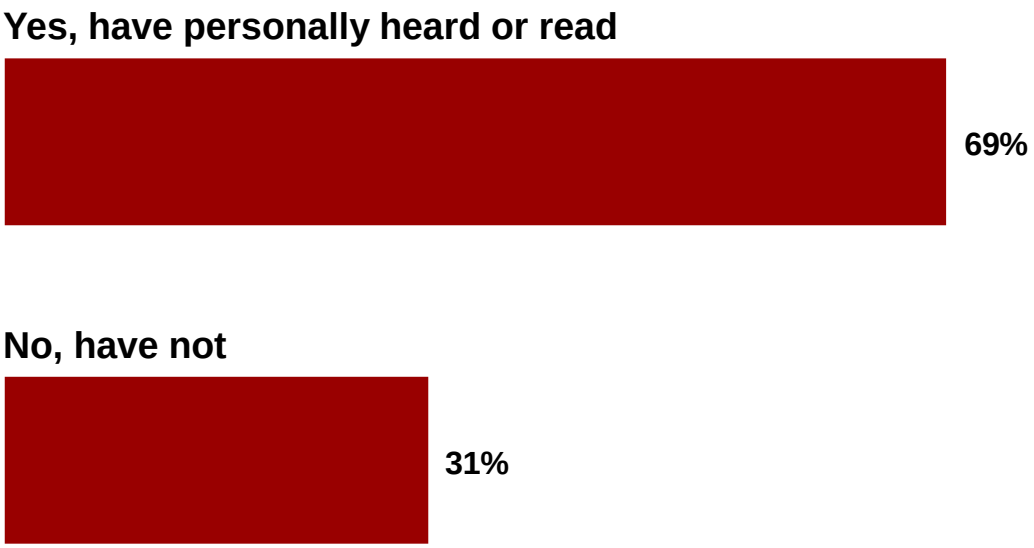
***% saying they feel each is very effective in protecting people from getting sick during cold and flu season***




n=1632

# False Information: Many Have Heard It Personally

***% saying they have personally heard or read information about vaccines that they believe is false and inaccurate***




n=1632

# Most of What People Call Out is False Information; Perceptions of What Constitutes False Information are Nuanced

***% giving each example of false and inaccurate information that they personally have heard about vaccines (among those who have heard something)***

**People Calling Out Misinformation that is Never True (34%)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Vaccines cause autism | 14% |
| Vaccines have microchips | 13% |
| Vaccines cause infertility | 3% |
| Vaccines change your DNA | 2% |
| Vaccines allow government to control you | 2% |

**People Expressing Skepticism of Exaggerated Positive Claims (4%)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Vaccines don't have adverse side effects | 2% |
| Vaccines always work | 2% |

**People Calling Out Misinformation that is Very Rarely True (27%)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Vaccines cause death | 7% |
| Vaccines cause disease/make you ill | 6% |
| Vaccines don't work | 6% |
| Vaccines are unsafe/dangerous/harmful | 4% |
| Vaccines cause heart issues | 2% |
| Vaccines have adverse side effects | 2% |

**People Disagreeing with Common, Positive Truths about Vaccines (20%)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Vaccines prevent illness/are effective | 13% |
| Vaccines are safe | 5% |
| Vaccines stop transmission | 2% |

*All other responses were <2%*

n=1110

# Deep Concerns about False Information

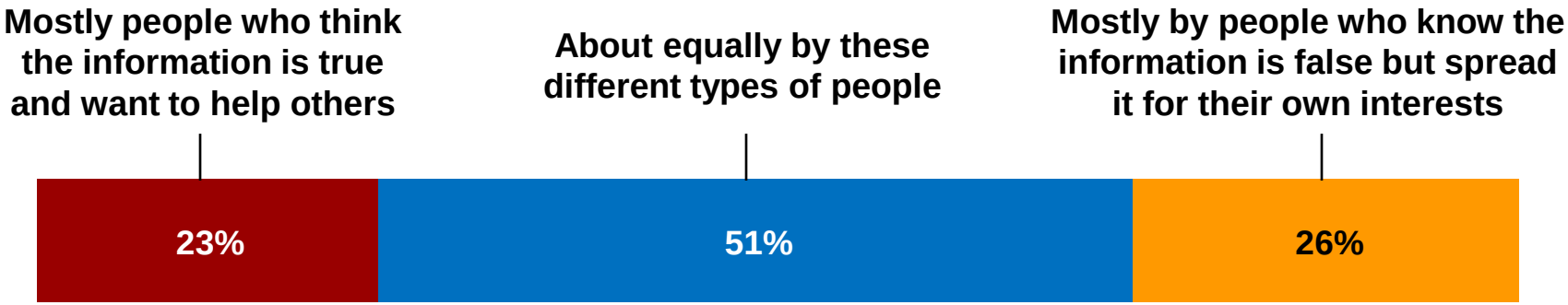
***% saying the spread of false and inaccurate information about vaccines in the U.S. is…***


