

# **Business Preparedness for Novel Influenza A (H1N1)**

*Results from a Poll of Businesses  
Across the United States*

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# Business Preparedness: H1N1

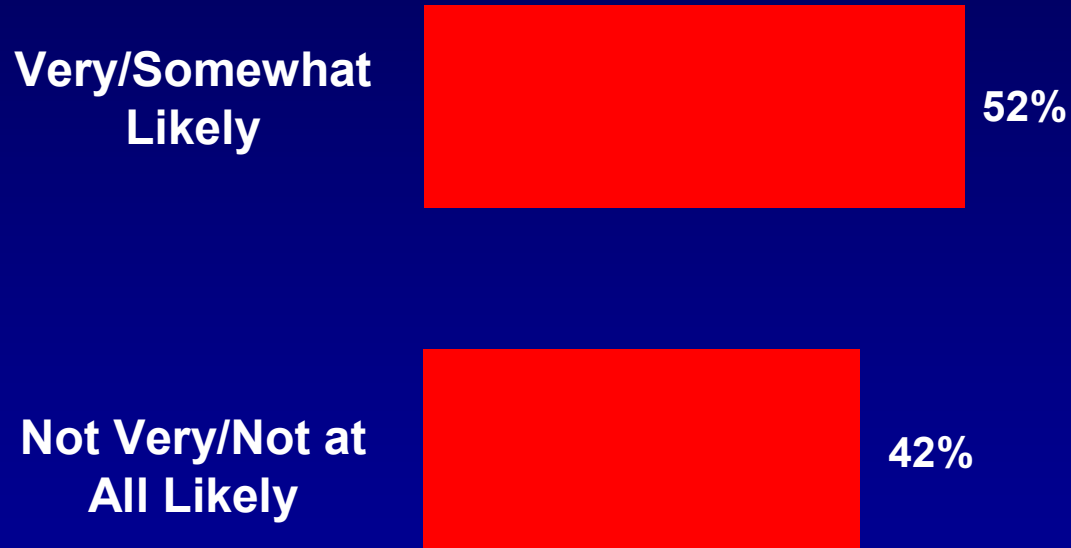
- I. Current Beliefs & Response**
- II. Absenteeism**
- III. Leave Policies**
- IV. Doctor's Note Policies**
- V. Mitigation Strategies**
- VI. Interest in Information**
- VII. Conclusions**
- VIII. Poll Design Overview**

# I. Current Beliefs & Overall Response

- **This is a concerning and relevant issue from the businesses perspective**
- **More than half have had discussions about what they would do in such an outbreak**
- **But fewer have made tangible changes to emergency plans or human resource policies**

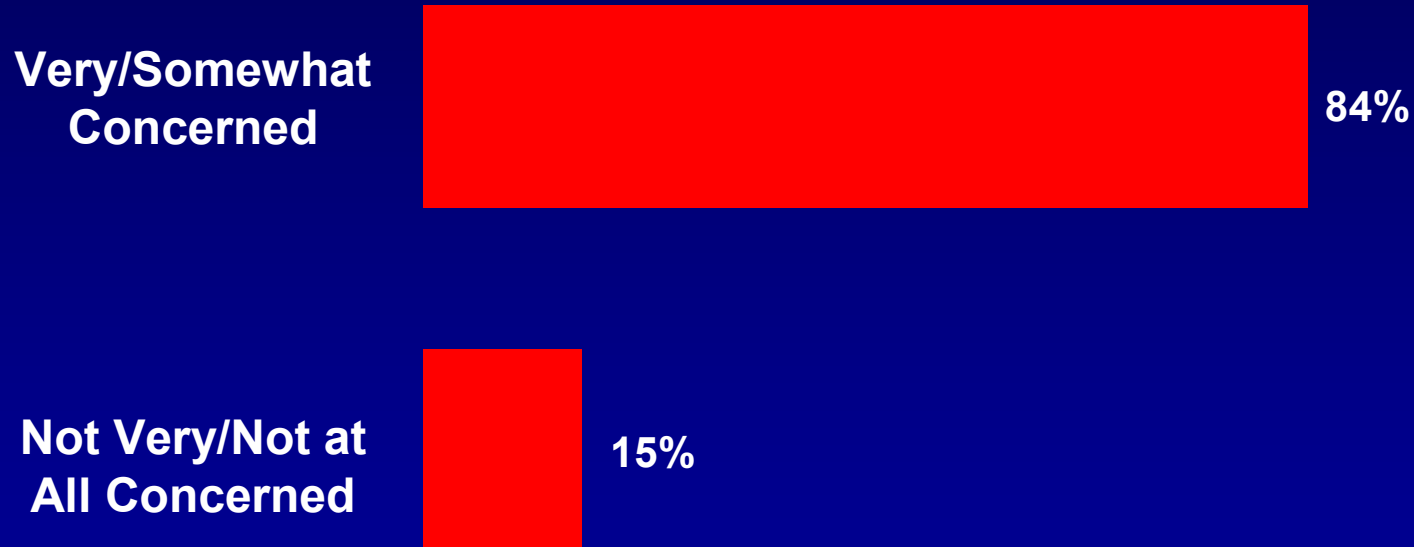
# Businesses' Beliefs About Future Outbreak

