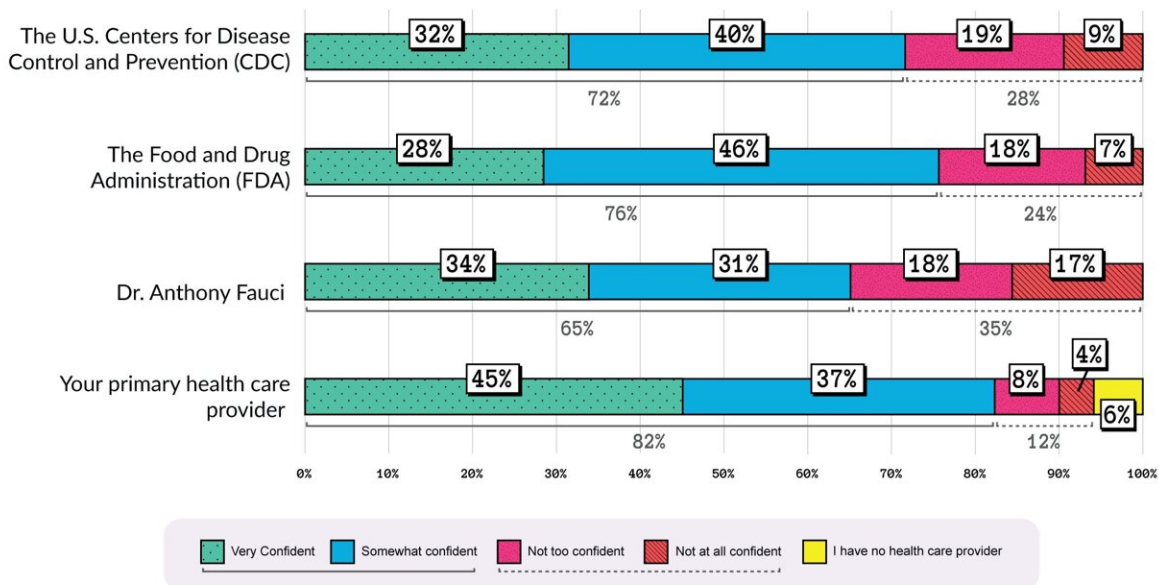


# Confidence declines in CDC and Dr. Anthony Fauci, survey finds

January 27 2022

**In general, how confident, if at all, are you that the following are providing the public with trustworthy information about means of preventing and treating COVID-19?**



Annenberg Public Policy Center ASK survey, January 11-17, 2022.  
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Public confidence in health authorities (Very confident to not at all confident) from Annenberg Public Policy Center ASK survey conducted January 11-17, among 1,656 U.S. adults. Credit: Annenberg Public Policy Center

Battered by waves of COVID-19 and confusion over shifting

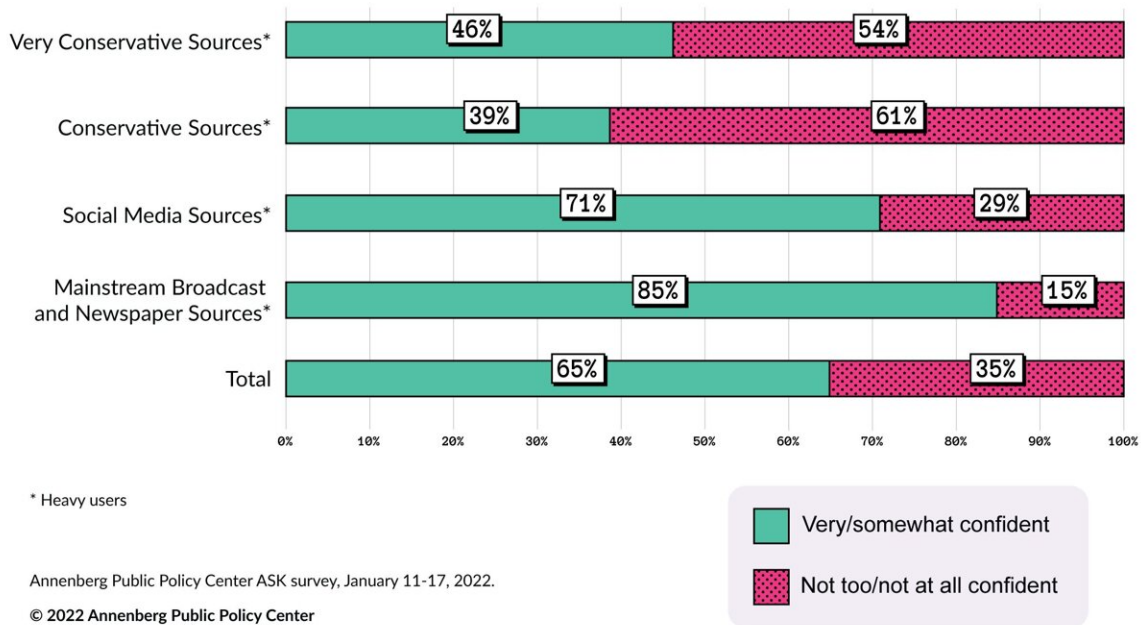
government messages about it, Americans' confidence in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declined in January with drops both among groups of Democrats/Democratic-leaning independents and Republicans/Republican-leaning independents, according to January survey data from the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania.