n=1632

# Deep Concerns about False Information but Not Seen as Malicious Necessarily

***% saying the spread of false and inaccurate information about vaccines in the U.S. is…***

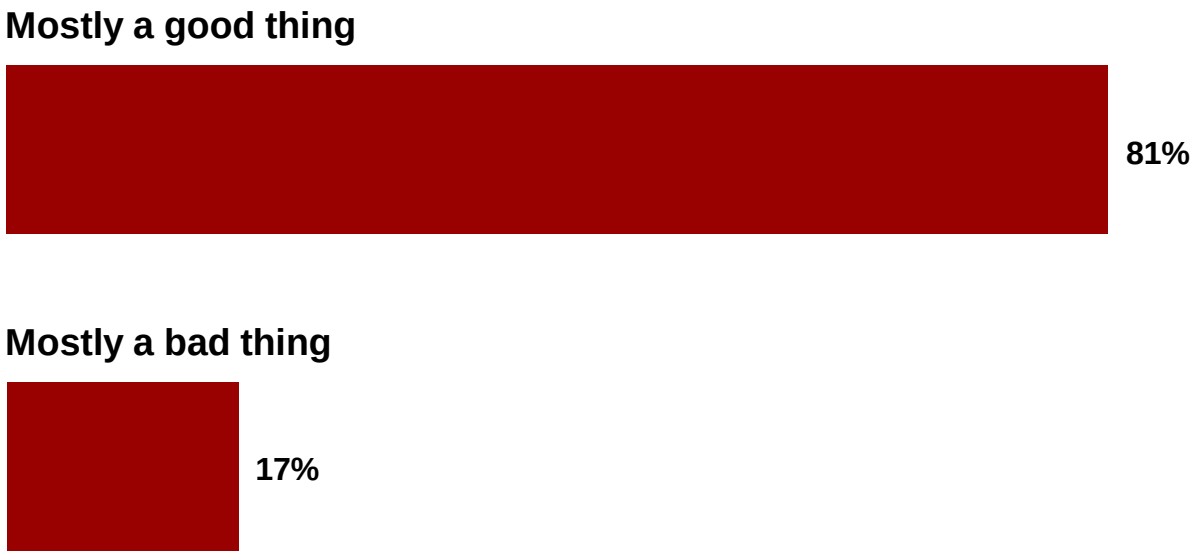

***% saying false information about vaccines is spread…***




n=1632

# Underlying Views of Vaccines: Most Feel New Vaccine Development is Good

***% saying, in general, they think the development of new vaccines is…***




n=1632

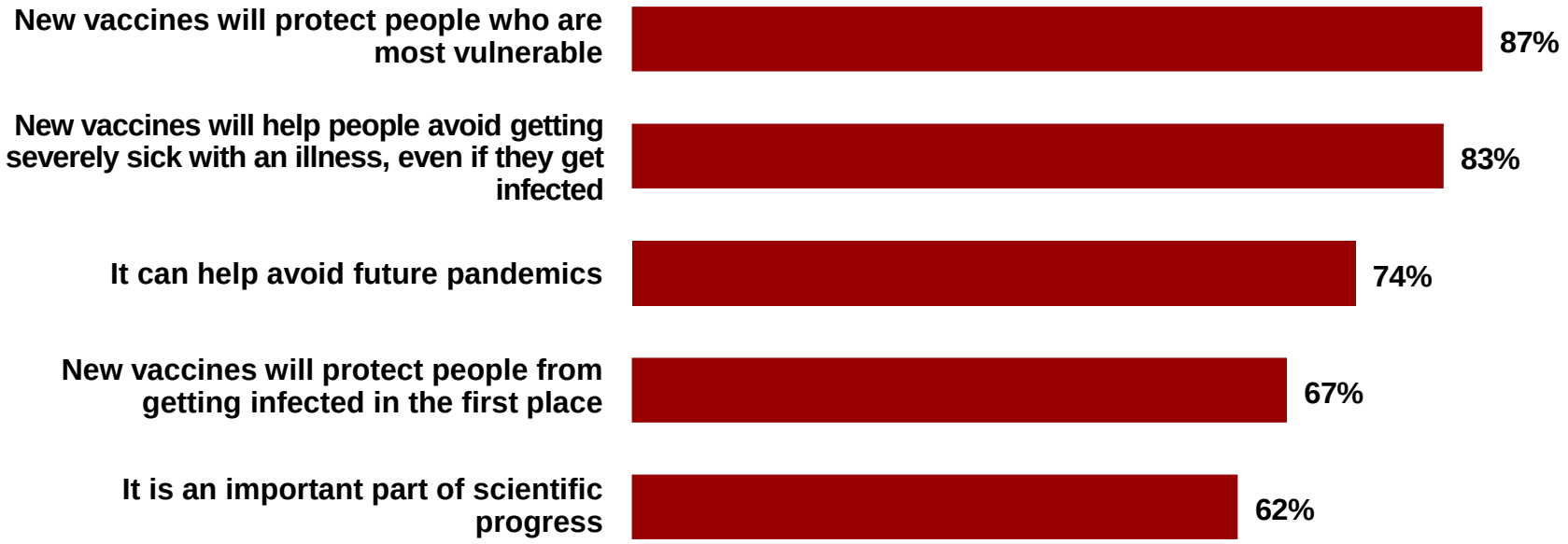
# Protecting Vulnerable and Protecting Against Serious Illness are Major Drivers of Positive Vaccine Views

***% saying each is a <u>major reason</u> they think the development of new vaccines is mostly good (among those who say this)***


n=1290

# Beyond Protection from Infection, Protection Against Pandemics and Scientific Progress Also Drivers

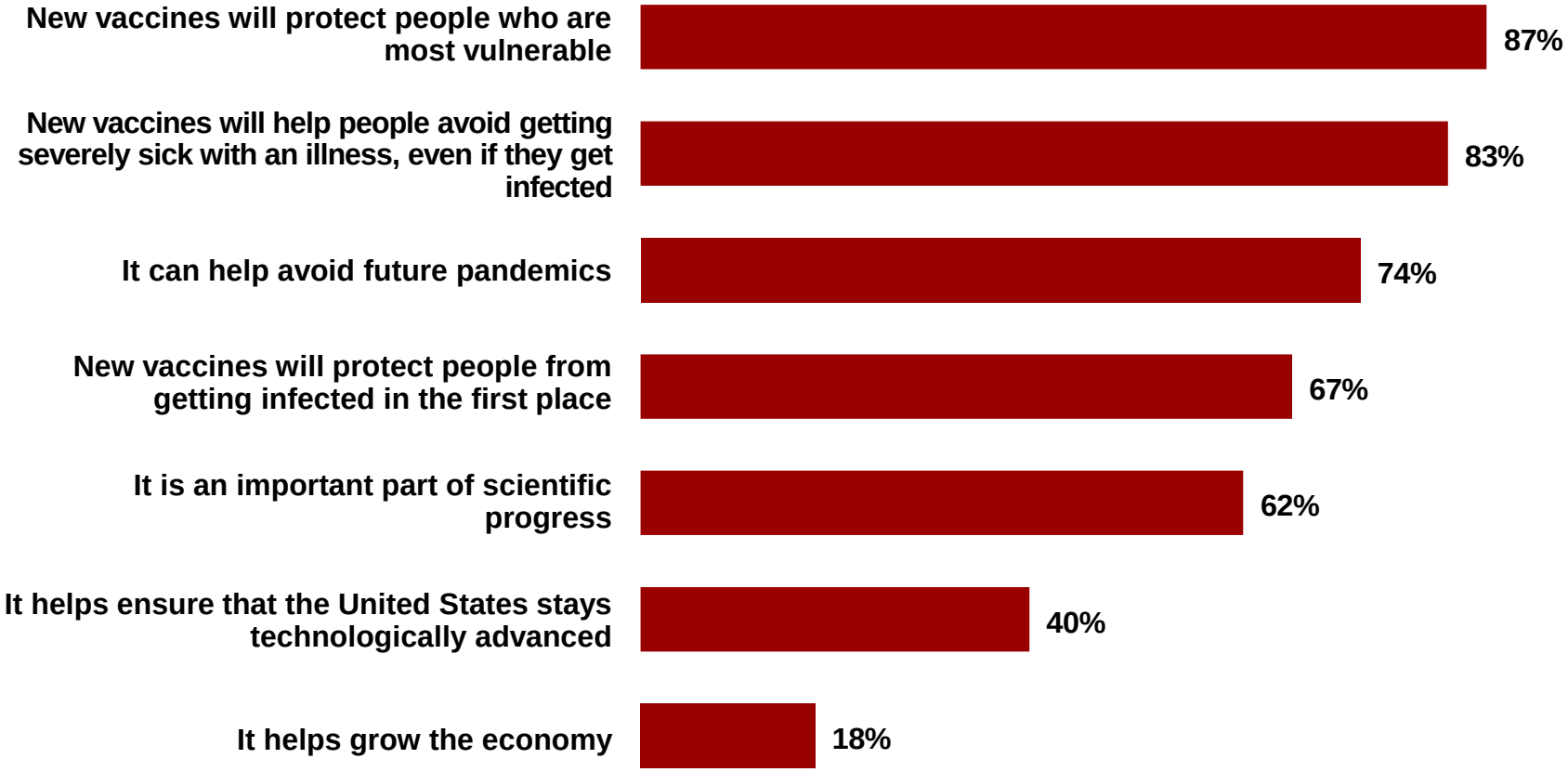
***% saying each is a <u>major reason</u> they think the development of new vaccines is mostly good (among those who say this)***