*% saying there will be a serious outbreak in the fall*

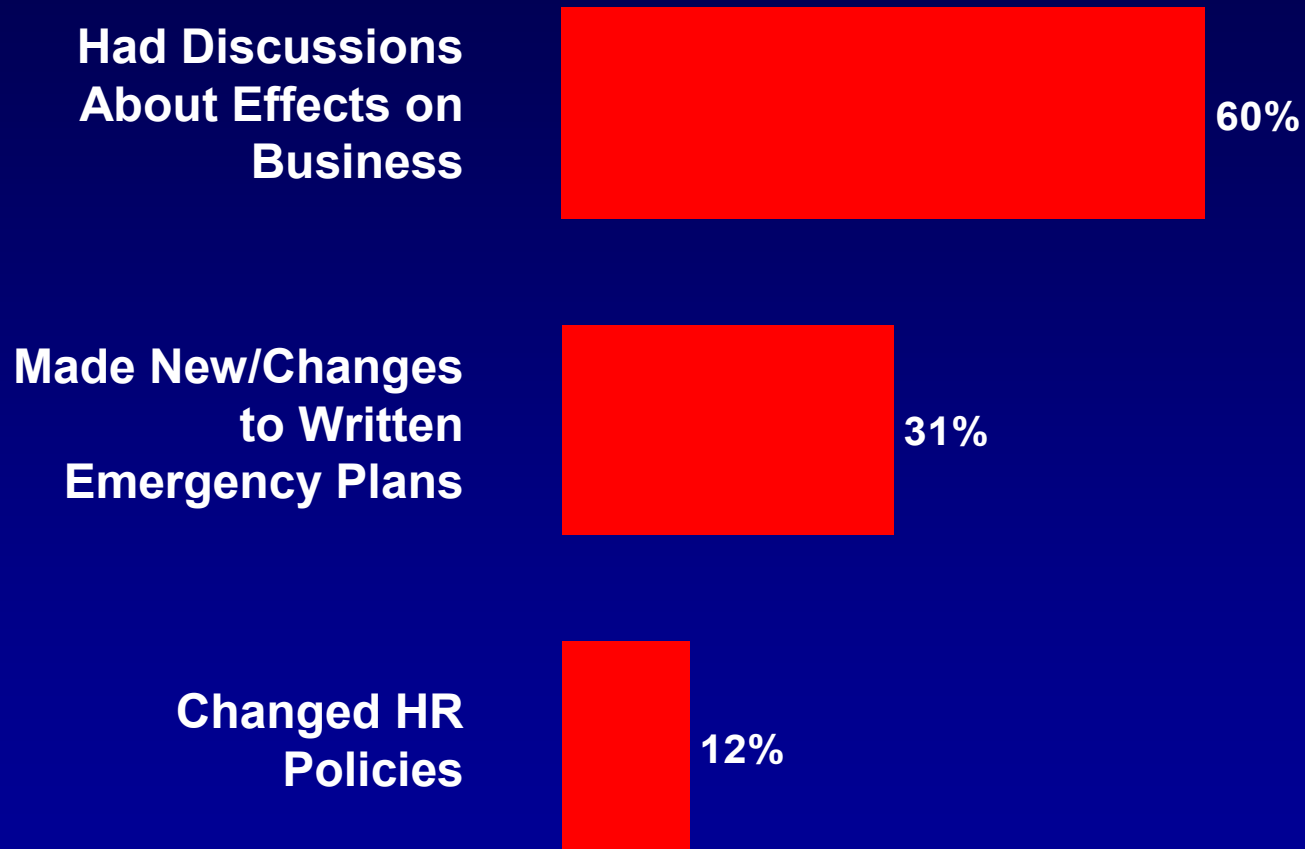


# Concerns About Whether Future Outbreak Would Negatively Affect Their Business

*% concerned that a serious outbreak would negatively affect their business*



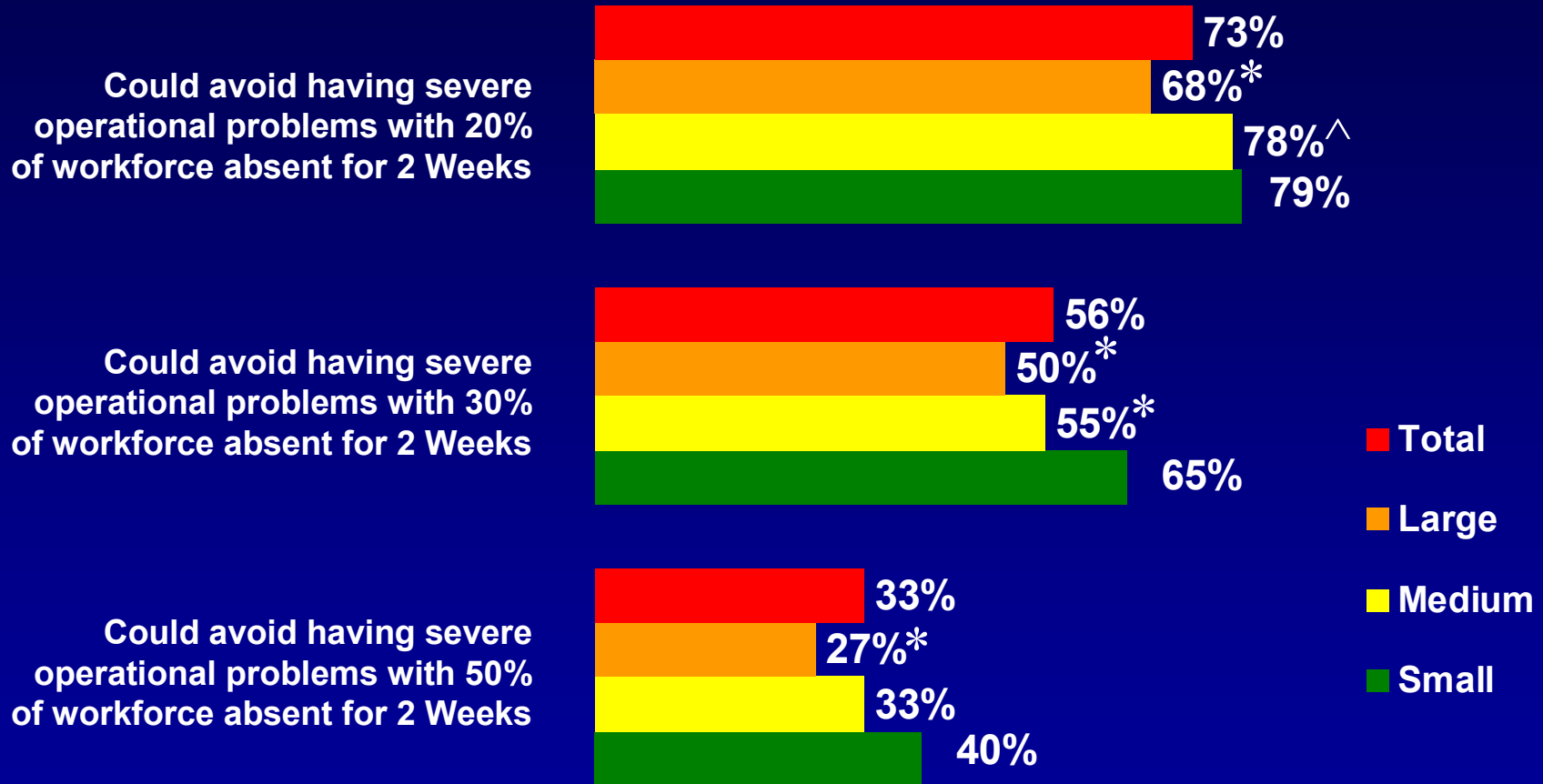
# Response to Spring Outbreak



# II. Absenteeism

- **Many businesses believe they would have trouble avoiding severe operational problems if significant numbers of their employees were absent**
- **Problems become more difficult to avoid...**
  - **as the length of absences increase and**
  - **as the percentage of workforce absent increases**

