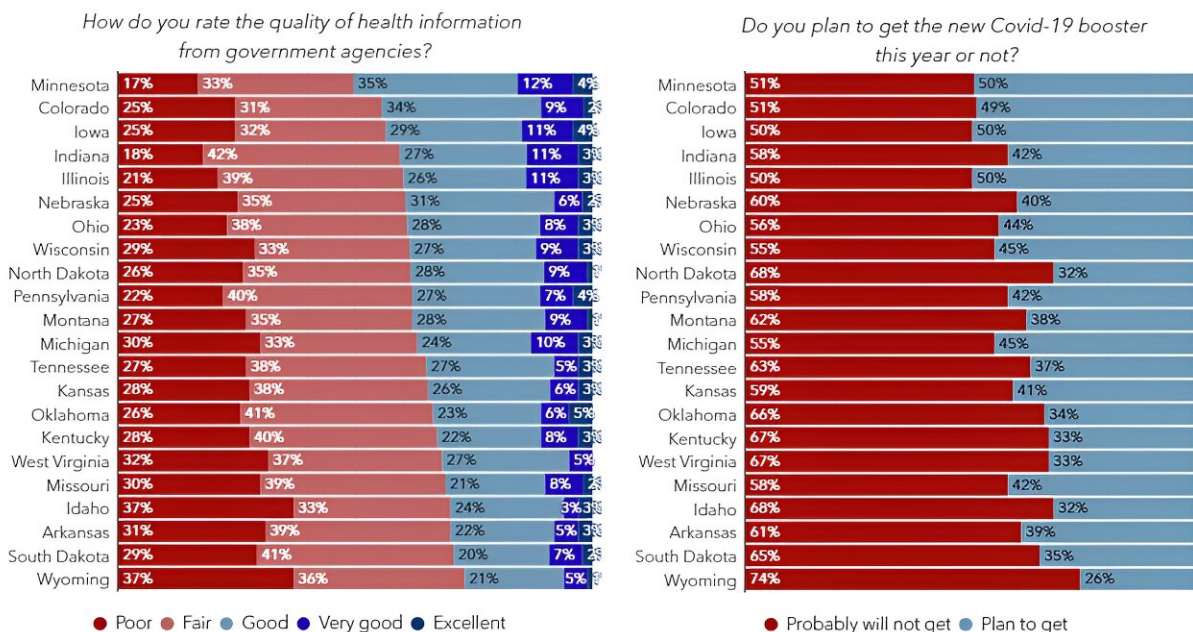


Majority of voters in American Heartland do not plan to get latest COVID vaccine, finds survey

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State Polls: Quality of Health Information, COVID-19 Booster Plans



Credit: The City University of New York

Most voters (57%) in 22 states in the American Heartland say they won't get the new COVID-19 vaccine this year. This finding from 12 traditional Midwestern states and 10 surrounding ones was significantly higher than the national average of 51%, in state and national surveys

conducted this fall by Emerson College Polling.

The new study, commissioned by the Emerson Polling's long-time health survey partners at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy (CUNY SPH) was issued to mark the launch of a newly formed Council for Quality Health Communication, launched by the O'Neill Center for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University Law Center and the *Journal of Health Communication*, which is housed at CUNY SPH.

"We found that American [voters](#) split down the middle, 51% to 49%, about getting the new COVID-19 shot, but likely acceptance dropped to 43% in our nation's Heartland," said Dr. Scott C. Ratzan, a founder of the new Council and distinguished lecturer on health communication and [social change](#) at CUNY SPH.

"Respondents in Minnesota, Colorado, Iowa, and Illinois align more closely with the national perception on COVID-19 boosters. Voters there are split evenly on whether they will get them," he added, "but residents elsewhere in the Heartland are less supportive and their attitude towards the vaccine tracks closely with how they rate the quality of the government health information they receive."

According to Dr. Kenneth H. Rabin, a CUNY SPH senior scholar and coordinator of the new Council, "Over a third of voters (37%) from the Heartland [states](#) of Idaho and Wyoming gave the quality of government health information a 'poor' rating, followed respectively by those in West Virginia (32%), Arkansas (31%), Missouri (30%), and Michigan (30%)."

"While almost three Heartland voters in five (57%) say they are unlikely to get the new version of the COVID-19 vaccine, rejection rates of 74% in Wyoming and 68% in Idaho are particularly startling," Rabin continued. "These findings should be a wake-up call to health

communicators, as we can no longer rely on mandates and must engage people in real conversations to encourage them to vaccinate themselves and their families."

"There is some good news here, however," he noted. "Voters who live in the 12 traditional Midwestern states do have a more positive perception of the overall quality of health care in their region compared to the rest of the country—37% of traditional Midwesterners said health care is better in their area, compared to 32% of overall national respondents."

Of the 22 states studied, 38% of voters in West Virginia say that their health care is worse than other states, followed by voters in Wyoming (36%), Montana (28%), Kentucky (27%), and Arkansas (25%).

Provided by The City University of New York

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