



# HEALTHCARE IN CANADA 2021

**Montreal Economic Institute**

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Research Report

November 2021



**MEI**

Ideas for a  
More Prosperous  
Society



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# Methodology



These are the findings of an **online Ipsos poll** conducted on behalf of the Montreal Economic Institute.



A sample of **1,168 Canadians** aged 18 years and over was interviewed from **November 22 to 25, 2021**.



**Weighting** was employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects the overall population according to the **latest census information** in terms of age, gender, and region.



The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the results are accurate to within **+/- 3.3 percentage points**, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had all Canadian adults been polled.



**Respondents from Quebec were deliberately oversampled (n=399)** to give more insight into views of respondents from this province. However, this oversample is weighted down when reporting statistics at the national level. Where appropriate, tracking is provided back to a similar study conducted in October 2020.



# SUMMARY

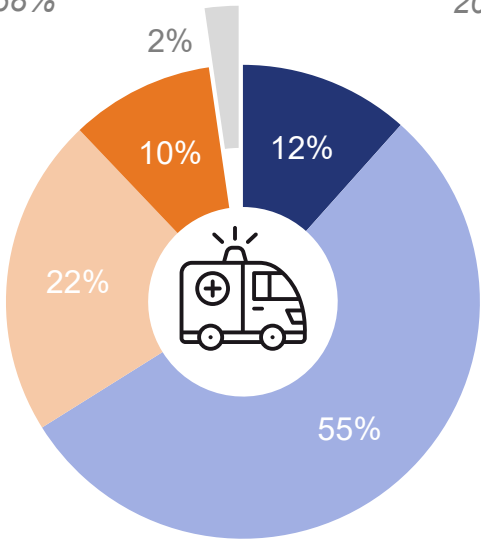
- **Canadians are largely satisfied** (66%) with the health system in place in their province, but there is still room for improvement, as only 12% say they are 'very satisfied' with it. This represents a slight decrease from last year, by 2 points and 4 points, respectively. Nationally, **32% say they are dissatisfied** with their province's health system (+2 points). Most provinces, outside of Ontario and Quebec, have seen falling satisfaction levels compared to last year.
- This ambiguity towards the health system is reflected in **mixed perceptions about the impact of government investment** over the years. More than a third of Canadians (35%) believe these investments have had *no effect* on the healthcare system. Only 34% of Canadians believe the additional amounts of money put in by their provincial government have improved things, a three-point decrease compared to last year. Almost 2 in 10 (19%) even believe that the extra funding has contributed to *worsening* the health care system, a two-point increase from last year.
- A window of opportunity for the private sector? Support for private care has eroded compared to last year, but comparisons to the French and Swedish models do garner interest when Canadians are made aware of them.
  - A majority of Canadians (58%), and 64% of Quebec residents, agree that the government should allow patients **increased access**, on a voluntary basis, to **private care provided by private health entrepreneurs**, provided that medically-required care remains covered by the government. However, this represents five-point and eleven-point decreases respectively. Apart from Albertans, residents of other provinces are less likely to agree compared to last year.
  - More than 8 in 10 Canadians (83%) were unaware that France and Sweden allow private entrepreneurs to **manage public hospitals**. When given some information and asked to reflect on this model, almost 6 in 10 agree (59%) that this model should be implemented in their province. Those familiar with the Swedish/French models are more likely to agree (75% v. 56% among those not aware), as are those who are less satisfied with their province's current health system (65% v. 58% among those satisfied).
- **Accessibility and capacity:** 7 in 10 Canadians (71%) believe that the health system is too bureaucratic, while 52% believe that the rate of spending is unsustainable.
  - 6 in 10 (62%) believe that their province's healthcare system should be decentralised and allow hospitals to be more autonomous and remunerated on the basis of the services they actually deliver.
  - This sentiment is much stronger in Quebec, where three-quarters (76%) agree that healthcare in their province should be more decentralised.