# Ability to Avoid Severe Operational Problems from Reduced Workforce: 2 Weeks Comparison by Size

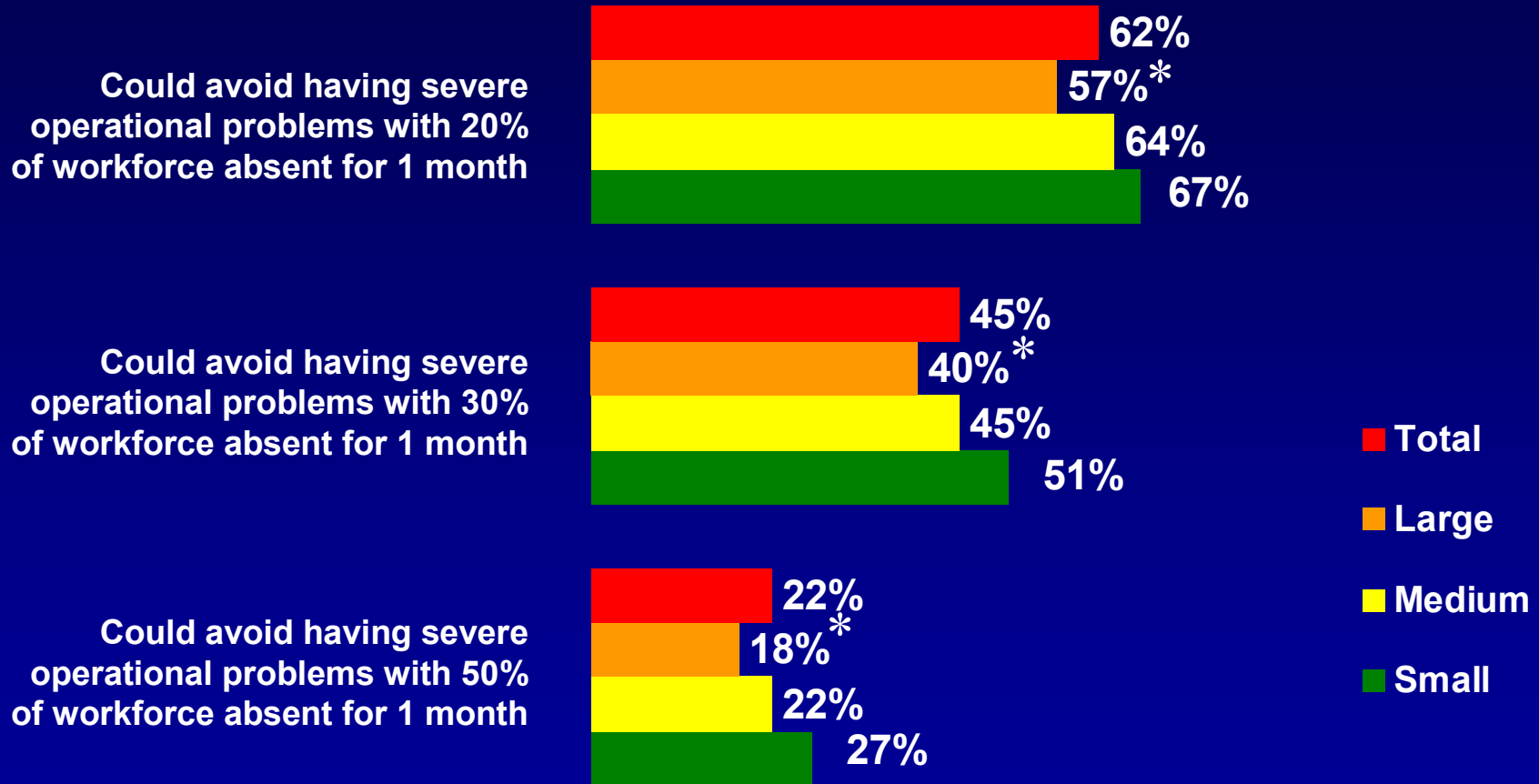


\*Statistically significantly different than small businesses.

^Statistically significantly different than large businesses.



