

IMMEDIATE RELEASE WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: ATTENTION POLITICAL, ASSIGNMENT EDITORS, Director David Redlawsk may be contacted at 319-400-1134 (cell), 732-932-9384, ext. 285 (office), or redlawsk@rutgers.edu. Poll manager Ashley Koning may be contacted at 908-872-1186 or akoning@rutgers.edu. Questions and tables are available at: <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu/rep-ebola-concerns/>. Visit our blog at <http://eagletonpollblog.wordpress.com> for additional commentary. Follow the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/RutgersEagletonPoll> and Twitter [@EagletonPoll](https://twitter.com/EagletonPoll).

NEW JERSEYANS CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF U.S. EBOLA OUTBREAK

Those paying more attention are less knowledgeable about Ebola risks

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – As the deadly Ebola hemorrhagic fever continues to rage in West Africa, 69 percent of New Jersey residents are at least somewhat concerned about the possibility of an outbreak in the United States, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. More than one-third of residents are paying “very close” attention to Ebola news, while an additional 40 percent are following the story “somewhat closely.”

Despite extensive media coverage of the crisis, however, New Jerseyans are uncertain about Ebola’s transmission and treatment. Public health officials explain that Ebola is far less contagious than measles or influenza, but 67 percent of residents believe the virus is relatively easily transmitted, the survey finds. And while there is no cure with patients primarily treated for their symptoms, 39 percent think there is a medicine effective against Ebola, while 40 percent know there is none; another 21 percent are unsure.

Also, uncertainty about whether anyone hospitalized for Ebola in the U.S. actually caught the virus here is high: 42 percent think the virus has been transmitted on American soil, while 45 percent say, correctly, that this is not the case.

Misperceptions about Ebola are greatest among New Jerseyans paying the most attention, the poll discovers. Those most focused on the news are more than twice as likely as the least attentive residents to think there is an effective medicine, and 13 points more likely to think the virus spreads relatively easily.

Greater attention to the news is also related to stronger concern about a U.S. outbreak. Seventy-six percent of residents following Ebola news very closely are at least somewhat concerned that an outbreak will happen here, compared to 60 percent of those paying relatively little attention. .

“As in national polls, Garden Staters are worried about Ebola, but many do not know basic

facts,” said David Redlawsk, director of the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling and professor of political science at Rutgers University. “Within the countless hours of media coverage, some hysterical voices are feeding perceptions that Ebola is a huge threat to the U.S. But, so far it is not even close to the threat of death from the flu, which statistics show kills from 3,000 to 49,000 Americans every year.”

Results are from a statewide poll of 842 New Jerseyans contacted by live callers on both landlines and cell phones from Sept. 29 to Oct. 5, 2014, with a margin of error of +/- 4.4 percentage points. Some questions included in the poll were inspired by a recent nationwide poll by the Harvard School of Public Health.

Concern about Ebola varies across groups

Only 31 percent of respondents say they are not at all concerned about an Ebola outbreak in the U.S., but some groups are more worried than others. Women are 10 points more likely than men to be concerned, and nonwhites are 19 points more concerned than whites. Levels of concern are significantly higher among those with lower incomes and less education.

Recognizing that Ebola is relatively difficult to transmit reduces concern about an outbreak. Just 13 percent of residents who know the virus is not easily spread are very concerned, but 53 percent of those who think it is highly contagious express high levels of concern.

“Concern is greatest when people are least certain about risks,” noted Redlawsk. “Ebola is particularly scary, with no cure and a high death rate. Believing it is easily spread feeds this fear.”

Increased news consumption does not lead to accuracy

Residents interviewed after the Sept. 30 announcement by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the first U.S.-diagnosed Ebola case in Texas were more likely to be following the news very closely, compared to those interviewed before the announcement. But paying attention to news about Ebola does not necessarily improve New Jerseyans’ knowledge of basic facts: 48 percent of the most attentive incorrectly think there is an effective medicine for Ebola. Only 20 percent of those not following the story closely say the same.

Increased news consumption is related to thinking someone has already caught Ebola in the U.S., with residents paying the most attention nine points more likely to think so than those paying little attention. Ebola news watchers are also the most likely to think the virus spreads very easily.

Moreover, news consumption may be driving fear in another way: while 22 percent of those paying the least attention think Ebola has become a more serious threat recently, 55 percent of residents watching very closely say the virus has become a greater threat.