# Satisfaction with Provincial Health System

66% 32%

Satisfied 2020: 68% Dissatisfied 2020: 30%

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know/Refusal



Satisfaction with province's health care system

- Two-thirds (66%) of Canadians say they are satisfied with their province's health system. Compared to last year, this represents a slight drop (-2 points). Only 12% of Canadians say they are 'very satisfied'.
- However, residents in some provinces are more satisfied than others. Almost three-quarters of Ontarians (74%) are satisfied. However, other provinces have fallen in satisfaction compared to last year: BC (-7), AB (-6), SK (-15), ATL (-12); with Quebec being the exception (+5).
- Those aged 35-54 (38%) are more likely to be dissatisfied with their province's health system, when compared to those both younger and older.

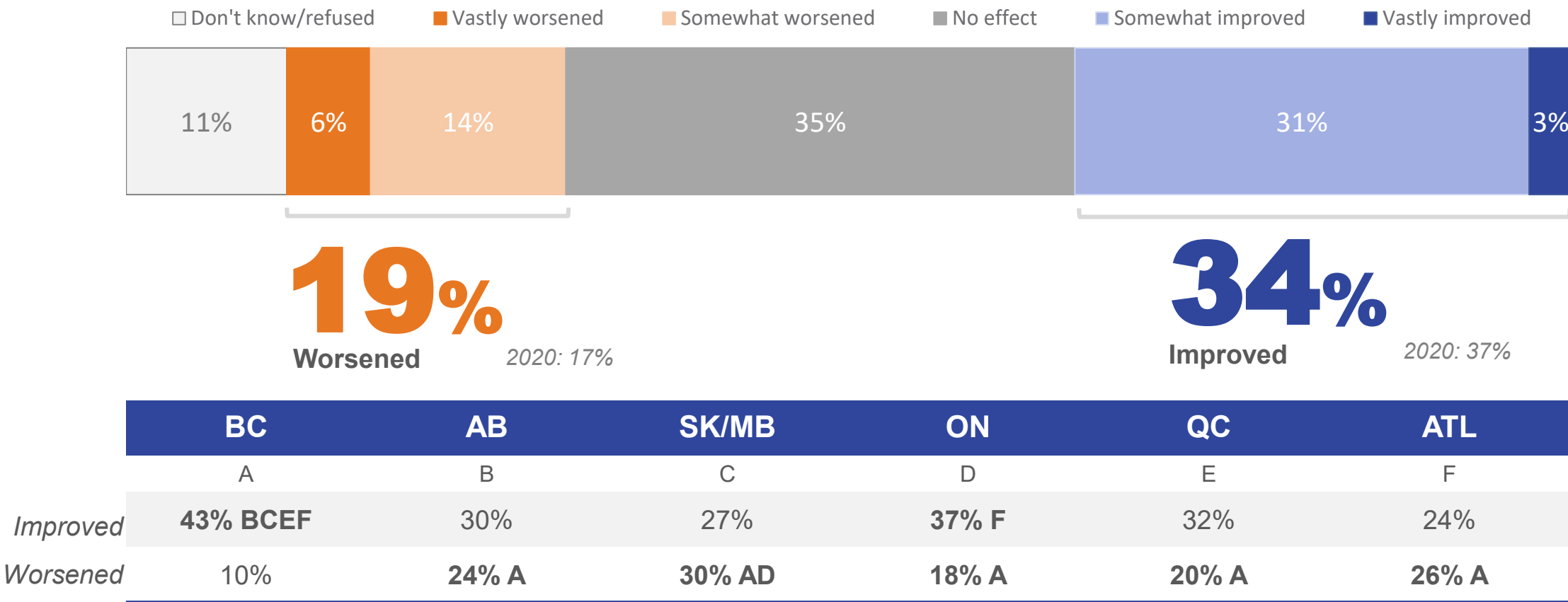
	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Satisfied	66%	65%	54%	74% CEF	61%	55%
Dissatisfied	32%	31%	46% D	24%	37% D	41% D