# Ability to Avoid Severe Operational Problems from Reduced Workforce: 1 Month Comparison by Size



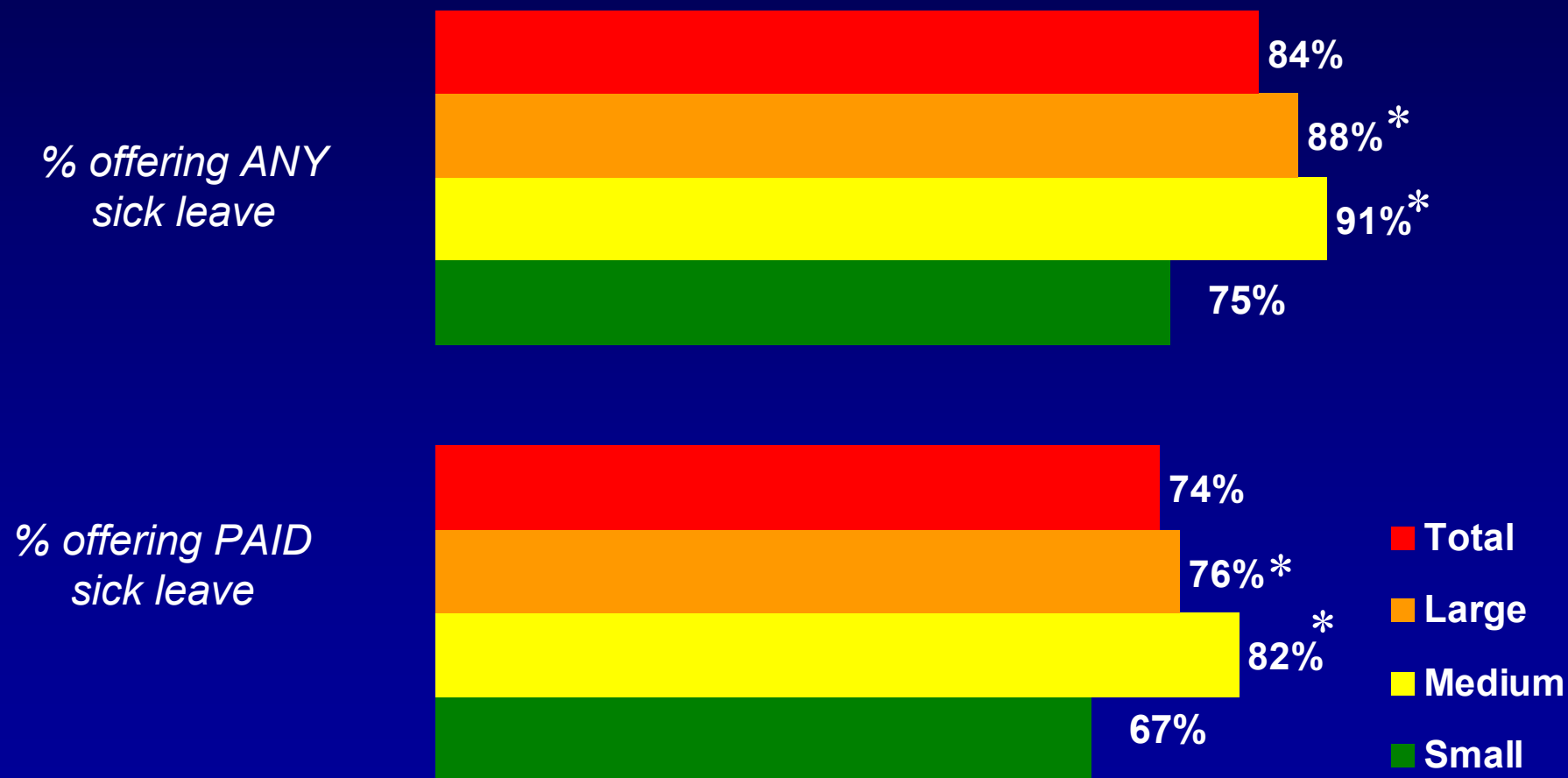
\*Statistically significantly different than small businesses.

# III. Leave Policies

- **Businesses are much more likely to offer paid sick leave than paid family sick leave or paid leave to allow employees to take care of children if schools close**
  - **Large and medium businesses are more likely to offer paid sick and family leave than small businesses**
- **Few businesses anticipate changing their leave policies in the event of a serious outbreak**

# Sick Leave: Current Comparison by Size of Firm

*% saying CURRENTLY has sick leave policy for any employees*

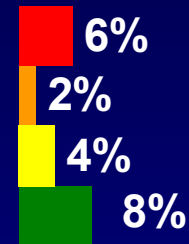


\*Statistically significantly different than small businesses.

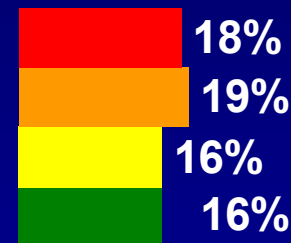
# Sick Leave: In a Serious Outbreak Comparison by Size of Firm

*% who predict changes in policies if there were a serious outbreak*

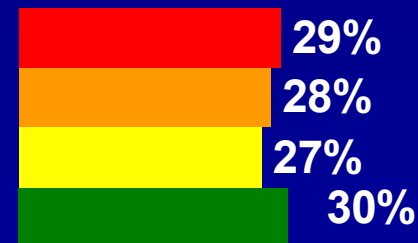
**% of those who do NOT offer sick leave  
who would begin to offer sick leave**



