



Ipsos Public Affairs

## **Aside from Excellent Medical Care, Keeping a Positive Mindset Seen as Most Beneficial When Facing a Serious Health Issue**

*Americans Most Appreciative of Help Staying Connected with Loved Ones and Help around the House when Dealing with Illness*



Ipsos Public Affairs

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## **Aside from Excellent Medical Care, Keeping a Positive Mindset Seen as Most Beneficial When Facing a Serious Health Issue**

### ***Americans Most Appreciative of Help Staying Connected with Loved Ones and Help around the House when Dealing with Illness***

**New York, NY** – Aside from excellent medical care, 35% of Americans say that keeping a positive mental attitude is most beneficial when facing a serious health challenge, according to a survey of over 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of CaringBridge. Roughly a quarter feel that having emotional support and encouragement from loved ones (27%) or personal prayer or faith (23%) would be most beneficial to them if they were dealing with a health problem. Fewer believe that staying physically active (13%) or keeping a journal about their experiences (2%) would provide the most benefit.

- Men are particularly like to say that that keeping a positive outlook is most beneficial while experiencing a health challenge, selected by 38%.
- While women agree that keeping a positive mental attitude is beneficial (31%), a third (33%) believe that having the emotional support/encouragement from your family and friends is most important when facing a serious health challenge or illness.

Many times, family and friends want to help a loved one who is facing a serious health challenge or illness. When asked what kind of help they would most appreciate if they were facing their own serious health problem, three out of five (58%) Americans select help staying connected with and updating other family and friends as one of their top two choices. Many also selected household help, such as preparing meals/cooking or managing life chores (52%) and help getting their legal affairs such as Power of Attorney, Living wills, etc. in order (41%) as being the types of help they would most appreciate. Adults are less likely to say that they would most appreciate more material kinds of help: receiving items to help pass time, such as books and magazines (24%); receiving personal mementos or pictures (17%); or receiving gifts such as flowers or candy (7%).

- Women are more likely than men to say that household help would be among the top things they would appreciate receiving (57% vs. 48%).
- Adults over 55 are more likely than those under 35 to say they would most appreciate help with their legal affairs (48% vs. 31%).

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted September 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010. For the survey, a nationally representative sample of 1,011 randomly-selected adults aged 18 and over residing in the U.S. was interviewed online via Ipsos' U.S. Online Express omnibus. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate within  $\pm 3.7$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire*



*population of adults in the U.S. been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/gender composition reflects that of the actual U.S. population according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.*

### ***Staying Connected with Family & Friends***

When asked which communication method they would most prefer to use to provide updates to family and friends in the event of a health challenge or illness, nearly nine in ten (87%) would choose the phone as one of their top three preferred methods. Likewise, three in four (76%) say face-to-face communication and almost two-thirds (64%) say email is one of their top three preferred methods. Less popular communication methods include text messages (22%), mail (22%), a personal and private health website (13%), social networks (9%), or blogs (3%).

Among the 64% of respondents who have shared updates about a serious health issue or challenge, two thirds (67%) have shared these updates online in some way. Email is the most common online communication method (81%), followed by text messages (38%). Others sharing health updates online have done so using a personal or private health websites such as CaringBridge (14%), blogs or micro-blogs (7%), or other online tools (7%). However, one in five (21%) reports that they did not use the internet when sharing updates about health problem affecting them or a loved one.

### ***Using a personal health website to stay connected***

Some Americans may choose to use a website to share information about their serious health challenge or illness with family and friends. When asked to rank the features of a personal website dedicated to sharing their health information with family and friends, 43% of adults selected knowing that the website was private and secure as most important. Being free of charge to users ranks as the most important feature for a over quarter of adults (28%). Other key features include making sure the website was easy to access and navigate (12%), having features like a calendar so friends and family could be kept informed of upcoming events related to their care (9%), and having a personal space where they could write about their experiences (8%).

If given access to a personal website to share updates during a health challenge or illness, 29% of Americans say that bridging the communication gap for family and friends living far away would be the top benefit of using such technology. Similarly, 1 in 5 say that being able to share news on your own time schedule (22%) and easing the burden of repeating updates (22%) would be the greatest advantages. Fewer see providing a comfortable setting in which to share emotions and thoughts (12%) or reducing the awkwardness of not knowing what to say (9%) as top benefits of using this kind of website.

However, more than a third (35%) say that concerns about privacy and security online may deter them from using a personal website. Roughly one in six say that the main obstacle to using such a website would be the difficult set-up process (18%) or personal



nature of the information they'd be sharing (16%). Other drawbacks include having friends and family that aren't online (13%), the time it takes to use (9%), or some other obstacle (9%).

***Don't say, 'Told you so!'***

Four in five (84%) Americans choose 'Told you so!' as one of the three things they would least like to hear from family and friends when facing a health challenge or illness. More than 3 out of 4 (76%) also say one of the phrases they would least like to hear is 'I know someone who died of that same health condition.' Many would also dislike hearing 'I know how you're feeling' (45%) and 'How did this happen?' (35%).

Instead, 73% say one of the three things they would most like to hear from family or friends is 'I love you,' while more than three out of five would pick 'I'm here for you' (65%), or 'Is there anything I can do?' (63%). A majority would also like to hear 'You're in my prayers.'

Opinions are mixed when it comes to other common phrases of support. Respondents are equally likely to select 'Everything is going to be ok!' as something they most want to hear and something the least want to hear (21%, respectively). Just 11% would like to hear 'I'm sorry,' while 20% say this is among the top phrases they would not want to hear.

- Women are more likely than men to enjoy hearing 'Is there anything I can do?' (69% vs. 56%) and 'You are in my prayers' (60% vs. 50%) while men are more likely to select 'Everything is going to be ok!' as one of the phrases they would most like to hear (30% vs. 12%).

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