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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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Many Aware of Swine Flu Vaccine Arrival **AMERICANS FOLLOWING HEALTH CARE, ECONOMIC NEWS**

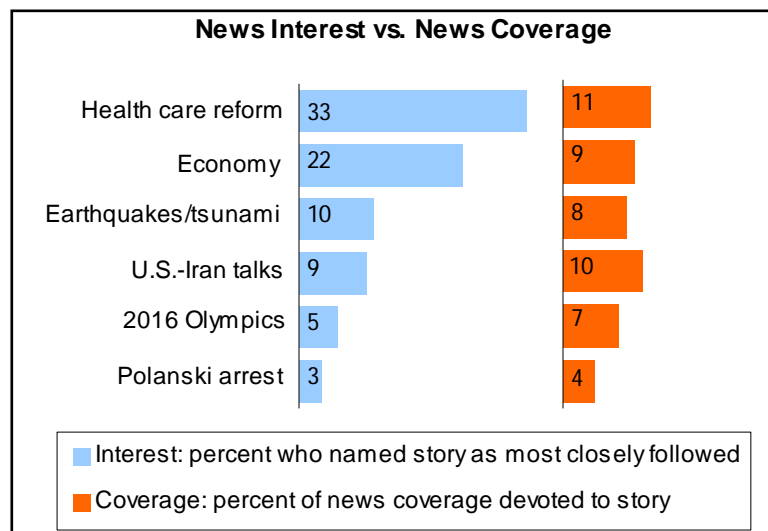
The public continued to closely track news about health care reform last week, while the media divided its attention across a range of foreign and domestic stories.

A third (33%) of the public says they followed the debate over health care reform more closely than other top stories last week, while 22% followed reports about the condition of the U.S. economy

most closely. According to the latest weekly News Interest Index survey, conducted October 2-5 by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, one-in-ten followed news about earthquakes in Indonesia and a tsunami in the South Pacific most closely, while 9% named talks between the United States and Iran over Iran's nuclear program as their top story.

Though a growing percentage of Americans say coverage of the health care debate has been excessive (21%), almost twice as many (40%) say the amount of coverage has been about right. The public also still finds the debate about health care reform important (94%), but hard to understand (66%).

A separate news content analysis by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) finds that health care reform received about as much coverage as other leading stories last week, including U.S.-Iran talks and economic news.



Coverage of the health care debate filled 11% of the newshole, while 10% of news reports focused on Iran. Economic news accounted for 9% of coverage. More than four-in-ten Americans (44%) say they followed economic news very closely last week, a reading that has been steady over the past month. Some 39% followed the debate over health care reform very closely, down slightly from the previous week (45%).

Too Much Coverage?

Relatively few say news organizations have given “too much” coverage to the debate over health care reform, the economy, or talks between U.S. and Iran. For all three stories, more say there has been the right amount of coverage.

<i>Amount of coverage of ...</i>	Too <u>much</u> %	Too <u>little</u> %	Right <u>amount</u> %	Don't <u>know</u> %
Condition of U.S. economy	22	32	44	2=100
Debate over health care reform	21	35	40	4=100
Talks between U.S. and Iran	14	33	48	5=100

Q.3a-c. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

About two-in-ten (21%) say there has been too much coverage of the health care debate. Four-in-ten say news organizations have given the debate the right amount of attention, while 35% say there has been too little coverage.

While still a minority viewpoint, the percentage saying there has been too much coverage of the debate over health care reform has grown since mid-July, when only 6% thought coverage was excessive. In the current survey, Republicans (30% too much) are more likely than Democrats (16% too much) or independents (19% too much) to say coverage has been excessive.

Views of economic coverage are similar. About two-in-ten (22%) say there has been too much economic coverage, while 44% say the right amount and 32% say too little. Fewer say there has been too much coverage of talks between the United States and Iran over Iran’s nuclear program (14%), a story that has developed relatively recently as opposed to longer running news about the economy and health care reform. Almost half (48%) say news organizations have devoted the right amount of coverage to talks between the United States and Iran, while a third (33%) says there has been too little coverage.

Arrival of Swine Flu Vaccine Registers Widely

Half the public say they have heard a lot about the arrival of the swine flu vaccine at hospitals, clinics and schools, while another 40% say they've heard a little about this. Women (55%) are somewhat more likely than men (44%) to have heard a lot about the arrival of the vaccine. Overall, just 10% say they have heard nothing about the flu vaccine.