**% of those who DO offer sick leave  
who will increase the number of  
employees who have sick leave**



**% of those who DO offer sick  
leave who will extend amount  
of sick time employees have**

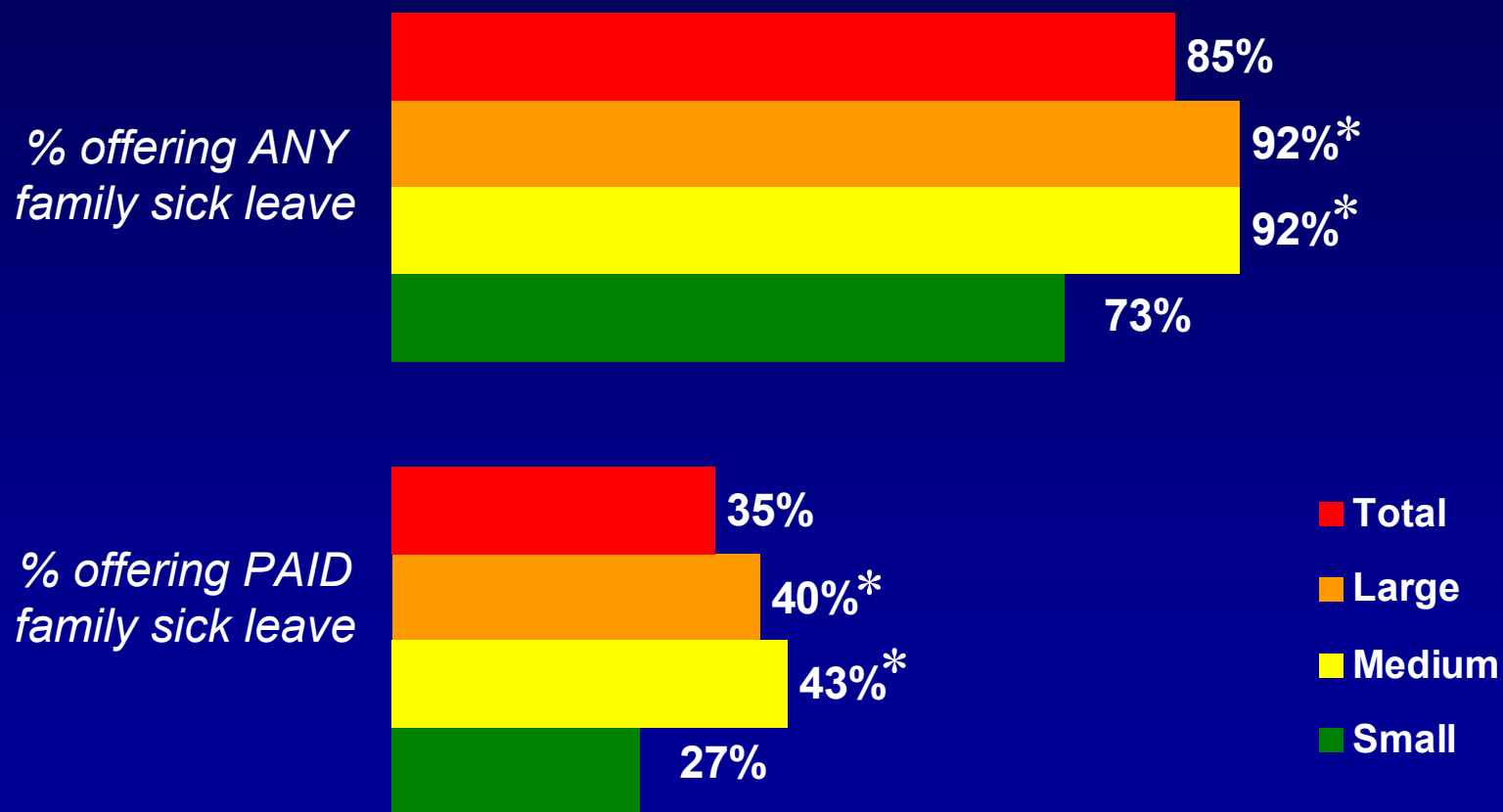


■ Total  
■ Large  
■ Medium  
■ Small

\*Statistically significantly different than small businesses.

## Family Sick Leave: Current Comparison by Size of Firm

*% saying CURRENTLY has policy that would allow any employees to take time off to care for sick family members*



\*Statistically significantly different than small businesses.

# Family Sick Leave: In a Serious Outbreak Comparison by Size of Firm

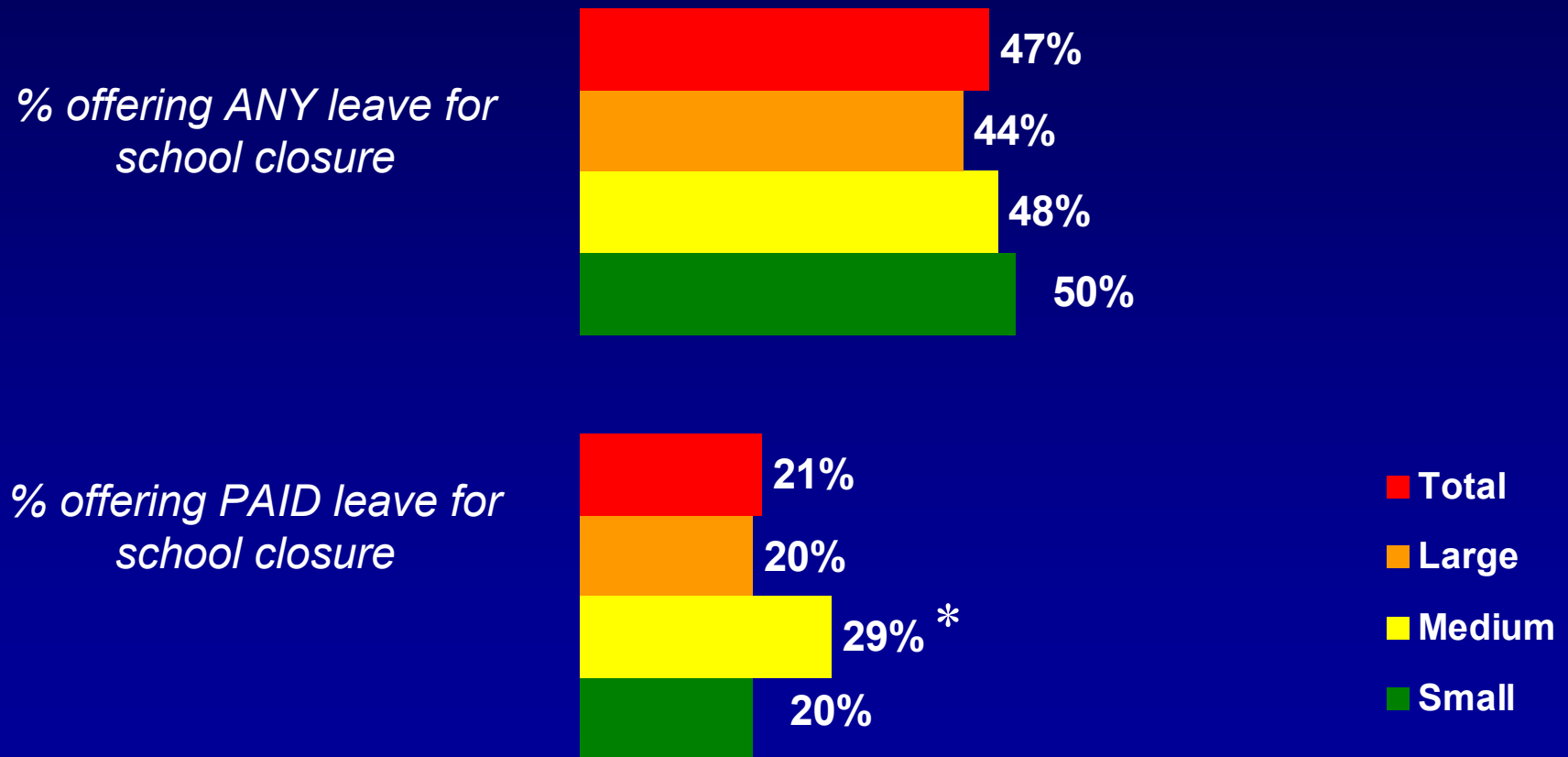
*% who predict changes in policies if there were a serious outbreak*



\*Statistically significantly different than medium and large businesses.

# Leave For School Closure: Current Comparison by Size of Firm

*% saying CURRENTLY has policy that would allow employees to take time off to care for children if schools/daycares closed due to special circumstances*



\*Statistically significantly different than small and large businesses.