	18-34	35-54	55+
	A	B	C
Satisfied	66%	60%	71% B
Dissatisfied	30%	38% AC	28%

Q1. In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your province's health care system?  
Base: All respondents (n=1168)

# Investments in the Health System over the Past Decade

- Canadians are split when it comes to whether the additional amounts of money injected over the past decade have improved their province's healthcare system. Just over one third (35%) believe that these investments have had *no effect*. While another third (34%) believe that these funds have been beneficial to the system, this represents a three-point decrease compared to last year (37%). Almost two in ten (19%) believe that these investments have in fact made the system *worse*, a two-point increase from last year. Those in British Columbia (43%) and Ontario (37%) are more likely to say they have seen an improvement, while those in Alberta (24%), the Prairies (30%), and Quebec (20%) are a bit more skeptical.



Q2. In your opinion, have the additional amounts injected into the health care system over the past ten years by the government of your province improved the health care system?  
Base: All respondents (n=1168)



# Access to Independent Health Entrepreneurs

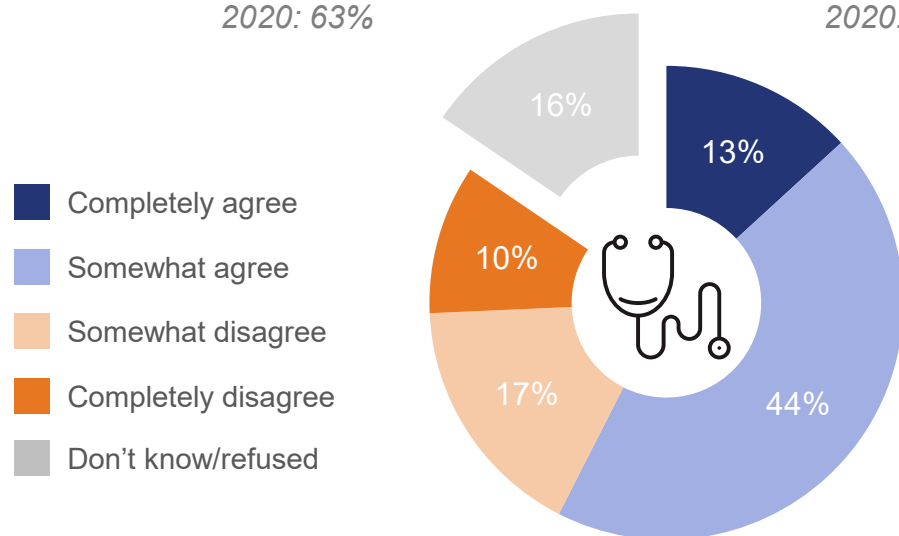
58% 27%

Agree

Disagree

2020: 63%

2020: 23%



- Around six in ten (58%) Canadians agree that the government should allow patients increased access, on a voluntary basis, to private care provided by private health entrepreneurs, provided that medically-required care remains covered by the government, a five-point decrease compared to 2020. Indeed, the proportion of Canadians who say they 'completely agree' (13%) has decreased by eight points.
- Quebec stands out on account of its strong support for private care, where almost two thirds (64%) say they support increased access. With the exception of Alberta, which shows a twelve-point increase compared to 2020, other regions are less likely than last year to show support: BC (-4), SK/MB (-9), ON (-6), QC (-11), and Atlantic Canada (-19).