What the Public's Hearing About ...			
	A lot %	A little %	Nothing/ Don't know %
Arrival of the swine flu vaccine at hospitals, clinics, and schools	50	40	10=100
Barack and Michelle Obama lobbying for Chicago's Olympic bid	42	37	20=100
David Letterman acknowledging affairs, blackmail attempt	37	36	28=100
Fossil of human ancestor	9	36	54=100

Q4a-d. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

About four-in-ten (42%) say they heard a lot about Barack and Michelle Obama traveling to Copenhagen to lobby for Chicago's Olympic bid; 37% heard a little, while 20% heard nothing at all. The efforts of the president and his wife on behalf of Chicago's failed bid registered more broadly with Republicans (55% a lot) than with Democrats (39%) or independents (40%).

Somewhat fewer say they heard a lot about talk show host David Letterman acknowledging affairs with staffers and a blackmail attempt (37%). Some 36% heard a little about this, while 28% heard nothing at all.

News about a nearly complete fossil that may be the earliest known human ancestor did not make much of an impression with the public. Just 9% heard a lot about the story, 36% say they heard a little, but a 54% majority says they heard nothing at all about the fossil.

Health Care Reform Still Hard to Understand

There has been no change in perceptions about the issue of health care reform, with majorities continuing to say that the issue affects them personally, is important, and is interesting. At the same time, most still say that the debate is hard to understand.

There is near consensus that health care reform is important: 94% of the public says this. In addition, broad majorities say the issue affects them personally (74%) and is interesting (71%). And despite being a closely followed and highly covered story throughout the summer, 66% say health care reform is still hard to understand, little changed from the percentages who said this is mid-July (63%) and early September (67%).

Little Change in Views of Health Care Reform			
	July 17-20 2009	Sept 3-6 2009	Oct 2-5 2009
	%	%	%
Interesting	72	72	71
Boring	25	26	26
Don't know	3	2	2
	100	100	100
Affects you personally	78	73	74
Does not	21	26	24
Don't know	1	1	2
	100	100	100
Easy to understand	34	31	33
Hard to understand	63	67	66
Don't know	3	2	1
	100	100	100
Important	95	93	94
Unimportant	4	6	6
Don't know	1	*	*
	100	100	100

Q.5a-d. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly News Interest Index, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center's longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media's coverage. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis. In the most recent week, data relating to news coverage were collected from September 28-October 4, 2009 and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected October 2-5, 2009 from a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults.

About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events.

This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Monday through Sunday) PEJ compiles this data to identify the top stories for the week. The News Interest Index survey collects data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for the weekly surveys are based on landline telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of approximately 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls, and that results based on subgroups will have larger margins of error.

For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to www.journalism.org.

About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
October 2-5, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1000

Q.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY “Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?”]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	44	30	15	11	0
September 25-28, 2009	44	37	10	10	*
September 18-21, 2009	44	34	15	7	*
September 11-14, 2009	45	32	14	9	*
September 3-6, 2009	41	31	15	13	*
August 28-31, 2009	45	30	13	12	1
August 21-24, 2009	50	27	13	10	1
August 14-17, 2009	41	37	11	12	*
August 7-10, 2009	42	34	13	10	*
July 31-August 3, 2009	46	34	11	8	*
July 24-27, 2009	45	35	12	8	*
July 17-20, 2009	43	35	11	11	1
July 10-13, 2009	37	38	13	11	*
July 2-5, 2009	38	35	15	12	*
June 19-22, 2009	42	33	15	10	*
June 12-15, 2009	41	35	12	12	*
June 5-8, 2009	41	34	11	14	*
May 29-June 1, 2009	43	37	11	8	*
May 21-24, 2009	44	35	13	9	*
May 15-18, 2009	44	35	12	8	*
May 8-11, 2009	42	34	12	12	*
May 1-4, 2009	47	36	11	5	1
April 17-20, 2009	52	30	10	7	1
April 9-13, 2009	48	29	13	10	0
March 27-30, 2009	48	32	10	10	*
March 20-23, 2009	52	34	8	6	*
March 13-16, 2009	48	33	9	10	*
February 27-March 2, 2009	56	30	8	6	*
February 13-16, 2009	55	29	10	6	*
January 30-February 2, 2009	52	31	12	5	*
January 23-26, 2009	57	30	8	5	0
January 16-19, 2009	43	35	13	9	*
January 2-4, 2009	42	36	15	7	*
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1
b. Debate over health care reform	39	29	16	16	*
September 25-28, 2009	45	31	12	12	0
September 18-21, 2009	44	26	19	11	*
September 11-14, 2009	44	27	14	15	*
September 3-6, 2009	40	26	16	17	0
August 28-31, 2009	40	28	17	14	1
August 21-24, 2009	49	24	12	15	1
August 14-17, 2009	39	31	15	15	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹					
August 7-10, 2009: <i>Debate in Washington over health care reform</i>	40	27	17	15	1
July 31-August 3, 2009	47	26	14	13	1
July 24-27, 2009	44	28	15	13	*
July 17-20, 2009	33	31	13	21	2
July 10-13, 2009	24	29	20	27	*
June 26-29, 2009	29	26	20	25	1
June 19-22, 2009	28	28	20	23	*
June 12-15, 2009	29	26	18	26	*
May 15-18, 2009: <i>Debate over Obama's health care plans</i>	25	30	20	24	*
March 6-9, 2009: <i>Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling health care</i>	41	32	13	14	*
September, 1994: <i>The Clinton administration's health care reform proposals</i>	32	41	18	9	*
June, 1994	34	40	19	7	*
May, 1994	37	37	16	9	1