“Paying careful attention to news coverage about Ebola may not be a good idea,” said Ashley Koning, manager of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. “The tone of the coverage seems to be increasing fear while not improving understanding. And today’s tragic death of the Ebola patient in Texas may well add to people’s worries as the media doubles down on covering the story.”

As an example, Koning pointed to the increase in misperceptions among respondents interviewed following the CDC announcement, noting that, “After the announcement, we saw a 10-point increase in thinking there is an effective treatment, and a 12-point increase in thinking someone actually caught Ebola in the U.S. However, in contrast, there was an 11-point decline in the incorrect belief that Ebola is easily spread. Some accurate information may be getting through the noise, but not enough.”

Some groups appear more likely than others to hold misperceptions about Ebola: 73 percent of women think the disease is easily spread compared to 60 percent of men. Millennials – those under 30 – are more than 10 points more likely than older residents to think Ebola is easily spread.

Middle-age residents are most likely to believe a treatment exists, while younger residents are least likely to believe this, the research finds. Republicans are nine points more likely than Democrats to think there is a viable treatment for the disease.

Nonwhites are 10 points more likely than whites to say someone in the U.S. caught Ebola while in this country, and 10 points more likely to think the disease is very easily spread.

News consumption differs by key groups and announcement of first U.S. case

While most New Jerseyans are paying at least some attention to Ebola, residents interviewed after the CDC announcement were 11 points more likely to say they were following the story very closely than those interviewed earlier. There also are notable differences in who is paying attention. Republicans are 12 points more likely than Democrats and independents to be following Ebola news very closely. While 82 percent of white residents are following the story at least somewhat closely, this drops to 68 percent among nonwhites.

News consumption steadily increases with age: 22 percent of millennials are following the media reports very closely, compared to 49 percent of seniors. Attention also rises with income and education: residents with household incomes over \$100,000 are 20 points more likely than those making less than \$50,000 to be following the story at least somewhat.

###

QUESTIONS AND TABLES BEGIN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release of October 8, 2014 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey Adults unless otherwise indicated; all percentages are of weighted results.

NOTE: During the second full day in the field, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reported the diagnoses of an Ebola case on U.S. soil. No questions were changed after that announcement, but we report overall results for those interviewed before and after the announcement.

[UNRELATED QUESTIONS BEING HELD FOR LATER RELEASE PRECEDED THIS SECTION]

Q. On another topic, how closely are you following news about the recent outbreak of Ebola in West Africa?

			CDC Announcement of U.S. Case											
			Before	After										
Very closely	36%		27%	38%										
Somewhat closely	40%		52%	38%										
Not too closely	16%		10%	18%										
Not at all closely	8%		12%	7%										
Unwgt N=	837		123	714										

	Party ID			Ideology			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Con	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Very closely	34%	34%	46%	35%	34%	42%	35%	37%	36%	36%	22%	28%	47%	49%
Somewhat	41%	42%	31%	44%	43%	32%	41%	39%	46%	32%	41%	42%	38%	41%
Not too closely	20%	13%	18%	13%	15%	22%	16%	16%	12%	23%	26%	20%	11%	7%
Not at all	5%	11%	5%	9%	7%	3%	8%	7%	5%	10%	11%	11%	4%	3%
Unwgt N=	266	389	174	195	435	183	403	434	629	185	104	170	282	281

	Income				Education			
	<50K	50K-100K	100K-150K	150K+	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Very closely	29%	39%	37%	35%	40%	32%	32%	42%
Somewhat	35%	40%	48%	49%	36%	38%	44%	43%
Not too closely	22%	17%	9%	14%	14%	23%	15%	11%
Not at all	14%	4%	6%	2%	10%	7%	9%	3%
Unwgt N=	193	245	123	129	184	225	241	187

Q. How concerned are you that there will be a large outbreak of Ebola inside the United States within the next year?

		Following News About Ebola Outbreak						CDC Announcement of U.S. Case	
		How Easily Ebola Spreads			How Easily Ebola Spreads			Before	After
		Very closely	Some-what	Not too/Not at all	Very	Some-what	Not Very or at all		
Very concerned	33%	47%	23%	28%	53%	26%	13%	33%	34%
Somewhat concerned	36%	29%	45%	32%	26%	48%	37%	42%	35%
Not at all concerned	31%	24%	32%	40%	21%	25%	51%	26%	32%
Unwgt N=	830	340	343	144	270	272	221	120	710

