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Armed with Facts About Diabetes, Eight in Ten (80%) Canadians Rank Diabetes as an Immediate Priority for the Canadian Healthcare System

Over Eight in Ten (85%) Believe the Federal Government Must Work with the Provinces and Territories on a National Diabetes Strategy

Toronto, Ontario, November 7th, 2019 — In the lead up to World Diabetes Day, a new poll conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Diabetes Canada reveals that once informed about the prevalence, severity and cost of diabetes in Canada, diabetes ranks as one of the most urgent priorities for the Canadian healthcare system with eight in ten (80%) Canadians ranking it in their top 3 priorities; which is second only to cancer (85% ranked 1-3). BC residents are most likely to prioritize diabetes, with 9 in 10 (89%) ranking it in their top 3. This is a stark increase from where diabetes ranked before Canadians were provided the facts, which saw the disease ranked outside the top 3 priorities for Canadians (35% ranked diabetes in their top 3 vs. 89% cancer, 74% heart disease and stroke, 42% dementia). Additionally, over eight in ten (85%) believe that the federal government must work with the provinces and territories on a national diabetes strategy, with four in ten (43%) *strongly* agreeing.

Canadians Underestimate the Severity of Diabetes

While over half (54%) of Canadians say they know a lot or a fair amount about diabetes, there is evidence to suggest that Canadians greatly underestimate the severity and prevalence of the disease in Canada. Despite seven in ten (71%) agreeing that diabetes is on the rise in Canada, Canadians greatly underestimate the chance someone who is 20 years old today has of being diagnosed with diabetes in their lifetime – which has 50/50 odds. Only 5% believe there is a 50% or greater chance, while six in ten (58%) believe there is less than a 50% chance, and a third believe the odds are under 30% (36%) – four in ten (37%) say they don't know.

Only a minority (18%) of Canadians correctly identify that more than 20 Canadians die of diabetes-related complications every day. Half (51%) say they don't know, and 3 in 10 (31%) believe it is 20 or less.

Canadians also underestimate the link between diabetes and heart attacks – 40% of all heart attacks in Canada are related to diabetes. When asked what proportion of heart attacks in Canada are related to diabetes, over four in ten (43%) believe it to be under 40%, with half (49%) indicating they don't know. Only a third (35%) of Canadians correctly identify heart disease as a potential complication of diabetes, which is significantly lower than the proportion who identified this link in 2018 (40%).

The Cost of Diabetes in Canada

As with the severity and prevalence of diabetes in Canada, Canadians either don't know or underestimate the cost of diabetes to the Canadian healthcare system – which spends \$29 billion a year treating diabetes. When asked how much they think is spent on treating diabetes in Canada, six



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in ten (57%) say they don't know and four in ten (39%) believe it is \$15 billion or less – only four percent believe it is \$30 billion a year. Even without knowing the real cost of diabetes, seven in ten (69%) are concerned about the costs of diabetes to the healthcare system in Canada, with a quarter (26%) expressing they are *very* concerned.

The Financial Burden of Living with Diabetes

Eight in ten (79%) Canadians are concerned that diabetes medication and devices are not affordable for all Canadians, with four in ten (38%) saying they are *very* concerned. Over half are also concerned about the availability of diabetes medication and devices in Canada (58%) and about US patients potentially being able to purchase medication in Canada (54%).

Those closest to the disease, either living with diabetes themselves or caring for a loved one with diabetes, continue to struggle. A minority (34%) feel the government provides enough support for the care of people living with diabetes – only 6% strongly agree the government provides enough support, compared to 24% who strongly *disagree*.

Eight in ten (79%) of those closest to the disease feel it is difficult to pay for health care bills related to diabetes, with a third (35%) *strongly* agreeing – a significant increase in concern from last year (24% in 2018). A majority (70%) believe that if people with diabetes were not reimbursed by public or private insurance for treatments, it would be a major financial burden to cover these expenses– this is up 10 percentage points from last year (60% in 2018). Four in ten (42%) of those closest to the disease report they are paying out of pocket expenses related to their diabetes.



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of two Ipsos polls on behalf of Diabetes Canada. The most recent was conducted between October 11th and 15th, 2019. For this survey, a sample of 2,002 Canadians aged 18+ were interviewed. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The second survey was conducted between September 30th and October 3rd. For this survey, a sample of 1,270 Canadians aged 18+ were interviewed. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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