# Leave for School Closure: In a Serious Outbreak Comparison by Size of Firm

*% who predict changes in policies if there were a serious outbreak*



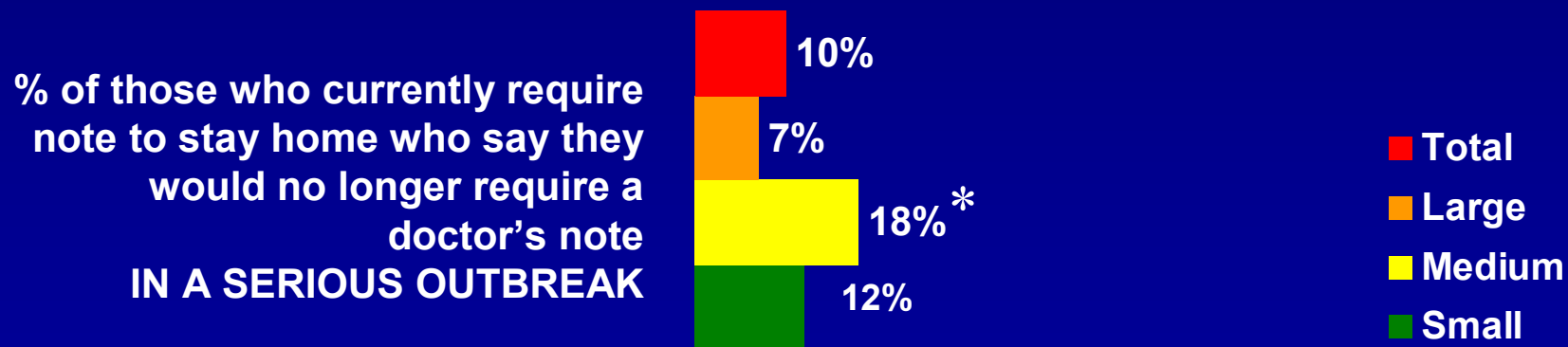
\*Statistically significantly different than large businesses.



# IV. Doctor's Note Policies

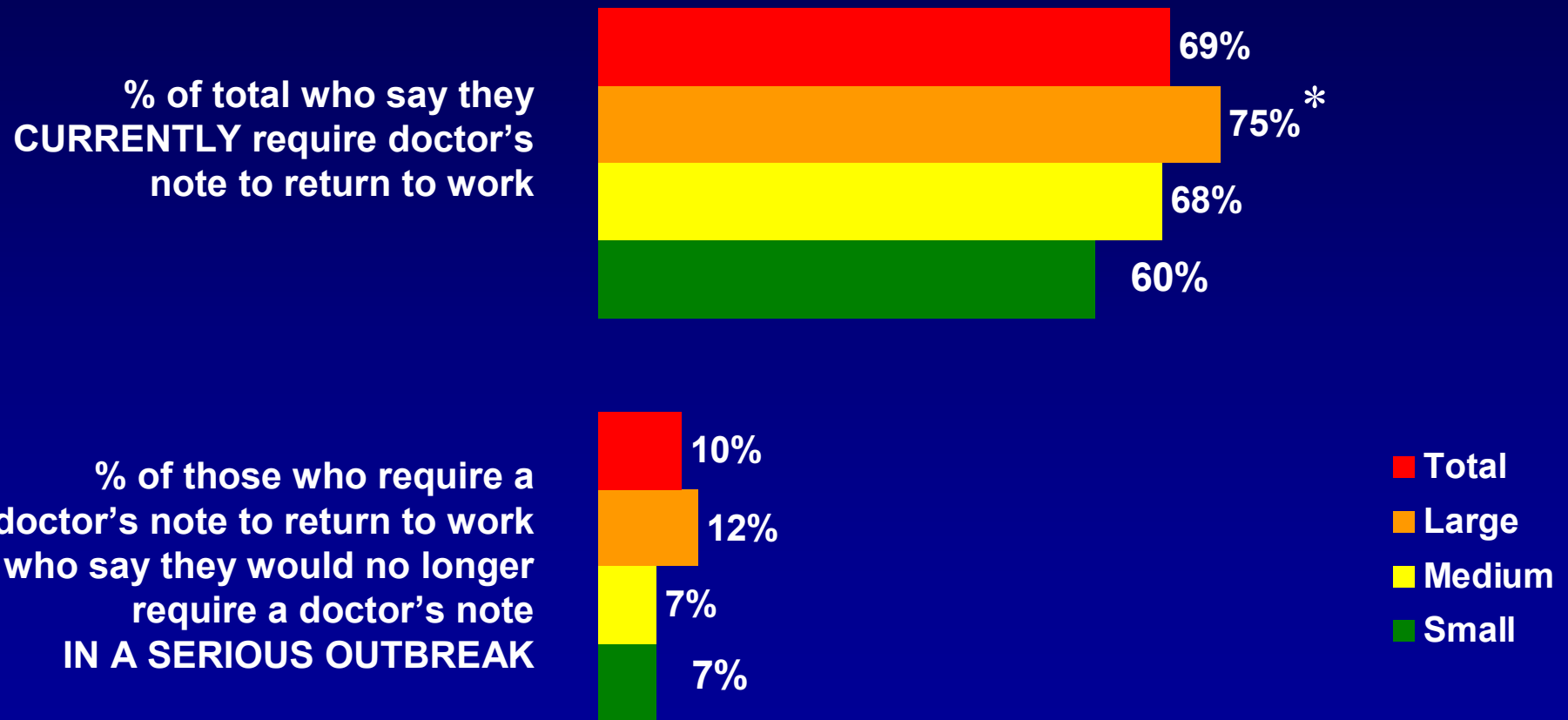
- **Nearly half of businesses that offer sick leave require a doctor's note to take sick leave, and almost two-thirds require a doctor's note to return to work after contagious illnesses**
  - **Small businesses that offer sick leave are less likely than large businesses that offer sick leave to require a doctor's note to stay home or return to work**
- **Few businesses are likely to change their doctor note policies in the event of a serious outbreak**

# Doctor's Note to Stay Home: Current and In a Serious Outbreak Comparison by Size of Firm



\*Statistically significantly different than small businesses.