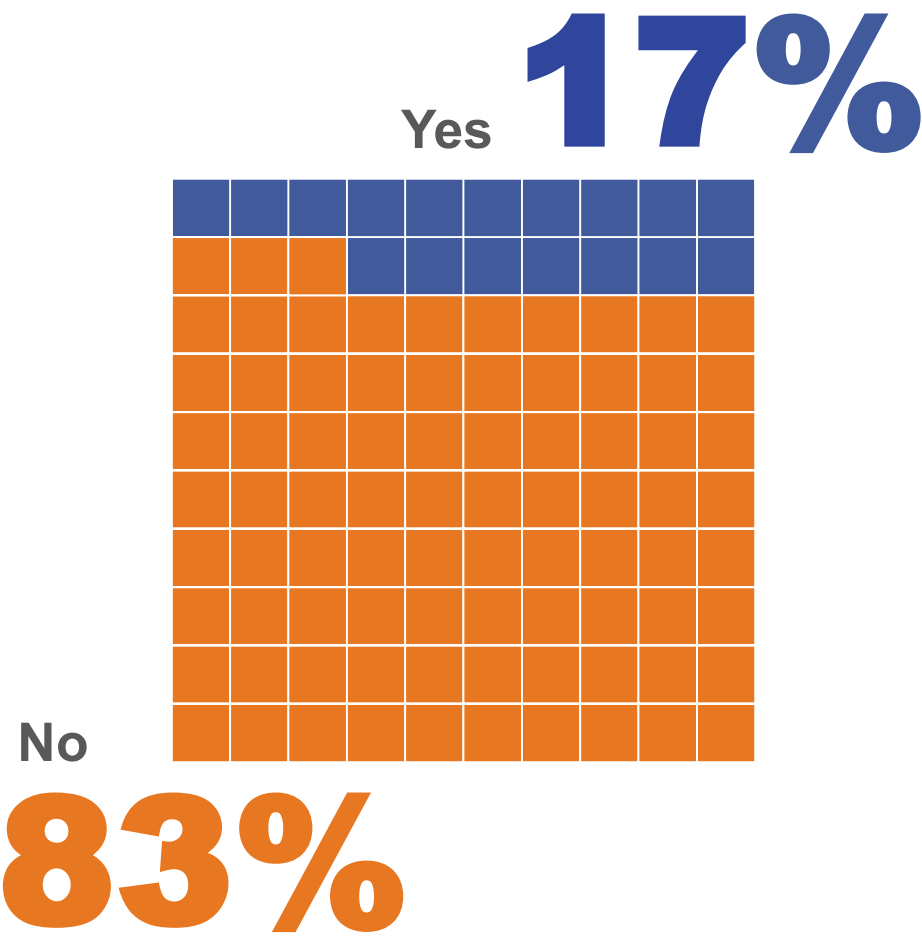
	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Agree	58%	60%	54%	54%	64% DF	51%
Disagree	29%	23%	23%	29%	25%	28%

	18-34	35-54	55+
	A	B	C
Agree	60%	56%	57%
Disagree	24%	28%	28%

## Access to independent health entrepreneurs

Q3. Would you agree or disagree that governments in Canada allow patients increased access to access healthcare services provided by independent health entrepreneurs?  
Base: All respondents (n=1168)

# Awareness of Private Management of Public Hospitals: France and Sweden



- Over 8 in 10 (83%) Canadians are not aware that France and Sweden allow private entrepreneurs to manage some public hospitals, while only 17% are.
- Awareness differs between provinces. British Columbia (88%), the Prairies (91%) and Ontario (84%) are less likely to be aware, while Alberta (25%) and Quebec (20%) are more likely to be aware of the French and Swedish models.
- Gender and generational differences are noticeable. Men are more likely to be aware of these facts (23% vs. 11% among women), while women are more likely to be unaware (89% vs. 77% among men). Those aged between 18-34 are more likely to be aware (21%), while those aged between 35-54 are more likely to be *unaware* (85%).

	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Yes	12%	25% ACD	10%	16%	20% AC	15%
No	88% BE	75%	91% BE	84% B	80%	85%