¹ June 12-15, 2009 to August 7-10, 2009 asked about: "Debate in Washington over health care reform." May 15-18, 2009 asked about: "Debate over Barack Obama's health care plans." March 6-9, 2009 asked about: "Barack Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling the U.S. health care system." September, 1993 through September, 1994 asked about: "The Clinton Administration's health care reform proposals." May, 1993 through August, 1993 asked about: "Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton."

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
January, 1994	38	38	15	9	*
Early January, 1994	40	40	14	6	*
December, 1993	45	35	12	7	1
October, 1993	44	32	17	6	1
September, 1993	49	34	11	6	*
August, 1993: <i>Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton</i>	27	32	25	15	1
June, 1993	28	38	19	15	*
May, 1993	30	30	25	14	1
c. Earthquakes in Indonesia and a tsunami in the South Pacific	18	37	27	18	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
August 14-17, 2009: <i>A typhoon that caused flooding and mudslides in Taiwan</i>	7	21	30	41	1
April 9-13, 2009: <i>A major earthquake in Italy</i>	18	35	25	22	*
May 16-19, 2008: <i>The earthquake in China</i>	30	41	17	12	*
May 9-12, 2008: <i>Reports about the cyclone that hit Burma</i>	23	35	23	19	*
November 2-5, 2007: <i>The impact of Hurricane Noel on the Bahamas and Cuba</i>	11	22	31	35	1
September 7-10, 2007: <i>The impact of Hurricanes Felix and Henriette on Mexico and Central America</i>	14	29	29	27	1
August 24-27, 2007: <i>The destruction caused by Hurricane Dean in Mexico and the Caribbean</i>	18	39	24	18	1
October, 2005: <i>The earthquake in Pakistan</i>	22	39	23	16	*
January 2005: <i>The earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean</i>	58	32	7	3	*
January 2004: <i>The earthquake in Iran</i>	16	34	31	19	*
February 2001: <i>The earthquake in India</i>	15	33	31	20	1
March 2000: <i>Flood rescue efforts in Mozambique</i>	10	26	30	34	*
September 1999: <i>The earthquake in Turkey</i>	27	37	23	12	1
November 1998: <i>Hurricane Mitch and the rain and mudslides in Central America</i>	36	36	16	11	1
February 1995: <i>The earthquake in Japan</i>	25	47	20	8	*
May 1991: <i>The cyclone that devastated Bangladesh</i>	23	36	23	17	1
July 1990: <i>The earthquake in Iran</i>	20	36	28	16	*

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
d. Talks between the United States and Iran over Iran's nuclear program	30	32	18	20	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²					
July 31-August 3, 2009: <i>The Iranian government's crackdown on opposition protestors</i>	18	23	26	31	2
July 2-5, 2009: News about controversy surrounding the recent Iranian election	22	31	23	23	*
June 26-29, 2009: The Iranian government's crackdown on election protestors	31	27	18	23	1
June 19-22, 2009: Protests in Iran over disputed elections	28	28	21	22	1
June 12-15, 2009: The presidential election in Iran	18	26	23	34	*
May 21-24, 2009: <i>Iran testing a missile that could reach Israel</i>	20	29	25	26	*
July 11-14, 2008: <i>The Iranian government firing test missiles capable of striking Israel</i>	25	29	22	23	1
January 11-14, 2008: <i>Encounter between U.S. and Iranian ships</i>	25	26	21	27	1
December 7-10, 2007: <i>Intelligence report on Iran's nuclear weapons program</i>	25	31	20	23	1
October 26-29, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	26	34	21	18	1
September 28 – October 1, 2007: <i>Ahmadinejad visit to U.S.</i>	23	31	20	25	1
June 1-4, 2007: <i>US-Iranian talks</i>	19	27	27	26	1
February 23-26, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	29	37	18	15	1
February 16-19, 2007: <i>Iran supplying weapons to Iraqi insurgents</i>	28	32	20	19	1
February 2-5, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	33	38	18	10	1
Sept., 2006: <i>Iran's nuclear research program</i>	23	34	19	23	1
August, 2006	24	34	20	20	3
June, 2006	21	32	22	22	3
April, 2006	26	30	23	20	1
March, 2006	24	31	22	22	1
e. The arrest of film director Roman Polanski by Swiss authorities	11	20	28	41	*
f. The decision to award the 2016 Olympics to Rio de Janeiro	17	27	24	31	*

