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U.S. ORGANIZATIONS FOCUSED ON HUMANITIES, CIVICS, AND PUBLIC HEALTH INSPIRED BY NATIONAL POLL SHOWING AMERICANS OPEN TO OVERCOMING DIVISIVENESS

NCHE Poll Finds Public Embracing Racial Healing & Fairness

WASHINGTON – Organizations advancing racial and health equity and civic engagement are inspired by a national poll finding a strong appetite for unity in communities across the country despite intense divisions. The poll found that a significant majority take pride in their American identity, and two in three (67%) say they are hopeful Americans can work through differences and find lasting common ground in the future.

The inaugural [Heart of America Annual Survey](#), sponsored by the National Collaborative for Health Equity (NCHE), also found that Americans across the political spectrum, including 3 in 4 Republicans, say promoting diversity in the workplace and educating our children on the history of racism is important for racial healing.

“Americans feel transformative leadership brings Americans together with a sense of shared purpose and encourages us to engage with each other on a personal level. Americans express a desire for deepening our understanding of the diversity of Americans’ lived experiences and believe our leaders have an important role to play in bridging divides,” the Benenson Strategy Group wrote in their summary of the comprehensive poll.

On behalf of NCHE, the Benenson Strategy Group, a respected research firm, conducted 1304 online interviews from June 16-24, 2023. All respondents were 18 years old or older and included oversamples of young voters and voters of color to ensure adequate representation within the survey. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level was ± 2.60 percentage points.

Dr. Gail C. Christopher, NCHE’s executive director, said the poll results demonstrate the hateful, divisive rhetoric frequently presented by some media, politicians, and public figures

does not accurately represent the feelings of most Americans. “Our poll captures the actual environment in the country, and the poll responses strongly indicated that the narrative we hear so much over the airwaves is a false narrative. It’s wrong,” Dr. Christopher said. “Our poll relays the true voice of the broad American public.”

Further, Dr. Christopher warned that today’s communication technology is elevating and amplifying the voices of the few, creating an impression that dissension is more widespread than is accurate. “We are living in an echo chamber,” she said. “For our country to heal, we need to elevate the voices of the many. The voices of people who want democracy to work and for our nation to heal. Those are the people represented in the poll. The media should take on more responsibility in capturing the voices of the many, the people who aren’t looking to tear our nation apart.”

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, American Public Health Association Executive Director, agreed that too much attention is placed on differences among Americans and not enough on the common threads that can unite the country.

“While we focus on differences, this survey reinforces my belief, and that of most Americans, that we can and want to work together for racial healing and equity,” he said. “APHA, NCHE, and countless local organizations across the country are uniting people in this goal.

Phoebe Stein, President of the Federation of State Humanities Councils, said the poll results confirm that healing is possible at the community level.

“As the Federation supports the nation’s humanities councils to strengthen the civic, cultural, and social fabric of our nation through the humanities, I am heartened to see the results of this survey that tell us healing begins in the community: The path forward starts with empathy, respect, and relationship building,” said Stein.

Doug Linkhart, President of the National Civic League, said: “I was pleased to see the results of this survey. It confirms what we hear from people around the country, which is that there is more that unites us than divides us and that, despite the publicity given to conflict, most people want racial healing, equity, and unity.”

Dr. Christopher said NCHE will remain at the forefront, helping lift the voices for racial healing and unity.

“This is the nation’s path forward,” she said. “This will be an annual poll so we can consistently demonstrate that there is way more good in America than is being represented. The authentic narrative is that of a nation that wants and will do better. Equity and fairness are achievable. We need to amplify those thoughts and beliefs.”

(For broadcast or print interviews with Dr. Christopher, please contact Michael Frisby at Mike@frisbyassociates.com or 202-625-4328.)

(Dr. Gail C. Christopher is the Executive Director of the [National Collaborative for Health Equity](#), Senior Scholar at the Center for Advancement of Well-Being at George Mason University, and former Senior Advisor and Vice President of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Her new book, *RX-Racial Healing*, is available [HERE](#).)

About NCHE

Founded in 2014, NCHE was established to promote health equity through action, leadership, inclusion, and collaboration. We work to create environments that foster the best possible health outcomes for all populations, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or nativity. NCHE also works to improve conditions for health and well-being, including housing, education, income and wealth, and the physical and social environment. Further, it is imperative that we address historical and contemporary structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism, which fuels inequities in our society.