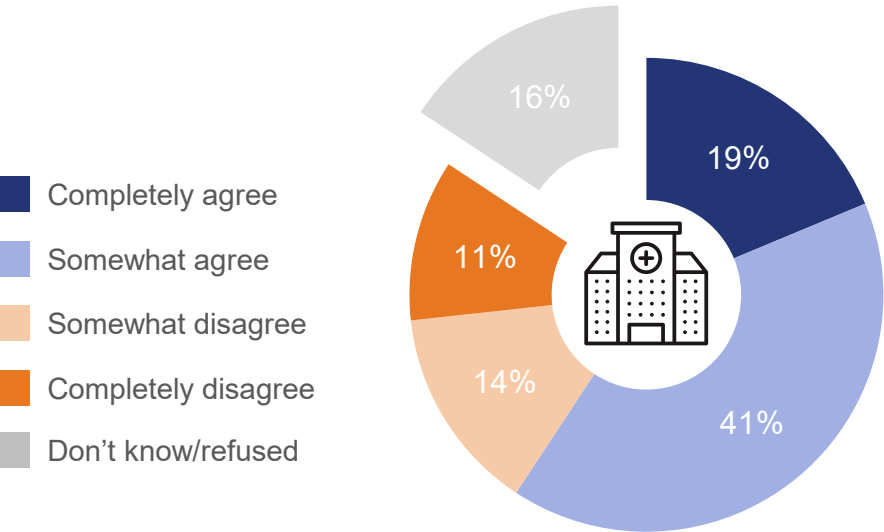
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
	A	B	A	B	C
Yes	23% B	11%	21% B	15%	16%
No	77%	89% A	79%	85% A	84%

Q4. Did you know that France and Sweden allow private entrepreneurs to manage some public hospitals, while still fully reimbursing patients for the medically required care they receive?  
Base: All respondents (n=1168)

# Agreement with Following Swedish/French Model

59% 25%

Agree Disagree



- Completely agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know/refused

Allow private companies to manage public hospitals

- A majority (59%) of Canadians believe that Canada should follow this Swedish/French model and allow private entrepreneurs to manage some public hospitals. This sentiment is higher in Quebec.
- Those familiar with the Swedish/French models are more likely to agree (75% v. 56% among those not aware), as are those who are less satisfied with their province's health system (65% v. 58% among those satisfied).
- There are no statistically significant differences across age or gender when it comes to support for following these healthcare models.
- However, 16% say they don't know.

	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Agree	55%	55%	63%	54%	70% ABD	63%
Disagree	27%	28%	29%	27% E	19%	20%

	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
	A	B	A	B	C
Agree	60%	58%	59%	61%	58%
Disagree	26%	24%	23%	23%	28%

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Canada should follow this 'French or Swedish model' and allow private entrepreneurs to manage some public hospitals, provided that medically required care remains covered and fully reimbursed by the government?  
Base: All respondents (n=1168)





# Need to Improve Health Care System's Capacity

90%

Agree

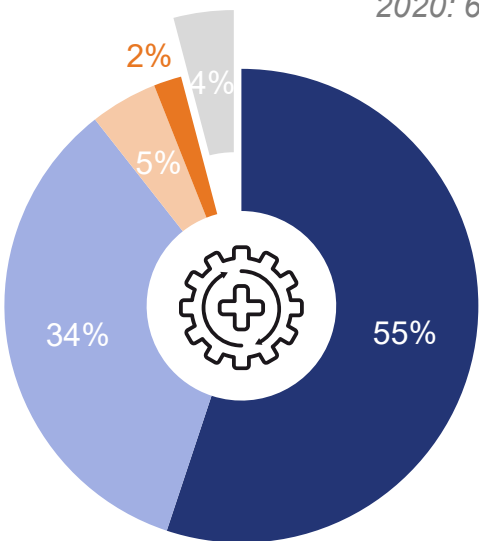
2020: 88%

7%

Disagree

2020: 6%

- Completely agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know/refused



- Almost all Canadians agree that there's a need to improve the capacity of their province's health care system, be it through additional beds, more PPE, hiring staff, or investing in hospitals and clinics.
- Although overall support for improved capacity has only slightly increased (+2) from last year, the proportion of those who 'completely agree' has increased six points.
- Support is high across all ages and genders, but those aged 35 years and over are the most likely to say the health system needs improved capacity. Men are more likely than women to disagree with this sentiment.

