

## FACTUM

### Canadians Largely Satisfied with Healthcare System, But Eager for Increased Access

Two-Thirds (66%) Satisfied with Provincial Healthcare System, But Seven in Ten (71%) Agree System is Too Bureaucratic

**Montreal, QC, December 2, 2021** — Amidst the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Canadians continue to show relatively high satisfaction in their healthcare system, as revealed in a recent Ipsos survey conducted on behalf of the Montreal Economic Institute. Among the 1,168 adult Canadians surveyed, two-thirds (66%) report being satisfied (55% somewhat/12% very) with their province's healthcare system. However, Canadians remain critical of several aspects of the health system, with seven in ten (71%) agreeing (29% completely/43% somewhat) that the system is too bureaucratic to respond quickly or adequately to the needs of the population and over half saying that recent investments in healthcare have either worsened (19%) or had no effect (35%) on the system.

These concerns have raised the question of the availability of private healthcare, where almost six in ten Canadians (58%) think the government should allow increased access to private entrepreneurs, as long as medically necessary care is fully reimbursed by the government.

#### *Varying Rates of Satisfaction Across Provinces*

Although two-thirds of Canadians say they are satisfied with province's healthcare system, this represents a slight two-point decrease compared to last year. The remaining third (32%) say they are dissatisfied with the system, with one in ten (10%) saying that they are 'very dissatisfied'.

Furthermore, rates of satisfaction with the healthcare system vary across provinces and regions. On the one hand, satisfaction remains strongest in Ontario, where almost three quarters (74%) say they are satisfied. Quebec has also seen a five-point over last year in terms of satisfaction with the health system (61%). On the other hand, satisfaction in other parts of Canada has fallen compared to last year: British Columbia (66%: -7 points from 2020); Alberta (65%: -6); Saskatchewan/Manitoba (54%: -15); Atlantic Canada (55%: -12).

#### *Areas of Improvement, Discontent, and Skepticism*

Almost all Canadians (90%) agree that there's a need to improve their province's healthcare system (i.e. additional beds, hiring staff, investing in hospital and clinics). Moreover, the proportion who 'completely agree' with this statement (55%) has increased by six points compared to last year, and those aged 35 years or more are the most likely to agree with this sentiment. Elsewhere, seven in ten (71%) believe their healthcare system is too bureaucratic to respond quickly or adequately to the needs of the population, which represents a ten-point increase compared to last year. More specifically, the proportion of those saying they 'completely agree' that the system is too bureaucratic has increased by 6 points. Residents of Quebec stand out as the most likely to agree with this sentiment (85%).

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Over six in ten Canadians (62%) agree (43% somewhat/19% completely) the healthcare system should be more decentralized, where hospitals would be more autonomous and remunerated based on delivered services. Quebecers are the most likely to agree with this statement (76%). While two in ten (19%) disagree with this idea, a similar proportion (19%) say they remain undecided on the matter.

A slight majority (52%) of Canadians agree (35% somewhat/18% completely) that their province's rate of spending on healthcare is unsustainable, while under a quarter (23%) disagree (17% somewhat/6% completely). Again, Quebecers are significantly more likely than those in other provinces and regions to agree with this statement (66%). This view is also likely to become stronger with age, where older age groups tend to agree more (35-54: 72%; 55+: 76%), while younger Canadians are more likely to disagree (21%).

Secondly, Canadians are split when asked on the effects of additional public funds which have been injected in their provincial healthcare systems of the past years. Over a third (34%) believe these investments have improved the system (+2 compared to 2020), while a similar proportion (35%) believe that these funds have had no effect. In fact, two in ten (19%) believe that the investments have had a negative effect (+2 since 2020). Residents of British Columbia (43%) and Ontario (37%) are more likely to say they have seen an improvement while residents of Alberta (24%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (30%), and Quebec (20%) remain more skeptical.

### *Curiosity about Increased Private Healthcare: Swedish and French Models*

Six in ten (58%) Canadians agree (44% somewhat/13% very) that the government should allow patients increased access to healthcare services provided by independent health entrepreneurs. Over 8 in 10 (83%) were not aware that the French and Swedish healthcare models allow private entrepreneurs to manage some public hospitals while fully reimbursing patients for medically required care. When asked to reflect on that model, under six in ten (59%) agree (41% somewhat/19% very) that Canada should emulate these systems, while a quarter (25%) disagree (14% somewhat/11% completely). Those that are familiar with the French/Swedish models are more likely to agree with this statement (75% v. 56% among those unaware).



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### About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between November 22-25, 2021, on behalf of the Montreal Economic Institute. For this survey, a sample of 1,168 Canadian adults aged 18+ years was interviewed. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within  $\pm 3.3$  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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