Confidence that the CDC is providing the public with trustworthy information about the means of preventing and treating COVID-19 fell from 77% only two months ago, in November 2021, to 72% in January 2022.

In addition, the [survey](#) found for the first time a significant drop in [confidence](#) in Dr. Anthony Fauci, who as director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) has been the target of withering attacks in conservative media outlets throughout the nearly two-year pandemic. Confidence in Fauci dropped to 65% in January 2022, a statistically meaningful drop over the nine months since April 2021, when it was 71%.

"Overall confidence remains high but has eroded for both Dr. Fauci and the CDC, with the CDC decline more recent and that of Dr. Fauci more gradual," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC). "This is deeply concerning, because voices that speak for the best available science need to be trusted and heard as we navigate the pandemic."

**Confidence in Dr. Anthony Fauci providing trustworthy information about preventing and treating Covid-19 by reliance on media sources**

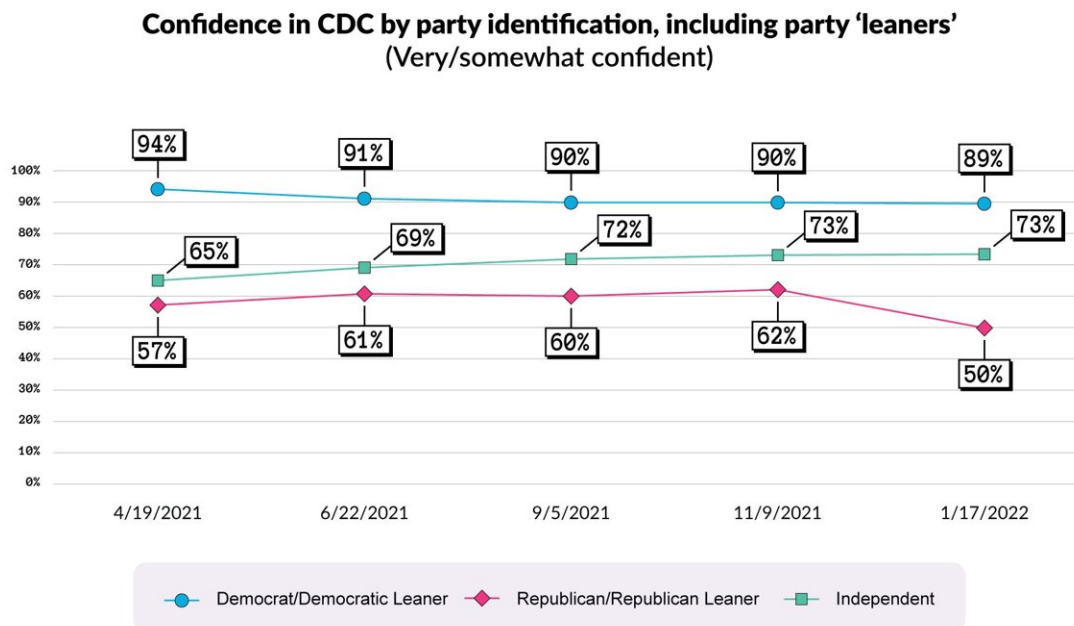


Confidence in Dr. Anthony Fauci, by reliance on different media sources -- very conservative, conservative, social media, mainstream broadcast and newspaper. From Annenberg Public Policy Center ASK survey conducted Jan. 11-17, 2022, among 1,656 U.S. adults. Credit: Annenberg Public Policy Center

## The January survey

The January data are from the fifth wave of the Annenberg Science Knowledge (ASK) survey, a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults empaneled by the Annenberg Public Policy Center in April 2021 to track attitudes and behavior in the pandemic. APPC first began tracking beliefs about the novel coronavirus and vaccination with cross-sectional surveys in March 2020.

The current survey was conducted January 11-17, 2022, among a national probability sample of 1,656 U.S. adults. The data were weighted to represent the target U.S. adult population. The margin of error for the total sample is  $\pm 3.3$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The panel survey, conducted for APCC by independent research firm SSRS is a follow-up to surveys in November 2021, September 2021, June 2021 and April 2021 with the same group of respondents.