	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Agree	88%	88%	92%	89%	91%	90%
Disagree	8%	7%	8%	6%	5%	8%

	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
	A	B	A	B	C
Agree	87%	92% A	83%	90% A	94% AB
Disagree	8% B	5%	11% BC	6%	4%

## Need to improve our health care system's capacity

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that it is necessary to improve our health care system's capacity (beds, personal protective equipment, medical personnel, hospitals and clinics, etc.) to avoid overcrowding during a pandemic or other health emergencies?  
Base: All respondents (n=1168)

# Too Much Bureaucracy?

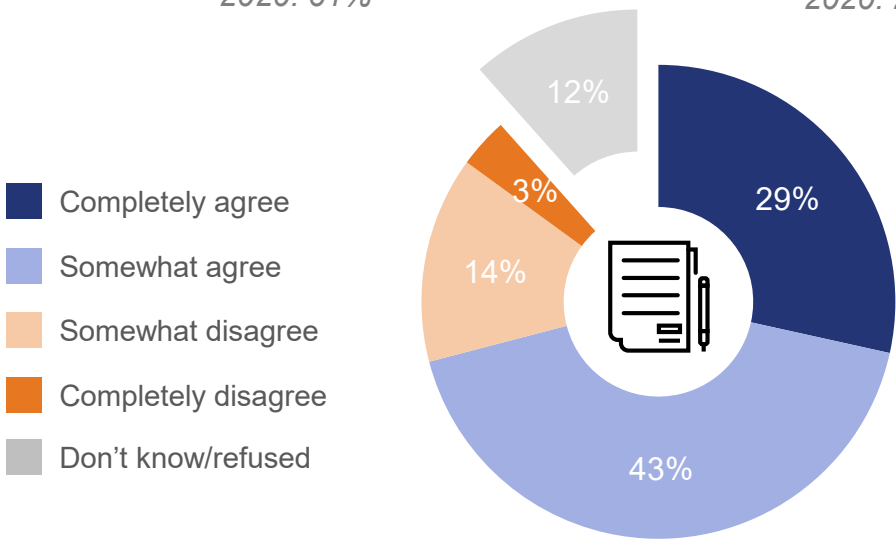
71% 18%

Agree

2020: 61%

Disagree

2020: 24%



My province's health care system is too bureaucratic

- An increase of ten points from last year, 7 out of 10 (71%) Canadians now believe that their province's health system is too bureaucratic to quickly respond to the needs of the population.
- The proportion who 'completely agree' has increased 6 points from last year.
- Quebec residents continue to stand out in terms of their level of agreement with this sentiment. Although last year Albertans were also more likely to agree that their province's healthcare system was too bureaucratic, they have largely fallen in line with most other provinces.
- This opinion gets stronger with age; those aged 35 and over are more likely than those aged 18-34 to think there's too much bureaucracy.

	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Agree	62%	69%	62%	68%	85% ABCDF	65%
Disagree	19% E	24% E	24% E	20% E	6%	22% E

	18-34	35-54	55+
	A	B	C
Agree	63%	72% A	76% A
Disagree	21% C	18%	14%

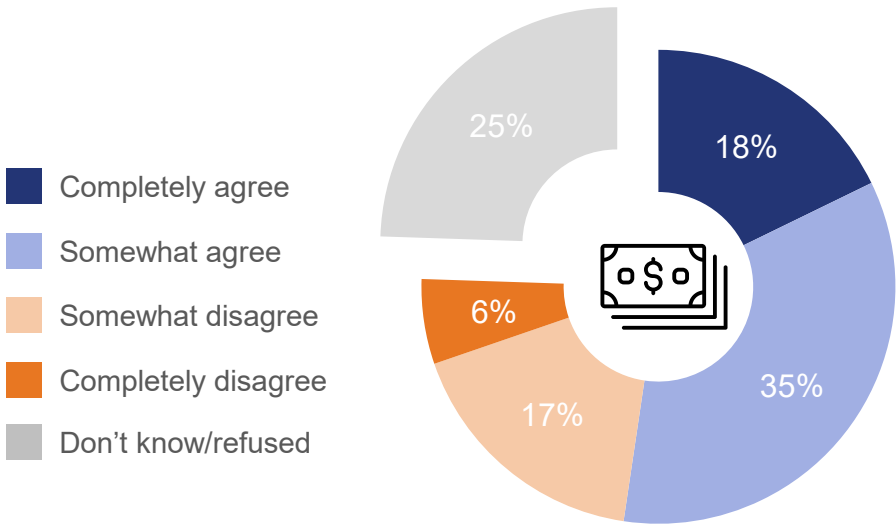
Q7\_1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: My province's healthcare system is too bureaucratic to respond quickly or adequately to the needs of the population.  
Base: All respondents (n=1168)