	Party ID			Ideology			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Con	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Very	35%	32%	34%	22%	35%	39%	28%	38%	26%	45%	37%	37%	29%	30%
Somewhat	35%	35%	38%	34%	37%	38%	36%	36%	40%	30%	36%	31%	37%	42%
Not at all	29%	34%	27%	43%	28%	23%	36%	26%	34%	25%	26%	32%	34%	28%
Unwgt N=	267	381	174	195	431	182	398	432	622	186	101	169	280	280

	Income				Education			
	<50K	50K-100K	100K-150K	150K+	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Very	43%	34%	22%	22%	54%	31%	32%	15%
Somewhat	29%	35%	43%	37%	26%	38%	37%	44%
Not at all	27%	31%	35%	41%	20%	31%	32%	41%
Unwgt N=	190	245	120	129	182	221	241	185

Q. To the best of your knowledge, is there an effective medicine to treat people who have gotten sick with Ebola, or not?

		Following News About Ebola Outbreak			Concern About Ebola Outbreak in U.S.			CDC Announcement of U.S. Case	
		How Easily Ebola Spreads			How Easily Ebola Spreads			Before	After
		Very closely	Some-what	Not too/Not at all	Very Concern	Some-what	Not at all		
Yes	39%	48%	41%	20%	42%	37%	38%	30%	40%
No	40%	37%	42%	41%	36%	40%	46%	44%	39%
Don't know	21%	14%	17%	39%	22%	23%	16%	26%	21%
Unwgt N=	838	340	343	151	234	327	267	122	716

	Party ID			Ideology			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Con	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Yes	37%	38%	46%	34%	42%	37%	40%	37%	39%	38%	27%	49%	40%	34%
No	48%	37%	31%	45%	38%	41%	43%	37%	38%	44%	47%	33%	41%	41%
Don't know	15%	25%	24%	20%	20%	22%	17%	26%	23%	19%	26%	17%	20%	25%
Unwgt N=	268	389	173	195	437	182	401	437	628	188	104	170	282	282

	Income				Education			
	<50K	50K-100K	100K-150K	150K+	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Yes	32%	40%	44%	48%	41%	35%	40%	39%
No	38%	38%	38%	44%	34%	41%	37%	49%
Don't know	29%	22%	18%	8%	25%	24%	23%	12%
Unwgt N=	193	245	123	129	185	226	240	186

Q. To the best of your knowledge, is anyone inside the United States currently being treated for Ebola they caught here in the United States, or not?

		Following News About Ebola Outbreak			Concern About Ebola Outbreak in U.S.			How Easily Ebola Spreads			CDC Announcement of U.S. Case	
		Very closely	Some-what	Not too/Not at all	Very Concern	Some-what	Not at all	Very	Some-what	Not Very Or at all	Before	After
		Yes	42%	45%	42%	36%	41%	41%	43%	44%	44%	38%
No	45%	48%	49%	34%	40%	50%	46%	38%	48%	58%	48%	44%
Don't know	13%	8%	9%	29%	19%	9%	10%	18%	8%	5%	20%	12%
Unwgt N=	841	340	344	153	234	328	268	272	275	222	123	718

	Party ID			Ideology			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Con	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Yes	46%	39%	42%	45%	41%	40%	43%	41%	38%	48%	47%	44%	39%	37%
No	42%	45%	48%	46%	46%	45%	48%	42%	49%	38%	39%	43%	49%	48%
Don't know	11%	16%	9%	10%	13%	14%	10%	17%	13%	14%	14%	13%	12%	15%
Unwgt N=	268	391	174	196	437	183	404	437	630	188	104	172	282	283

	Income				Education			
	<50K	50K-100K	100K-150K	150K+	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Yes	43%	47%	37%	42%	42%	45%	40%	39%
No	40%	40%	57%	49%	39%	40%	48%	54%
Don't know	17%	13%	6%	9%	19%	15%	12%	6%
Unwgt N=	193	247	123	129	185	226	242	187

Q. To the best of your knowledge, if a person is sick with Ebola and has symptoms, how easily is Ebola spread from that person to other people?