Annenberg Public Policy Center ASK survey, January 11-17, 2022.  
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Note: Leaners are independents who say they lean toward either party.

Confidence in the CDC by party and party "leaners" in five waves of the Annenberg Public Policy Center ASK survey from April 2021 to January 2022. See the Appendix linked in the news release for details on the first four waves. Credit: Annenberg Public Policy Center

## **Trust in health care authorities**

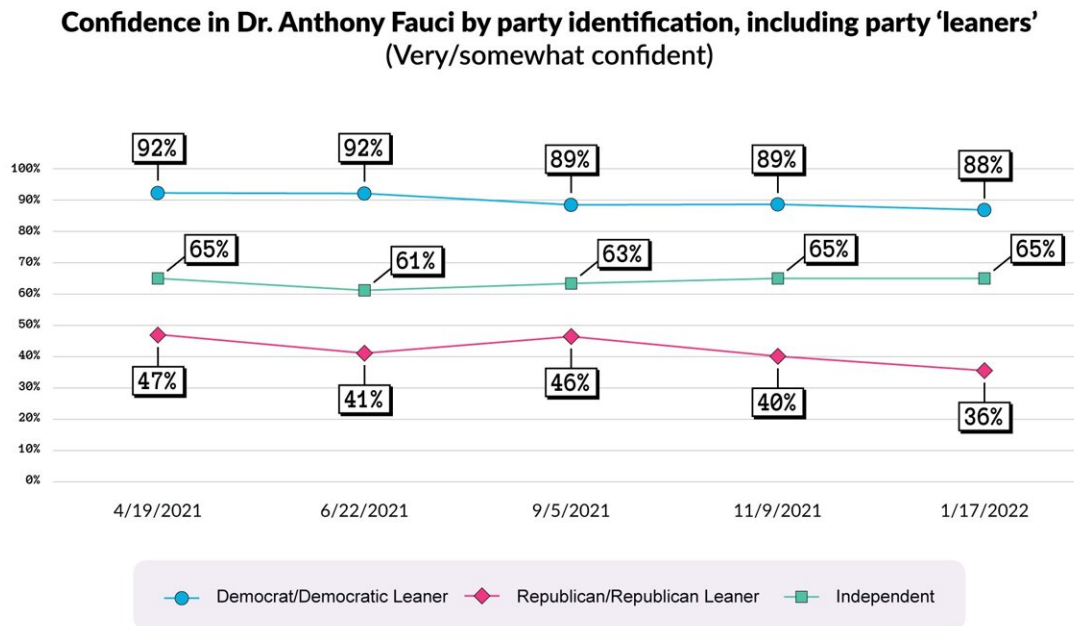
The survey found that an individual's primary health care provider continues to be the most trusted source of information about the means of preventing and treating COVID-19.

- Primary health care provider: 82% are confident their primary health care provider is providing trustworthy information about COVID-19, statistically unchanged since April 2021. However, the small percentage of those who say they are not confident in their health care provider increased to 12% from 8% in November, a significant change;
- Food and Drug Administration: 74% are confident the FDA is providing trustworthy information on COVID-19, unchanged over the past nine months;
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: As noted above, 72% are confident the CDC is providing trustworthy information on COVID-19, down from 77% in November, and 28% are not confident in the CDC, up from 23% in November;
- Dr. Anthony Fauci: As noted above, 65% are confident Fauci is providing trustworthy advice on COVID-19, down from 71% in April 2021, and 35% say they are not confident in Fauci, up from 29% in April 2021.

## **Democrats, Republicans, and 'leaners'**

The changes in confidence can be seen in breakdowns by self-identified party affiliations when including respondents who "lean" toward one party or the other. The party leaners are respondents who said they considered themselves independent or neither Republican nor Democrat, but answered a follow-up question by indicating that they thought of themselves as either "closer to the Democratic party" or "closer to the Republican party."

- **FDA:** Support for the FDA has been consistently high at about 90% throughout the survey period for Democrats and Democratic leaners. But among Republicans and Republican leaners, support dropped significantly from 63% in November 2021, where it had been for most of the time since April, to 54% in January 2022.
- **CDC:** Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning respondents, a drop in confidence in the CDC occurred over the nine-month survey period. Confidence among this group, which has also been very high, fell from 94% in April 2021 to 89% in January, a significant change. Among Republicans and Republican-leaning respondents, confidence in the CDC dropped significantly from 62% in November to 50% in January 2022.
- **Fauci:** Support for Fauci has been extremely high among self-identified Democrats and those who lean Democratic. That support eroded gradually, from 92% in April 2021 to 88% in January 2022, a significant change. Among self-identified Republicans and those who lean Republican, confidence in Fauci was much lower to start—47% in April 2021—and dropped significantly to 36% in January 2022.