n=1290

# National Reasons Less Compelling, but Still Present

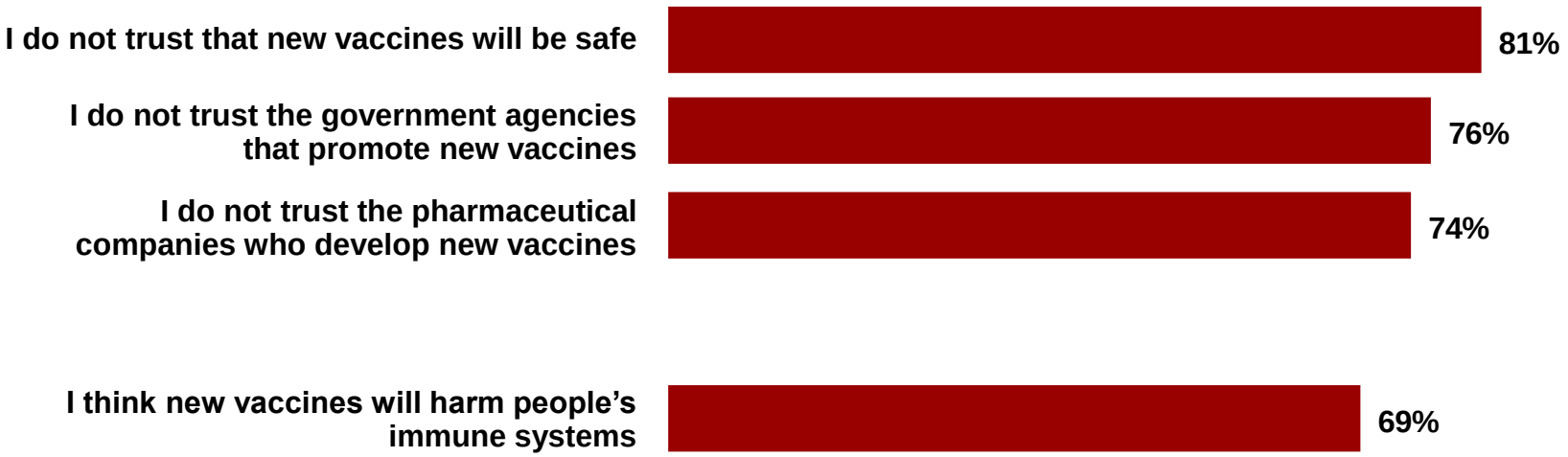
***% saying each is a <u>major reason</u> they think the development of new vaccines is mostly good (among those who say this)***




n=1290

# Trust in Safety is a Consistent Theme of Negative Vaccine Views

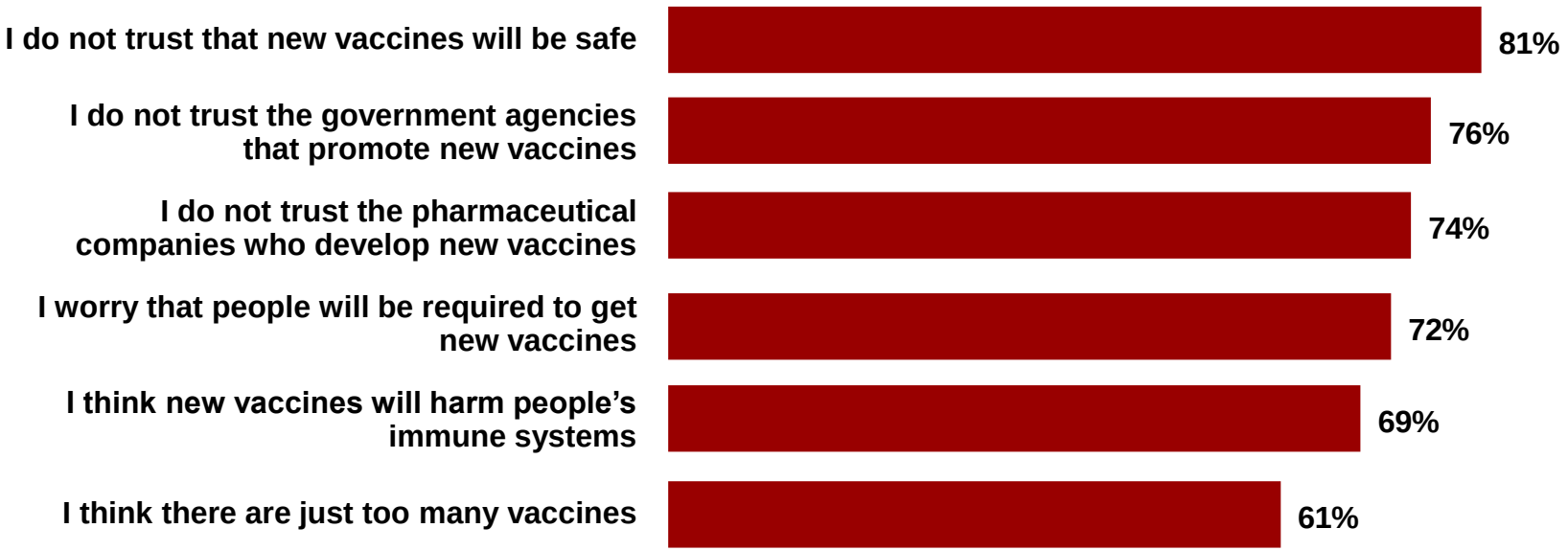
***% saying each is a major reason they think the development of new vaccines is mostly bad (among those who say this)***