² May 21-24, 2009 asked about: "Iran testing a missile that could reach Israel." July 11-14, 2008 asked about: "The Iranian government firing test missiles capable of striking Israel." January 11-14, 2008 asked about: "News about a naval encounter between U.S. and Iranian ships." December 7-10, 2007 asked about: "A new intelligence report stating that Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program in 2003." October 26-29, 2007, February 23-26, 2007 and February 2-5, 2007 asked about: "Mounting tensions between the United States and Iran." September 28-October 1, 2007 asked about: "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent trip to New York City where he spoke at Columbia University and the United Nations." June 1-4, 2007 asked about: "Recent talks between the United States and Iran." February 16-19, 2007 asked about: "Reports that Iran may be supplying weapons to insurgents in Iraq." March, 2006 through June, 2006 asked about: "Iran's nuclear research program."

Q.2 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? [DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]

- 33 Debate over health care reform
- 22 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 10 Earthquakes in Indonesia and a tsunami in the South Pacific
- 9 Talks between the United States and Iran over Iran's nuclear program
- 5 The decision to award the 2016 Olympics to Rio de Janeiro
- 3 The arrest of film director Roman Polanski by Swiss authorities
- 10 Some other story (VOL.)
- 9 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.3 Do you think news organizations are giving too much coverage, too little coverage or the right amount of coverage to each of the following? [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]

	<u>Too much coverage</u>	<u>Too little coverage</u>	<u>Right amount of coverage</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	22	32	44	2
July 17-20, 2009	16	30	51	4
March 20-23, 2009	21	26	51	2
January 18-21, 2008	11	32	52	5
February, 2001: <i>Signs of an economic slowdown</i>	21	25	46	8
b. Debate over health care reform	21	35	40	4
TREND FOR COMPARISON:				
July 17-20, 2009: <i>Debate in Washington over health care reform</i>	6	45	44	6
c. Talks between the United States and Iran over Iran's nuclear program	14	33	48	5
June 1-4, 2007: <i>Recent talks between the United States and Iran</i>	13	32	45	10

Q.4 How much if anything, have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

		<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
a.	Talk show host David Letterman acknowledging affairs with staffers and a blackmail attempt	37	36	28	*
b.	The arrival of the swine flu vaccine at hospitals, clinics and schools	50	40	10	*
	TREND FOR COMPARISON				
	August 21-24, 2009: <i>The availability of swine flu vaccine for The upcoming flu season</i>	42	44	13	1
	May 1-4, 2009: <i>Vice President Joe Biden saying he advised his family to avoid traveling by air or subway because of concerns about the swine flu</i>	29	38	32	1
c.	News about a nearly complete fossil that may be the earliest known human ancestor	9	36	54	*
	TREND FOR COMPARISON				
	May 21-24, 2009: <i>A fossil that researchers believe links Humans with early primates</i>	18	34	48	1
d.	Barack and Michelle Obama traveling to Copenhagen to lobby for Chicago's Olympic bid	42	37	20	*

Q.5 Thinking about the issue of health care reform, do you think it... **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**. DO you think it **[NEXT ITEM]**?

		September 3-6 <u>2009</u>	July 17-20 <u>2009</u>
a.	71 Is interesting [OR]	72	72
	26 Boring	26	25
	2 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	2	3
b.	74 Affects you personally [OR]	73	78
	24 Does not affect you personally	26	21
	2 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	1
c.	33 Is easy to understand [OR]	31	34
	66 Hard to understand	67	63
	1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	2	3
d.	94 Is important [OR]	93	95
	6 Unimportant	6	4
	* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	*	1