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## **Affluent most troubled about the economy, study finds Women more concerned than men about health care**

By Lisa Shidler

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The survey of 500 people who live in households with incomes of \$100,000 or more showed that the main worry of 60% was the economy, followed by health care costs and unemployment, which were tied for No. 2, each getting 30% of the vote.

The online survey of individuals ages 18 and older was conducted from Dec. 29 to Dec. 31 by New York-based research firm Ipsos Mendelsohn.

Advisers and industry leaders said this research is further indication they need to approach their clients and help them with a wide range of issues — beyond their investment portfolios.

Women were more concerned about health care than men. Thirty-seven percent of them chose it as their top concern, compared with 28% of men.

The analysis also showed that paying taxes was considered much more of a concern by the two uppermost income groups in the poll. The groups were broken into households of \$100,000 to \$149,000, \$150,000 to \$199,000 and \$200,000 and up.

Rising taxes were the third-most worrisome topic, with 30% of respondents calling it a primary anxiety. Meanwhile, only 19% of those in the lowest income group found taxes worrisome.

Overall, 23% of the respondents were concerned about rising taxes.

### **YOUNG THINK DIFFERENTLY**

There was a significant difference in concerns for individuals ages 18 to 34. Unemployment fears didn't even rank among the top three concerns for these younger affluent individuals, which was a surprise to Richard Vogt, vice president at Ipsos Mendelsohn.

"When we look at youth, they mention the economy, but not jobs. They're more interested in the big picture," Mr. Vogt said.

The top three concerns for individuals ages 18 to 34 were climate change, the economy and education. Meanwhile, climate change ranked 11th for older respondents. There were 17 potential concerns from which to choose.

But the economy and worries about job losses is foremost in the minds of affluent individuals, particularly those over the age of 34.

"The economy has struck home and is a huge concern," Mr. Vogt said.

Even though clients are worried about many of these issues, industry leaders fear that advisers are uncertain about how to handle a lot of them.

Some advisers are struggling to deal with some concerns that go beyond clients' portfolios, said Elvin D. Turner, a managing director with Turner Consulting LLC of Bloomfield, Conn.

"The good ones are able to relate with clients. Just because clients may have \$3 million in assets, doesn't mean they're immune from the economy," he said. "People have to make fundamental changes in the economy."

Dan Mantell, a Waltham, Mass.-based certified financial planner with Wachovia Wealth Management of Winston-Salem, N.C., said he reassures clients expressing concerns about job losses or the economy by talking with them about what they can do to save money that can cushion them in a layoff. The Waltham branch manages \$500 million in assets.

## **ADDRESSING FEARS**

"When they bring up conversations about losing jobs, you bring them back to conversations you've had in the past and the plans you've put in place," Mr. Mantell said. "This is why we take a certain amount of cash and push it aside."

At his firm, he said, a staff psychologist has spoken with advisers about how they can try to help investors cope with many of these stresses.

Mr. Mantell said clients are concerned about a myriad of issues and he tries to listen to all of their fears and focus on the issues that he and the clients can manage.

"We have to understand that there are things we can control and things we can't. We can't control the market, but we have helped clients by putting appropriate portfolios together [for them]," Mr. Mantell said. "Clients have been tested in ways they've never been tested before."

Adviser Mark Snyder of Mark J. Snyder Financial Services Inc., a Medford, N.Y., firm with about \$170 million in assets, said the vast majority of his clients are most concerned about the safety of their portfolios.

"They're concerned about the economy," he said. "They're all psychologically concerned. They're concerned about whether their money will last in retirement."

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