n=301

# Concern about Requirements and Number of Vaccines Resonant Too

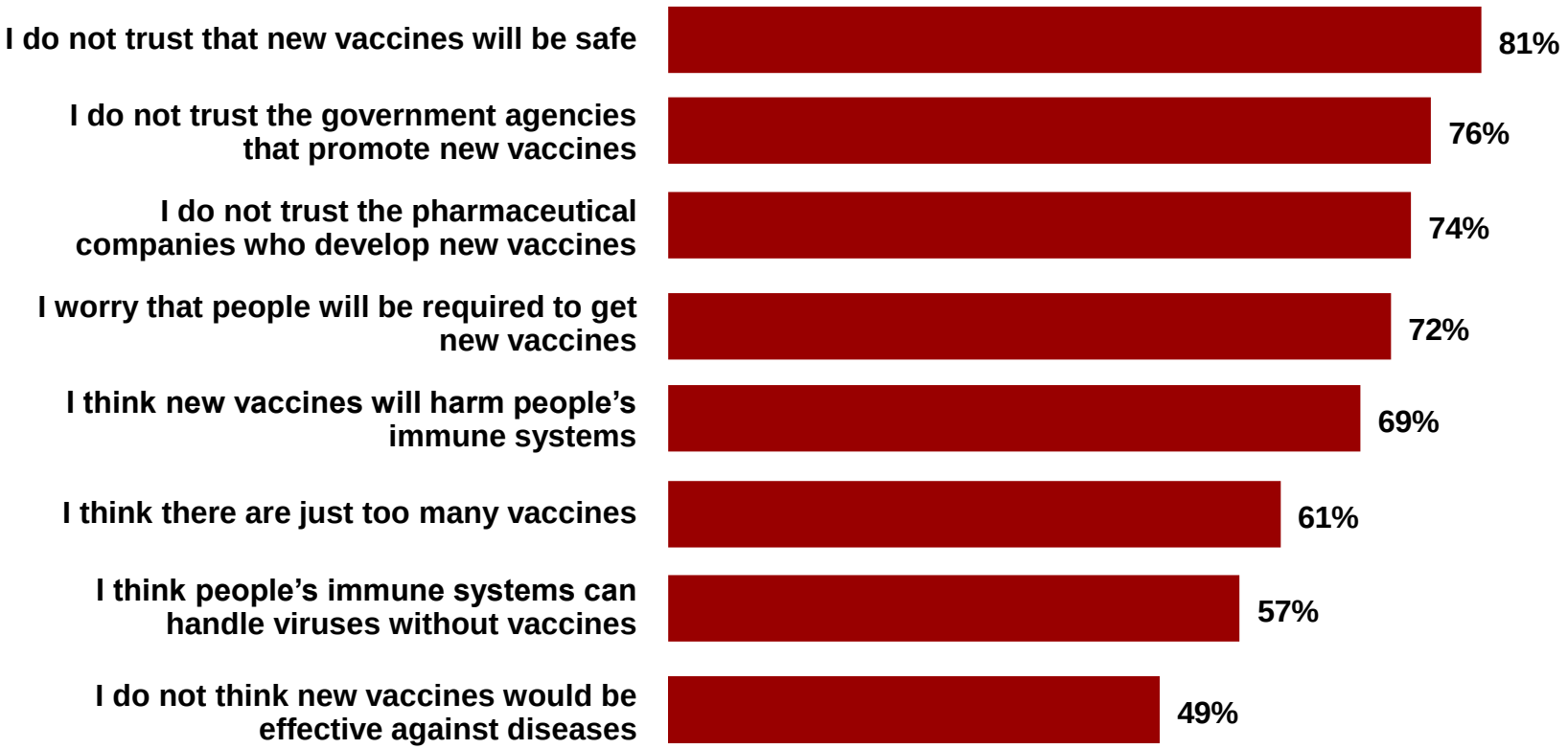
***% saying each is a major reason they think the development of new vaccines is mostly bad (among those who say this)***




n=301

# Confidence in Natural Immunity is Appealing Alongside Predictions of Ineffectiveness

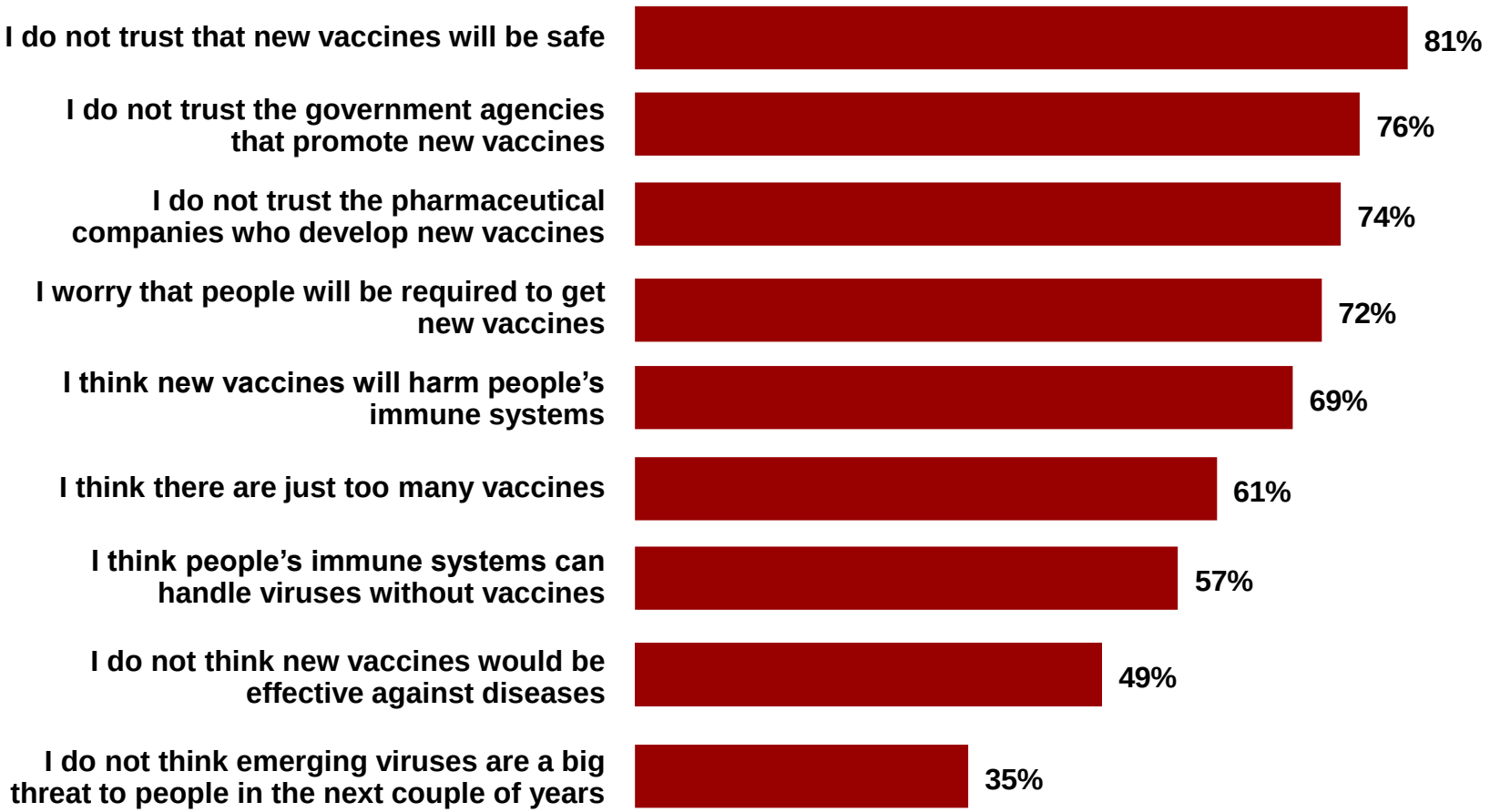
***% saying each is a major reason they think the development of new vaccines is mostly bad (among those who say this)***