# Doctor's Note to Return to Work After Contagious Illness: Current and In a Serious Outbreak Comparison by Size of Firm



\*Statistically significantly different than small businesses.

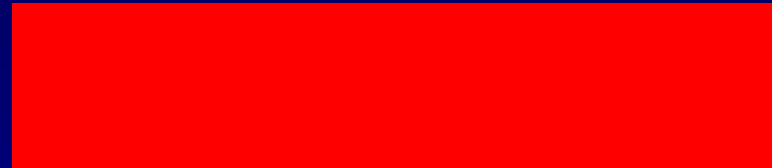
# V. Mitigation Strategies

- **Roughly half of businesses could implement mitigation strategies for 1-2 weeks, but far fewer could sustain them for more than 4 weeks**
- **Businesses were most likely to be able to stagger shifts**
- **They were least likely to be able to arrange the physical space to reduce contact between employees or employees and customers**

# Staggering Shifts

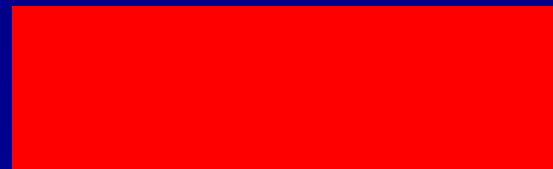
*% saying business could do this for...*

**At least 1-2 weeks**



**59%**

**More than 4 weeks**

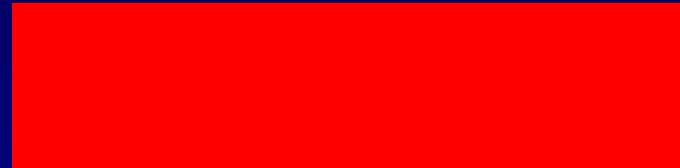


**42%**

# Identifying Workers Who Perform Duties That Could Be Temporarily Suspended and Let Them Stay at Home While Getting Paid

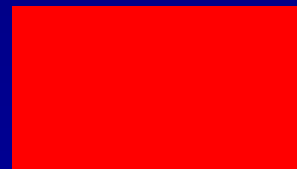
*% saying business could do this for...*

At least 1-2 weeks



51%

More than 4 weeks

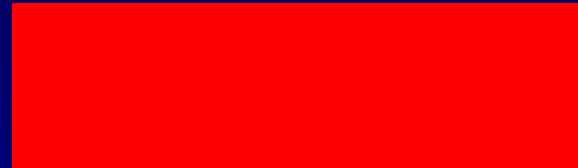


22%

# Physically Arranging Workplace to Limit Contact Between Employees

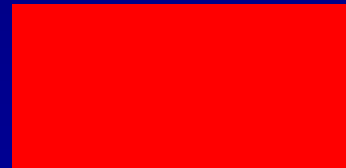
*% saying business could do this for...*

At least 1-2 weeks



44%

More than 4 weeks

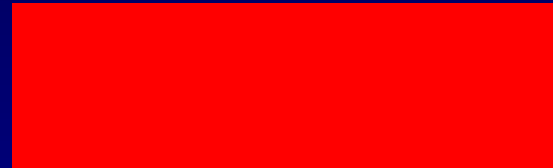


26%

# Physically Arranging Workplace to Limit Contact Between Employees and Customers/Clients

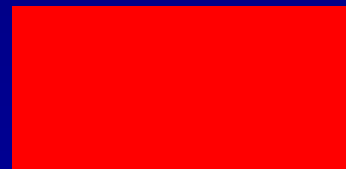
*% saying business could do this for...*