		Following News About Ebola Outbreak			Concern About Ebola Outbreak in U.S.			CDC Announcement of U.S. Case	
		Very closely	Some-what	Not too/Not at all	Very Concern	Some-what	Not at all	Before	After
		Very easily	36%	46%	25%	38%	57%	26%	24%
Somewhat easily	31%	29%	37%	24%	24%	41%	25%	35%	30%
Not very easily	21%	19%	28%	12%	9%	23%	32%	11%	22%
Not at all easily	4%	3%	4%	7%	1%	2%	10%	2%	5%
Don't know	9%	4%	7%	20%	9%	7%	9%	12%	8%
Unwgt N=	840	340	343	153	234	328	267	123	717

***Ebola October 2014
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll***

	Party ID			Ideology			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Con	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Very	37%	35%	36%	41%	33%	37%	32%	39%	32%	42%	43%	38%	28%	33%
Somewhat	28%	30%	33%	27%	35%	28%	28%	34%	34%	26%	32%	27%	35%	30%
Not very	24%	19%	21%	23%	20%	22%	26%	16%	24%	16%	13%	18%	26%	26%
Not at all	5%	4%	3%	3%	5%	4%	7%	2%	3%	6%	4%	6%	3%	3%
Don't know	5%	12%	7%	5%	7%	9%	8%	9%	8%	9%	8%	10%	8%	9%
Unwgt N=	267	391	174	195	437	183	403	437	629	188	104	172	282	282

	Income				Education			
	<50K	50K-100K	100K-150K	150K+	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Very	42%	34%	32%	24%	43%	38%	30%	31%
Somewhat	26%	30%	30%	43%	24%	33%	33%	31%
Not very	18%	23%	26%	23%	16%	17%	23%	26%
Not at all	6%	3%	4%	5%	4%	2%	4%	7%
Don't know	7%	10%	7%	5%	12%	10%	9%	4%
Unwgt N=	193	247	123	129	185	226	241	187

Q. Do you think Ebola has become a more serious threat recently, or has the virus simply been more visible in the news?

		Following News About Ebola Outbreak			Concern About Ebola Outbreak in U.S.			How Easily Ebola Spreads			CDC Announcement of U.S. Case	
		Very closely	Some-what	Not too/Not at all	Very Concern	Some-what	Not at all	Very Easily	Some-what	Not Very Or at all	Before	After
		Yes	42%	55%	43%	22%	49%	47%	31%	55%	39%	35%
No	51%	40%	52%	67%	45%	48%	64%	40%	55%	62%	48%	52%
Don't know	7%	5%	5%	11%	6%	4%	6%	5%	6%	3%	15%	5%
Unwgt N=	839	339	343	153	234	327	267	271	275	221	122	717

	Party ID			Ideology			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Con	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Yes	51%	37%	41%	46%	41%	41%	42%	43%	45%	37%	36%	44%	44%	45%
No	46%	55%	50%	52%	52%	55%	52%	51%	50%	55%	56%	52%	49%	48%
Don't know	3%	8%	9%	2%	7%	4%	7%	6%	5%	8%	8%	5%	7%	7%
Unwgt N=	267	390	174	195	436	183	402	437	629	187	104	172	281	282

	Income				Education			
	<50K	50K-100K	100K-150K	150K+	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Yes	42%	37%	47%	48%	42%	34%	47%	48%
No	53%	54%	51%	46%	45%	60%	50%	48%
Don't know	5%	9%	2%	6%	14%	6%	3%	5%
Unwgt N=	193	246	123	128	185	225	242	186

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll September 29 – October 5, 2014

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone using live callers September 29 –October 5, 2014 with a scientifically selected random sample of 842 New Jersey adults. This telephone poll included 618 landline and 224 cell phone adults, all acquired through random digit dialing. Distribution of household phone use in this sample is:

Cell Only:	12%
Dual Use, Reached on Cell:	15%
Dual Use, Reached on LL:	66%
Landline Only:	7%

Data were weighted to the demographics adults in New Jersey. Weights account for the probability of being selected within the sample frame and the probability of being sampled within a household, based on the number of individuals living in the household and the phone composition (cell, landline) of the household. The samples were weighted to several demographic variables reflecting the population parameters of the state of New Jersey: gender, race, age, and Hispanic ethnicity. The final weight, which combined all of the parameters mentioned, was trimmed at the 5th and 95th percentile so as to not accord too much weight to any one case or subset of cases. All results are reported with these weighted data.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the simple sampling error for the 842 adults is +/-3.4 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The adult sample weighting design effect is 1.69, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 4.4 percentage points for the adult sample.

Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 45.6 and 54.4 percent (50 +/-4.4) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling with additional fielding by Braun Research Inc. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, a non-partisan academic center for the study of politics and the political process.

Weighted Sample Characteristics 842 New Jersey Adults			
34% Democrat	49% Male	22% 18-29	58% White
49% Independent	51% Female	33% 30-49	12% Black
18% Republican		27% 50-64	18% Hispanic
		18% 65+	12% Asian/Other/Multi