n=301

# Little Disagreement that Emerging Viruses are a Threat

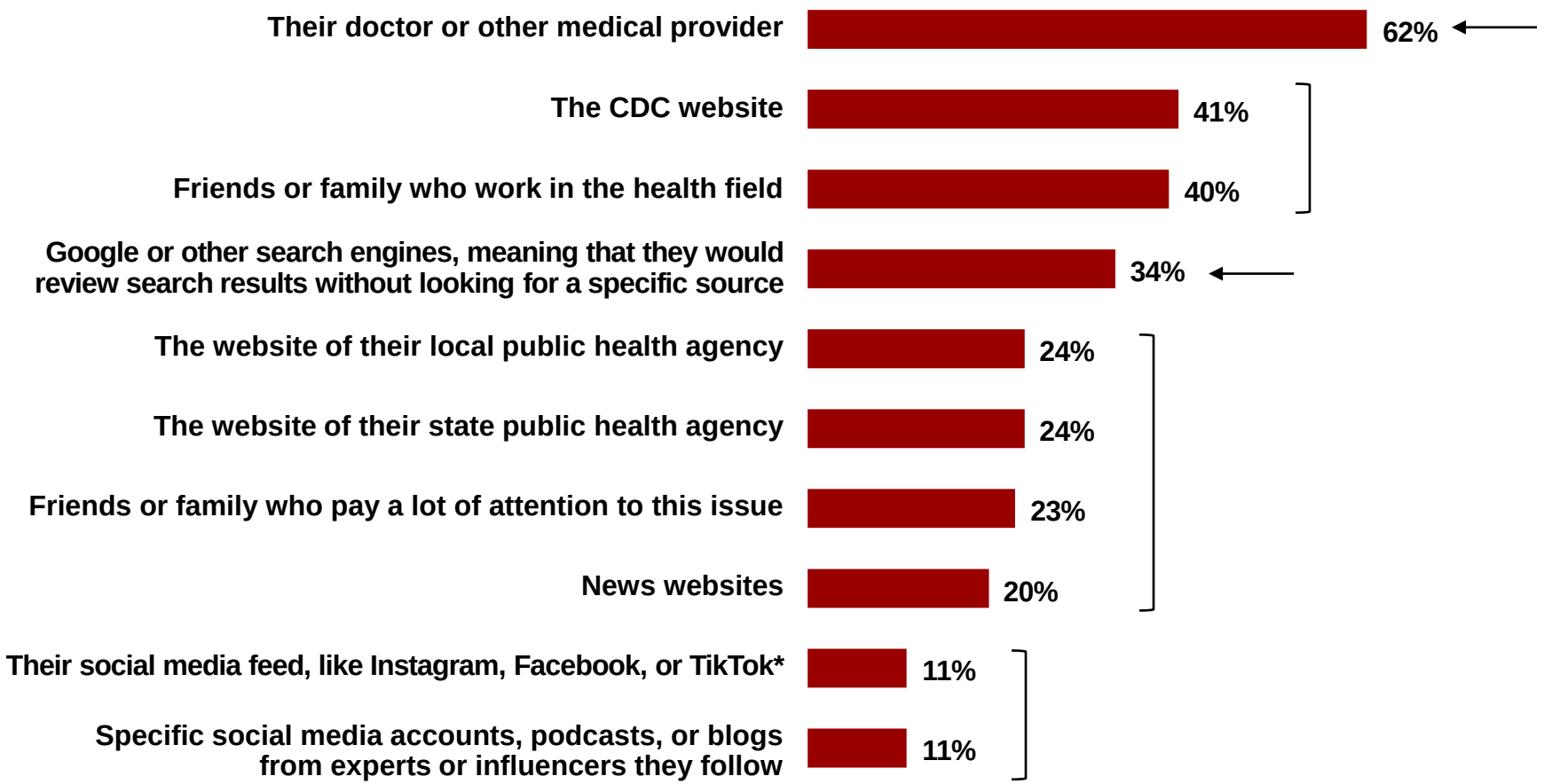
***% saying each is a major reason they think the development of new vaccines is mostly bad (among those who say this)***




n=301

# Doctors are Leading Source of Vaccine Information, CDC and Friends are Second Tier

***% saying, if they wanted to find out more information about these new vaccines, they would be very likely to use each of the following***




**Full text: "Your social media feed, like Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok, meaning that you would just scan your feed without looking for a specific expert or influencer"*

n=1632

# WebMD and Mayo Clinic are Top-of-Mind Online Sources of New Vaccine Information

***% saying, if they wanted to find out more information about these new vaccines, they would be very likely to use each of the following***

***(among 26% who are very likely to use "other" health websites)***

| | |
|---|---|
| WebMD | 25% |
| Mayo Clinic | 17% |
| National news organizations | 6% |
| NIH | 5% |
| WHO | 4% |
| Cleveland Clinic | 4% |
| Insurance companies | 3% |
| Johns Hopkins | 3% |
| Healthline | 3% |

All other responses <3%; n=414

# Implications for Communication

- Acknowledge and address many forces driving down interest in COVID vaccines – e.g., limited concern about infection, limited belief in vaccine effectiveness, false information

- Build messages for adult COVID vaccine with insights from vaccine views broadly:
    1. Emphasize value in protection from serious illness; transparency about limitations of vaccines is valued
    2. Focus on personal benefits for high-risk (vulnerable) populations
    3. Emphasize the possibility of protecting vulnerable loved ones; clarify transmission potential
    4. Tread carefully when it comes to false information; messages that imply judgement on those who share false information may not be effective – acknowledging good intentions may be better received