**At least 1-2 weeks**



**42%**

**More than 4 weeks**



**26%**

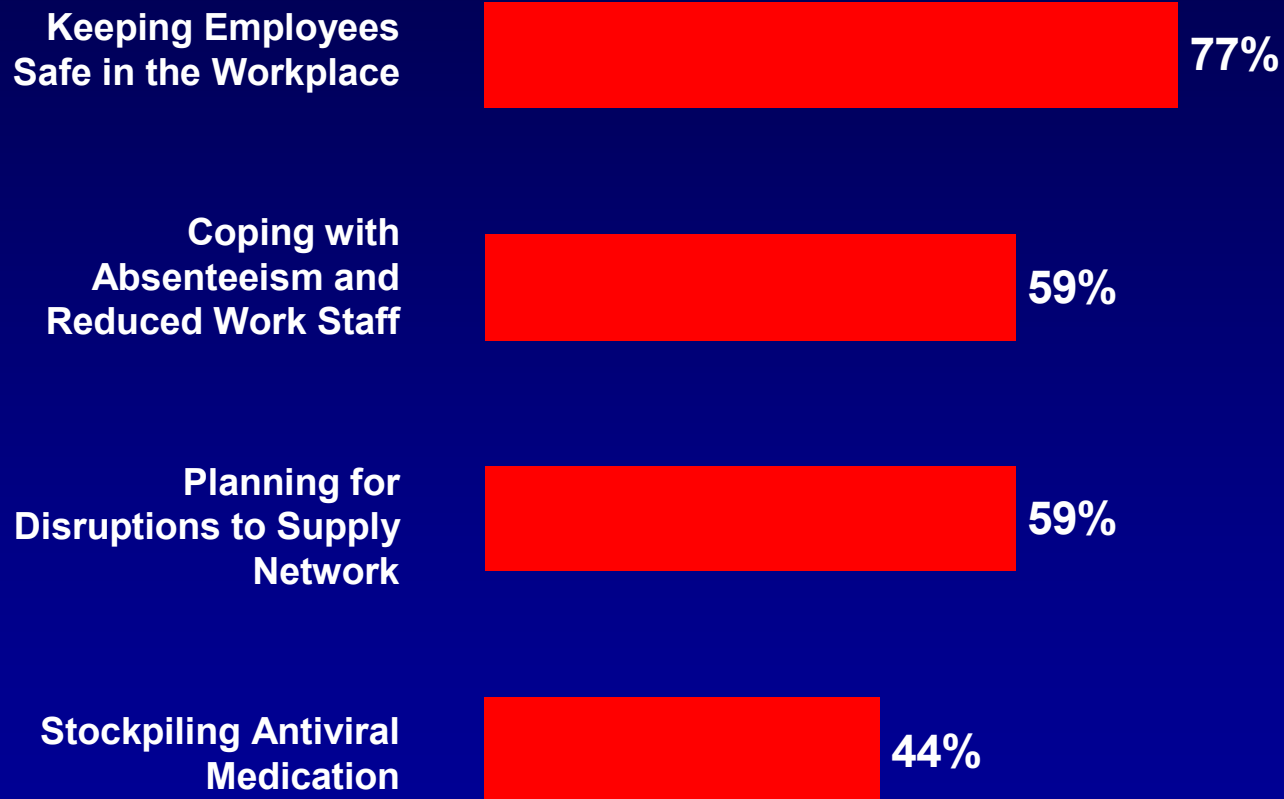


# VI. Information Interest

- **Firms are interested in learning about how to support their business and employees in a serious outbreak**
- **Interest is highest for information about:**
  - **keeping employees safe**
  - **coping with a reduced workforce**
  - **planning for supply interruptions**
- **Businesses are most likely to look for information about H1N1 pandemic planning from health organizations**

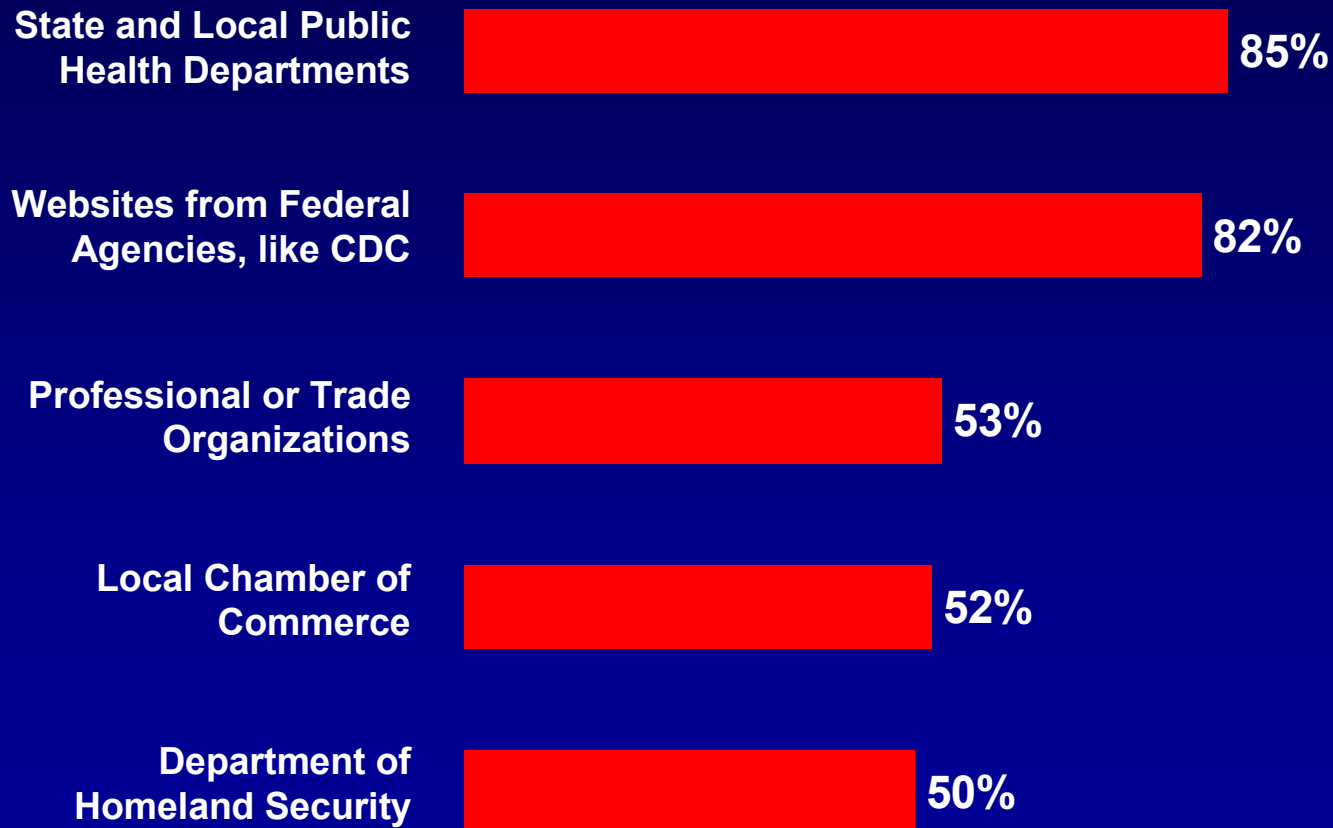
# Topics of Interest to Businesses

*% saying business very/somewhat interested in getting information about...*



# Likely Sources of Information about H1N1 Planning

*% saying business very/somewhat likely to turn to each source*



# VII. Conclusions

- Many businesses find this issue relevant to their operations
- Some businesses may be vulnerable to operational problems if faced with widespread absenteeism
- Although many businesses offer paid sick leave...
  - They are less likely to have paid leave that would allow employees to care for family members
  - Many businesses have leave policies that may make it more difficult for employees to take time off if they are sick or need to care for family members
  - A minority anticipate making changes to policies in the context of a severe outbreak
- Some businesses may find it challenging to implement mitigation strategies at the worksite if the outbreak becomes very severe

# VII. Conclusions

- There is both an opportunity and a need for businesses to discuss and begin planning for the potential of a widespread outbreak of H1N1
- Particular issues for consideration include:
  - Sustaining operations effectively in the face of widespread absenteeism
  - Developing effective leave policies and related doctor's notes policies specific to the context of widespread absenteeism
  - Beginning consideration of how to implement mitigation strategies at the worksite should they be needed
  - Partnering with employees on such issues in order to balance the operational needs of the business and the financial or other concerns of employees

# VIII. Poll Design Overview

- Telephone poll of human resources personnel
- July 16 to August 12, 2009
- Random sample of 1057 businesses in the United States
  - 353 small businesses (20-99 employees)
  - 356 medium businesses (100-500 employees)
  - 348 large businesses (>500 employees)
  - Includes oversample of businesses identified as Critical Infrastructure/Key Resource firms (~170 in each size category)
- Data weighted to match profile of businesses on size, CI/KR status, and retail/food industry status