



FACTUM

More Money More Accountability: Six in Seven (86%) Canadians Want Increased Federal Investment in Healthcare; But Six in Ten (59%) Want Provinces to Show a Plan for Better Care To Get It

Canadians Intrigued With Increased Role for Private Healthcare. Six in Ten (59%) Support Private Delivery of Publicly Funded Health Services; Similar Proportion (60%) in Favor of Private Healthcare for Those Who Can Afford It.

Toronto, ON, February 6th, 2023 – Nursing strikes, emergency waiting times, mutating viruses: finding solutions to the country's struggling healthcare system has become inescapably critical. Results of a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Global News show that, although six in seven (86%) Canadians believe the healthcare system needs more money from the federal government, six in ten (59%) also say that provinces should show the federal government a plan on how they will deliver better care to get more federal dollars.

Footing the Bill – But Not With a Blank Cheque

Facing seemingly intractable problems, most Canadians believe the healthcare system needs an overhaul. Indeed, the vast majority (85%) believe drastic changes are needed to the healthcare system to better meet the needs of people in their communities – which is higher among older Canadians (87%: 35-54; 90%: 55+ vs. 78%: 18-34). In fact, only a minority of Canadians (42%) are confident that if they went to the emergency room, they would be seen in a timely manner, which is higher among men (47% vs. 38% for women). Moreover, only a minority (46%) are confident that their provincial government will be able to reduce the wait times that are currently being experienced in hospital emergency rooms (the lack of significant variation between subgroups suggests an all-around lackluster outlook).

Part of this Gordian knot is centered around the back and forth between federal and provincial governments – mainly on the subject of funds. On the question of investments, Canadians are unequivocal: six in seven (86%) believe the healthcare system needs more money from the federal government, which is even higher among older Canadians (88%: 35-54; 92%: 55+ vs. 77%: 18-34). However, Canadians appear unwilling to simply throw money at the problem and are increasingly demanding concrete strategies and accountability. Faced with the choice, six in ten (59%) believe that provinces should show the federal government a plan on how they will deliver better care to get more federal dollars, whereas 41% believe provinces should decide how to spend the needed healthcare funds without any conditions.

In Quebec, residents are evenly split: 51% say federal funds should have no string attached, while 49% believe the province should show the feds a plan on how they will deliver better care in order to receive the money.



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Canadians believe that their provincial governments can free up more dollars to allocate towards healthcare by taking a closer look at their other program spending. Indeed, three quarters (73%) of Canadians believe that the healthcare system needs more money and it should come from provincial governments cutting spending elsewhere; an opinion more widely held among women (77% vs. 68% for men).

Private versus public healthcare: a piece of the puzzle?

In light of the need for increased investments, Canadians appear intrigued with an increased role for private healthcare. For instance, almost six in ten (59%) would support the private delivery of publicly funded health services and a similar proportion (60%) is in favor of private healthcare for those who are able to afford it. However, the right policy formula remains elusive as only a minority (48%) believe that the needed funds should come from the introduction of new user fees or private health services.

Interestingly, Quebecers appear more open to exploring an increased role of the private sector compared to other provinces. Indeed, they are more likely to support private healthcare for those who can afford it (75%: +15 points compared to the national average). Quebecers are also more likely to believe the influx of needed healthcare investments should come through the introduction of new user fees or private health services (62%: +14 pts compared to the national average).

That being said, most Canadians haven't given up on their public healthcare system, but many are willing to work around it. One third (32%) would go to the United States and personally pay for timely routine healthcare if they felt they needed it, while a similar proportion (29%) would do the same for urgent or emergency care. However, in both cases, Canadians aged between 18 and 34 are more likely to say they would pursue these alternatives - respectively 47% for routine healthcare (vs. 32%: 35-54; 20%: 55+) and 45% for emergency care (vs. 28%: 35-54; 17%: 55+).

As Canadians desire improved service delivery, many are hopeful of the impact of new technologies as eight in ten (78%) are in favour of expanding virtual care for services provided by a family doctor.



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between January 19 and 23, 2023, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,001 Canadians aged 18+ 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 ± 3.5 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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