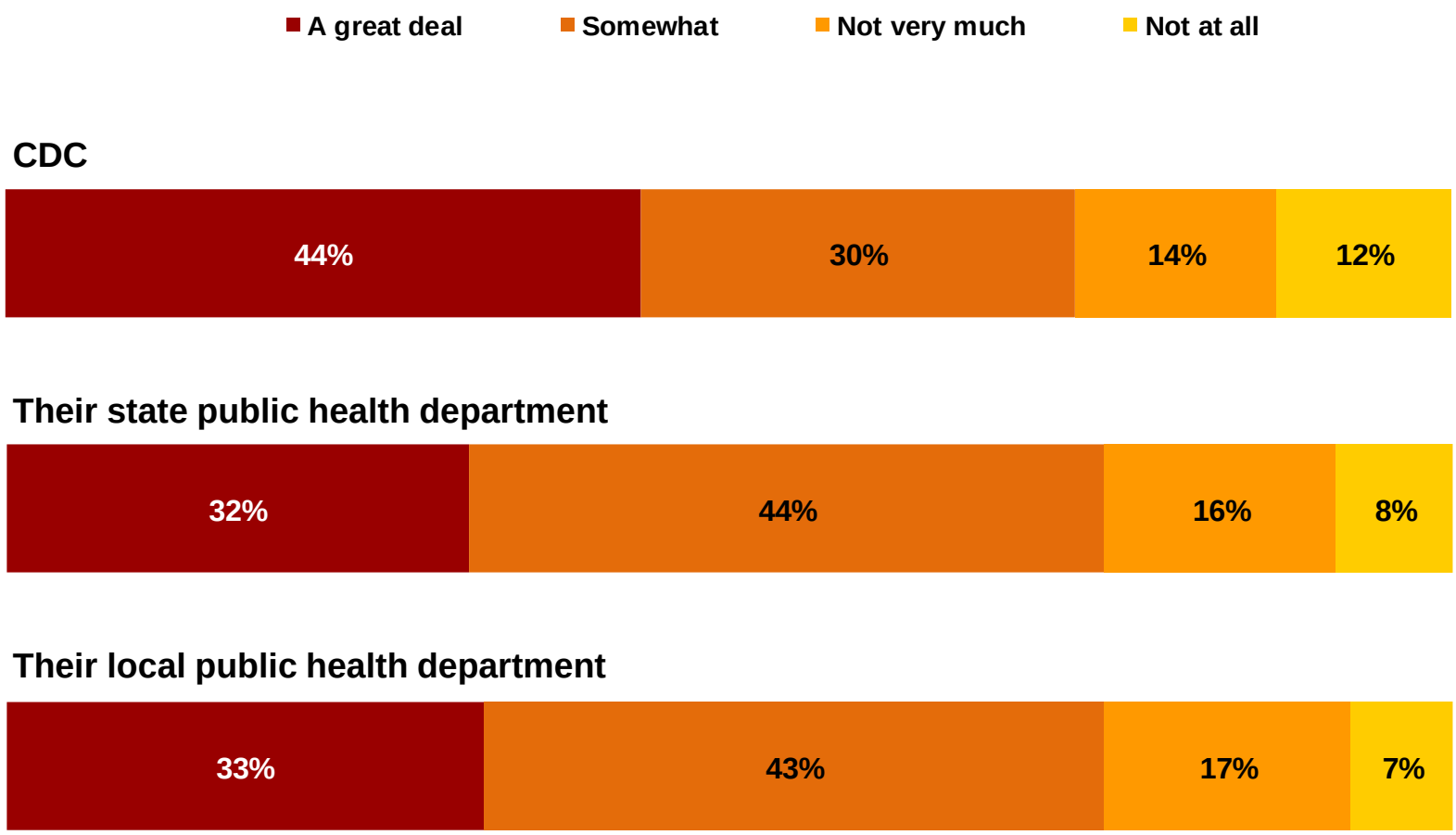
- Address concerns indirectly as well as directly
    - Frame messages to address tapping into natural immunity and ability to handle multiple vaccines
    - Understand the spectrum of false information – avoid exaggerated claims
    - Provide lots of reasons to trust public health even beyond vaccines

- Continue to build partnerships with trusted messengers, including a large network of people who work in the health field

# Opportunities for the Future

# Most Trust Public Health for COVID Information, Slightly More Trust in Federal Agency Information

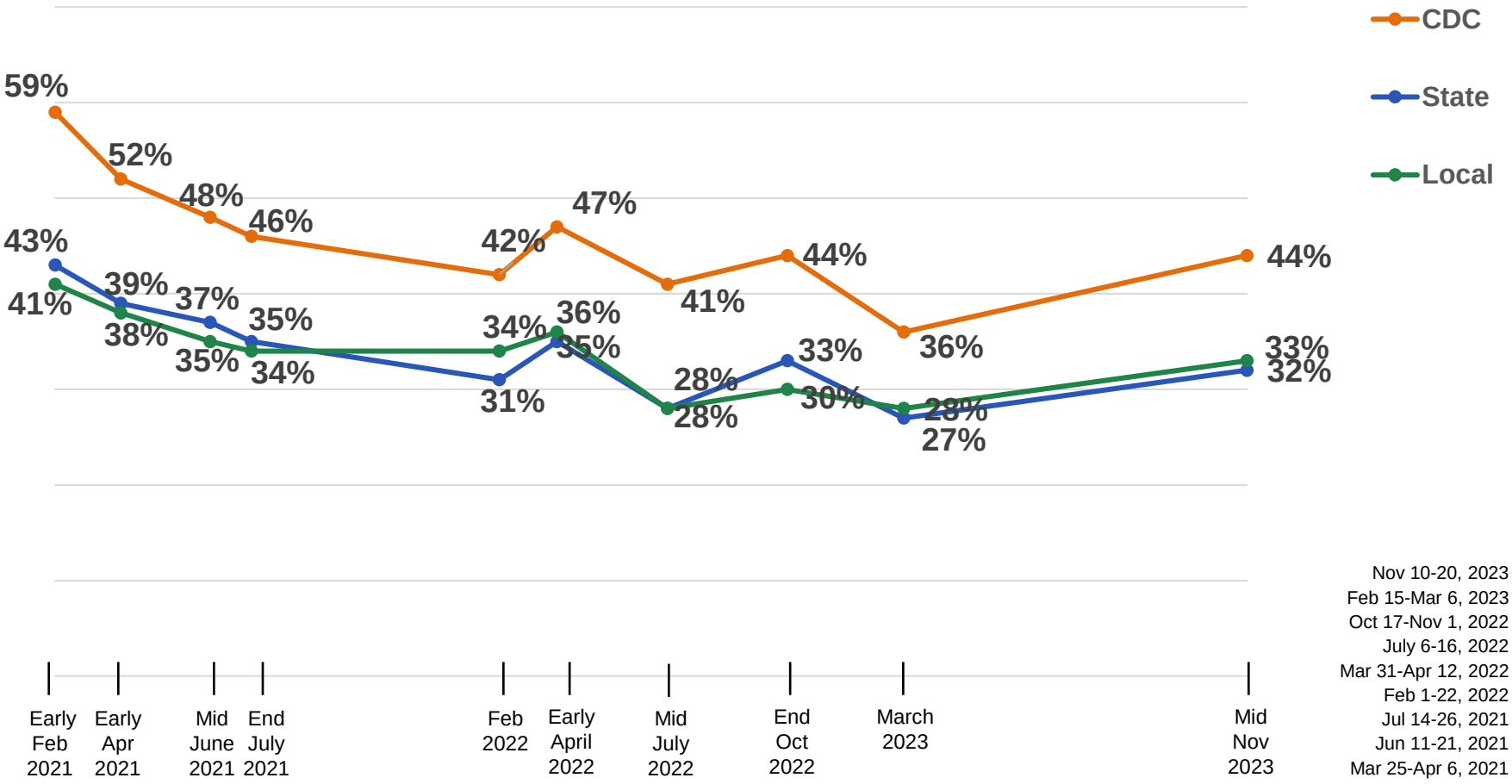
***% saying they trust each to provide accurate information about the COVID-19 outbreak***