Annenberg Public Policy Center ASK survey, January 11-17, 2022.

Note: Leaners are independents who say they lean toward either party.

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Confidence in Dr. Anthony Fauci by party and party "leaners" in five waves of the Annenberg Public Policy Center ASK survey from April 2021 to January 2022. See the Appendix linked in the news release for background on the different waves. Credit: Annenberg Public Policy Center

## Media use and confidence in health authorities

As past waves of the survey have found, people who are heavier users of conservative and very conservative media have significantly less confidence in Fauci, the CDC, and the FDA, both when compared with the overall sample and with heavier users of other types of media.

Fauci has been the target of attacks in conservative media outlets for many months, and as noted in a November survey release, on one night

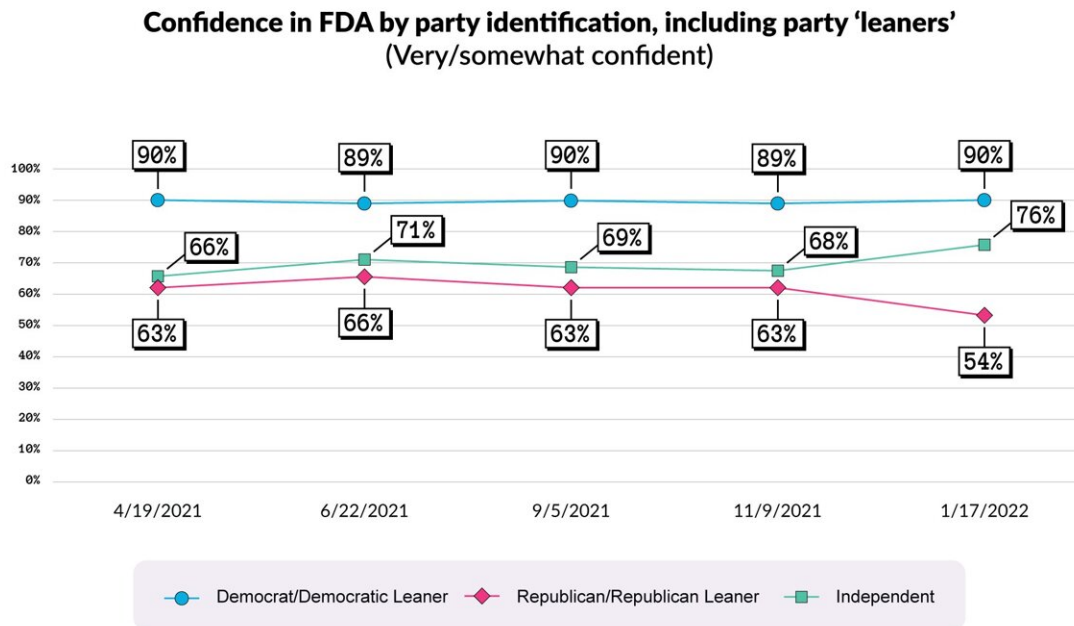


in November, a Fox News viewer would have seen Fauci likened to the Nazi doctor Josef Mengele and the Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. The CDC likewise has been the focus of attacks in conservative media over its vaccination and masking guidance and most recently, in January it was hit by accusations in conservative media that it "lied" about the extent of COVID-19 casualties, based in part on a deceptively edited video clip of CDC director Rochelle Walensky.

The survey found that among heavier users of:

- Very conservative sources such as Newsmax, One America News (OAN), Gateway Pundit, Parler, or Telegram: 46% have confidence in Fauci, 54% in the CDC, 60% in the FDA, and 78% in their primary health care provider;
- Conservative media such as Fox News, Mark Levin, or Breitbart: 39% have confidence in Fauci, 52% in the CDC, 60% in the FDA, and 88% in their primary health care provider;
- Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube: 71% have confidence in Fauci, 80% in the CDC, 78% in the FDA, and 87% in their primary health care provider;
- Mainstream broadcast/print media such as CBS News, NBC News, ABC News, the Associated Press, or the news pages of *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New York Times*: 85% have confidence in Fauci, 89% in the CDC, 90% in the FDA, and 95% in their primary health care providers.





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Note: Leaners are independents who say they lean toward either party.

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Confidence in the FDA by party and party "leaners" in five waves of the Annenberg Public Policy Center ASK survey from April 2021 to January 2022. See the Appendix linked in the news release for background on the different waves. Credit: Annenberg Public Policy Center

The January survey did not find significant changes since the November survey in these data.

**More information:** See this [Appendix](#) for additional information.

Provided by University of Pennsylvania

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