# Unsustainability of Increased Spending in Healthcare System

52% 23%

Agree

Disagree



- Half of Canadians (52%), believe that the rate of spending increase in their province's public healthcare system is unsustainable.
- Those in Quebec are more likely to think the rate of increase is unsustainable.
- This opinion also gets stronger with age; those aged 35 and over are more likely than those aged 18-34 to think that the rate of spending increase in healthcare is unsustainable.

	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Agree	39%	52% A	58% A	49% A	66% ABDF	49%
Disagree	29% E	26% E	29% E	26% E	14%	21% E

	18-34	35-54	55+
	A	B	C
Agree	45%	56% A	54% A
Disagree	29% BC	19%	22%

## Spending increase in public health care is unsustainable

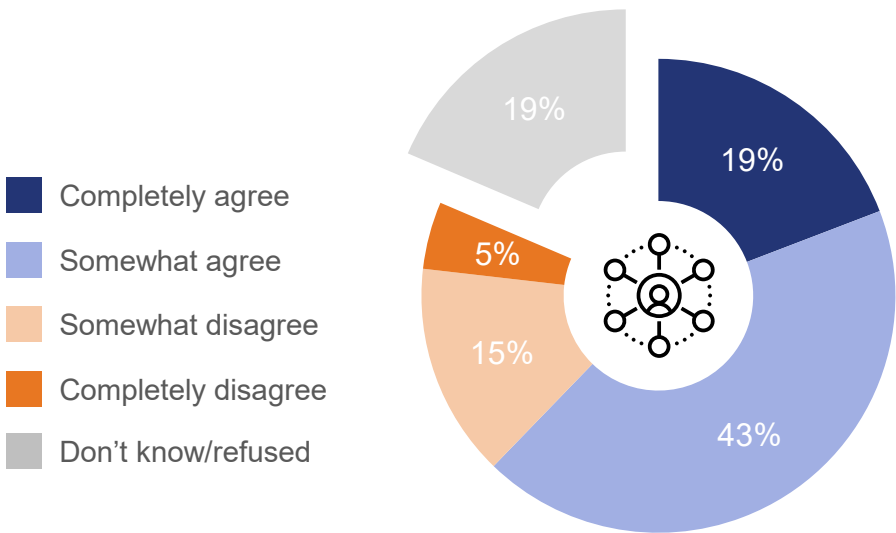
Q7\_2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: The rate of spending increase in my province's public healthcare system is unsustainable  
Base: All respondents (n=1168)

# Hospital Decentralisation

62% 19%

Agree

Disagree



- Six in ten (62%) believe that their province’s healthcare system should be decentralised and allow hospitals to be more autonomous and remunerated on the basis of the services they actually deliver.
- This sentiment is much stronger in Quebec, where three-quarters (76%) agree that healthcare in their province should be more decentralised.
- While two in ten (19%) disagree with this idea to some extent, a comparable proportion (19%) say they don’t know yet.

	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Agree	54%	58%	52%	60%	76% ABCDF	62%
Disagree	26% EF	24% EF	28% EF	20% EF	12%	9%

	18-34	35-54	55+
	A	B	C
Agree	60%	65%	62%
Disagree	20%	17%	21%

My province’s health care system should be decentralized

Q7\_3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: the healthcare system should be more decentralized and allow hospitals to be more autonomous and remunerated on the basis of the services they actually deliver  
Base: All respondents (n=1168)



# Your Ipsos Team

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