n=1632

# Trust in Public Health Agencies is Not in Freefall

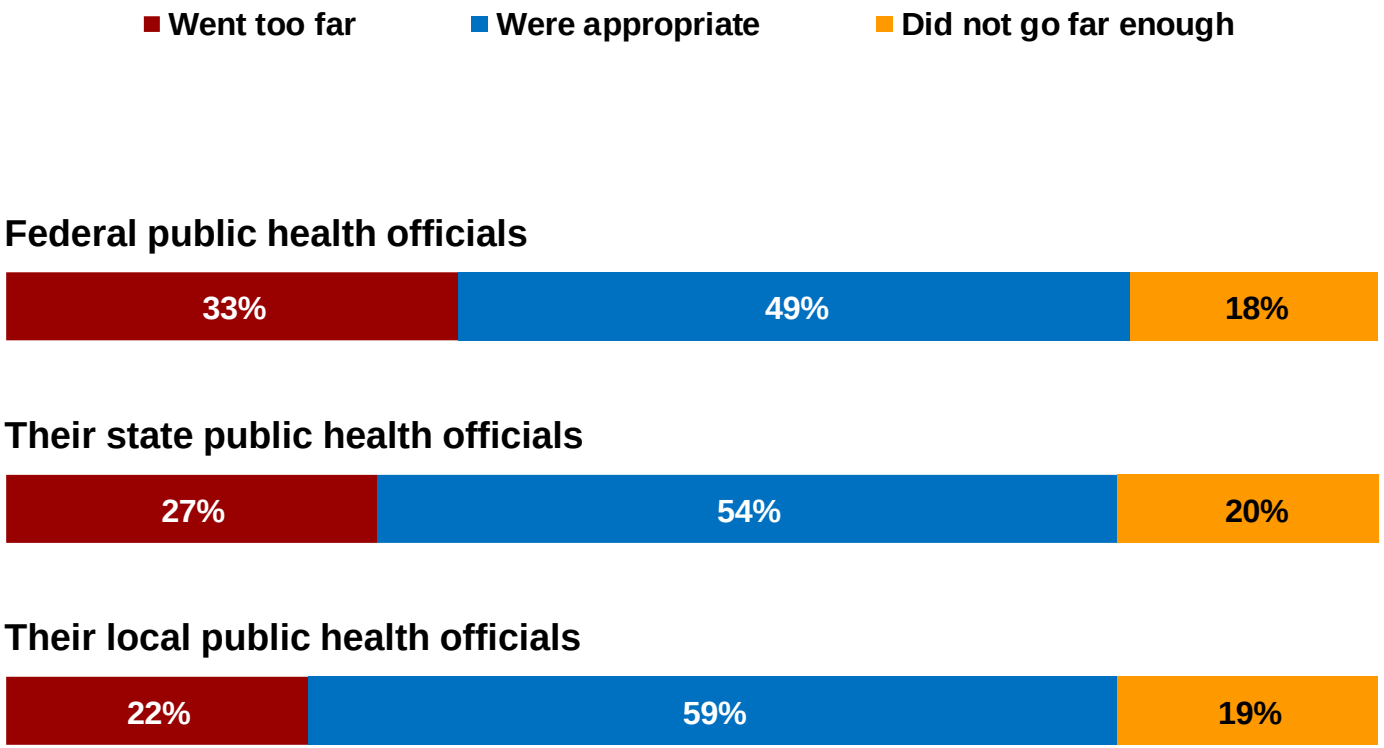
***% saying they trust each institution "a great deal" to provide accurate information about the COVID-19 outbreak***




Nov 10-20, 2023 n=1632
Feb 15-Mar 6, 2023 n=1938
Oct 17-Nov 1, 2022 n=1460
July 6-16, 2022 n=1564
Mar 31-Apr 12, 2022 n=2821
Feb 1-22, 2022 n=4208
Jul 14-26, 2021 n=2500
Jun 11-21, 2021 n=2638
Mar 25-Apr 6, 2021 n=1001
Feb 2-9, 2021 n=697

# Balanced Views on COVID Measures, More Found Local Measures Appropriate

***% saying they think the measures taken over the course of the pandemic by each to slow the spread of COVID-19…***




n=1632

# Substantial Support for Many Issues on Public Health Agenda

***% saying item should be a top priority for each***

| | a. **CDC** | b. **State** |
|---|---|---|
| **Preventing chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes** | 83% | 79% |
| **Preventing and addressing mental illness** | 80% | 85% |
| **Reducing infant mortality, or deaths among babies** | 79% | 78% |
| **Preventing and addressing opioid and other substance addiction** | 72% | 77% |
| **Controlling the spread of infectious diseases other than COVID-19** | 72% | 65% |
| **Reducing differences in health status, and health care access between people in different racial or ethnic groups** | 59% | 65% |
| **Preventing obesity and promoting healthy diets and physical activity** | 58% | 57% |
| **Reducing death and illness related to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections** | 58% | 52% |
| **Controlling the spread of COVID-19** | 57% | 51% |
| **Preventing injuries and deaths caused by guns** | 49% | 59% |
| **Preventing negative health outcomes from cigarettes and e-cigarettes** | 47% | 47% |

State public health departments asked about of half sample A, n=1338; CDC asked about of half sample B, n=1325

# Chronic Illness, Mental Health and Infant Mortality are Top Priorities Going Forward

***% saying item should be a top priority for each***

| | a. **CDC** | b. **State** |
|---|---|---|
| **Preventing chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes** | 83% | 79% |
| **Preventing and addressing mental illness** | 80% | 85% |
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| **Preventing negative health outcomes from cigarettes and e-cigarettes** | 47% | 47% |

State public health departments asked about of half sample A, n=1338; CDC asked about of half sample B, n=1325

# Addiction and Infectious Disease Beyond COVID also Prioritized

***% saying item should be a top priority for each***

| | a. **CDC** | b. **State** |
|---|---|---|
| **Preventing chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes** | 83% | 79% |
| **Preventing and addressing mental illness** | 80% | 85% |
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| **Preventing negative health outcomes from cigarettes and e-cigarettes** | 47% | 47% |

State public health departments asked about of half sample A, n=1338; CDC asked about of half sample B, n=1325

# COVID a Distinct Third Tier Priority

***% saying item should be a top priority for each***

| | a. **CDC** | b. **State** |
|---|---|---|
| **Preventing chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes** | 83% | 79% |
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State public health departments asked about of half sample A, n=1338; CDC asked about of half sample B, n=1325

# Four Consensus Issues: Mental Health, Chronic Illness, Addiction, and Infant Mortality

***% saying item should be a top priority for <u>their state public health department</u>***

**Among those who trust their state public health department…**

| | a. **A great deal** | b. **Somewhat** | c. **Not very much** | d. **Not at all** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ★ **Preventing and addressing mental illness** | **87%[c]** | **87%[c]** | 79% | 78% |
| ★ **Preventing chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes** | 81% | 80% | 75% | 72% |
| ★ **Preventing and addressing opioid and other substance addiction** | **81%[c]** | **77%[c]** | 67% | 80% |
| **Reducing differences in health status and health care access between people in different racial or ethnic groups** | **81%[bcd]** | **65%[cd]** | 42% | 41% |
| ★ **Reducing infant mortality, or deaths among babies** | 78% | 78% | 79% | 70% |
| **Preventing injuries and deaths caused by guns** | **78%[bcd]** | **60%[cd]** | 34% | 28% |

[abcd]*Percentage is statistically significantly greater than the percentage among the corresponding group*

Among those in half sample A who trust their state public health department for recommendations to improve health in general "A great deal" n=371, "Somewhat" n=486755, "Not very much" n=221, "Not at all" n=71

# Addressing Disparities, Gun Injuries are Divisive

***% saying item should be a top priority for <u>their state public health department</u>***

**Among those who trust their state public health department…**

| | a. **A great deal** | b. **Somewhat** | c. **Not very much** | d. **Not at all** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Preventing and addressing mental illness** | **87%[c]** | **87%[c]** | 79% | 78% |
| **Preventing chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes** | 81% | 80% | 75% | 72% |
| **Preventing and addressing opioid and other substance addiction** | **81%[c]** | **77%[c]** | 67% | 80% |
| **Reducing differences in health status and health care access between people in different racial or ethnic groups** | **81%[bcd]** | **65%[cd]** | 42% | 41% |
| **Reducing infant mortality, or deaths among babies** | 78% | 78% | 79% | 70% |
| **Preventing injuries and deaths caused by guns** | **78%[bcd]** | **60%[cd]** | 34% | 28% |

40pp

50pp

[abcd]*Percentage is statistically significantly greater than the percentage among the corresponding group*

Among those in half sample A who trust their state public health department for recommendations to improve health in general "A great deal" n=371, "Somewhat" n=486755, "Not very much" n=221, "Not at all" n=71

# Infectious Disease Even Beyond COVID is Divisive

***% saying item should be a top priority for <u>their state public health department</u>***

**Among those who trust their state public health department…**

| | a. **A great deal** | b. **Somewhat** | c. **Not very much** | d. **Not at all** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Controlling the spread of infectious diseases other than COVID-19** | **76%$^{bcd}$** | **64%$^{d}$** | **57%$^{d}$** | 40% | 36pp |
| **Controlling the spread of COVID-19** | **70%$^{bcd}$** | **50%$^{cd}$** | **31%$^{d}$** | 17% | 53pp |
| **Reducing death and illness related to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections** | **63%$^{bcd}$** | **51%$^{c}$** | 40% | 44% | |
| **Preventing obesity and promoting healthy diets and physical activity** | 59% | 56% | 57% | 51% | |
| **Preventing negative health outcomes from cigarettes and e-cigarettes** | **59%$^{bcd}$** | **45%$^{c}$** | 34% | 37% | |

$^{abcd}$*Percentage is statistically significantly greater than the percentage among the corresponding group*

Among those in half sample A who trust their state public health department for recommendations to improve health in general "A great deal" n=371, "Somewhat" n=486755, "Not very much" n=221, "Not at all" n=71

# Obesity and Smoking Lower Priorities Across Groups

***% saying item should be a top priority for <u>their state public health department</u>***

**Among those who trust their state public health department…**

| | a. **A great deal** | b. **Somewhat** | c. **Not very much** | d. **Not at all** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Controlling the spread of infectious diseases other than COVID-19** | **76%[bcd]** | **64%[d]** | **57%[d]** | 40% |
| **Controlling the spread of COVID-19** | **70%[bcd]** | **50%[cd]** | **31%[d]** | 17% |
| **Reducing death and illness related to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections** | **63%[bcd]** | **51%[c]** | 40% | 44% |
| ↓ **Preventing obesity and promoting healthy diets and physical activity** | 59% | 56% | 57% | 51% |
| ↓ **Preventing negative health outcomes from cigarettes and e-cigarettes** | **59%[bcd]** | **45%[c]** | 34% | 37% |

[abcd]*Percentage is statistically significantly greater than the percentage among the corresponding group*

Among those in half sample A who trust their state public health department for recommendations to improve health in general "A great deal" n=371, "Somewhat" n=486755, "Not very much" n=221, "Not at all" n=71

# Implications for Communication

- Remember that the foundation for trust still exists; leverage any rebounding of trust that occurs as we move through COVID
    - Look for opportunities to lean into strengths at federal and state levels

- Identify places where consensus issues can be showcased
    - Use them to build broad support at policymaker and public level as people see their issues being addressed
    - Target COVID and infectious disease messaging carefully

- Tailor messages across the trust spectrum as you expand your work to topics beyond COVID and infectious disease
    - Supplement approaches to reach the less trusting with tailored outreach that relies on partners *they* trust: e.g., doctors and nurses; pharmacists; family and friends in the health field

# Harvard Opinion Research Program

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# Special Thanks

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- ASTHO membership

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- Laura Espino
- Tom Schafer
- NPHIC membership

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- Keri Lubell
- Katie Melville
- Shakila Moharam Ali
- JIC Lead
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