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## NATIONAL ANGUS REID GROUP POLL

### AFTERMATH OF THE KREVER REPORT

- **Almost Nine in Ten (87%) Believe there is a Moral Obligation to Provide Compensation to Those Who Contracted Hepatitis "C" -**
  - **Strong Majority (95%) Say Both Levels of Government Should Make Identifying and Treating Those Who Have Been Infected a Priority, Regardless of Cost -**
  - **95% Believe Health Officials Should Make it a Priority to Find and Notify Those Who May Have Been Infected -**
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This Canada-wide poll was conducted by telephone between December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1997 and January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1998 among a representative cross-section of 1,500 adult Canadians.

The data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's age composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,500, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within the various sub-groupings of the survey population.

## **AFTERMATH OF THE KREVER REPORT**

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- Strong Majority (95%) Say Both Levels of Government Should Make Identifying and Treating Those Who Have Been Infected a Priority, Regardless of Cost -**
- 95% Believe Health Officials Should Make it a Priority to Find and Notify Those Who May Have Been Infected -**

Almost nine in ten Canadians (87%) believe that the federal and provincial governments have a moral obligation to compensate people who contracted Hepatitis “C” through the blood system. More than nine in ten (95%) agree (81% strongly, 14% somewhat) that even though it may be costly, people who received blood or blood products between 1979 and 1993 should be identified and informed that they may have become infected with Hepatitis “C” and that health officials should make it a priority to find and notify those who may have been infected.

These are some of the findings of a National Angus Reid Group Poll conducted by telephone between December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1997 and January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1998 among a representative cross-section of 1,500 adult Canadians. A sample of this size is said to have an associated margin of error of  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty.

Other survey findings include:

- A majority of Canadians (59%) are aware of Justice Krever’s final report on The Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System.
- 55% believe that people become infected with Hepatitis “C” as a result of blood transfusions.
- More than three quarters of Canadians (77%) believe that Hepatitis “C” can be fatal.

## **ATTITUDES TOWARD COMPENSATION FOR THOSE WHO MAY HAVE BEEN INFECTED**

### ***Almost Nine in Ten (87%) Believe there is a Moral Obligation to Provide Compensation***

Just under nine in ten (87%) believe that the federal and provincial governments have a moral obligation to compensate people who contacted Hepatitis “C” through the blood system. In fact, six in ten (59%) *strongly agree* that such an obligation exists, while a further three in ten (28%) *somewhat agree*. Only one in ten (11%) disagree that there is a moral obligation to provide compensation.

### ***Two Thirds (66%) Believe Federal and Provincial Governments Should Share Responsibility for Compensation***

Two thirds (66%) believe that both the individual provincial governments and the federal government should share responsibility for compensating (providing financial assistance) those people who got Hepatitis “C” through the blood system between 1979 and 1993. One quarter (26%) feels responsibility lies solely on the shoulders of the federal government, while only three percent (3%) believe the provincial governments should have primary responsibility.

### ***Strong Majority (73%) Say it Would be Unfair Not to Provide Compensation***

Almost three quarters (73%) believe (49% strongly, 24% somewhat) that it is not fair that people who got HIV or AIDS from the blood system receive compensation while those people who were infected with Hepatitis “C” from the blood system do not receive compensation. The remaining one quarter (24%) disagree.

### ***Majority (59%) Say Money Should Go Toward Prevention Rather than Paying for the Past***

Three in five (59%) believe (34% strongly, 25% somewhat) that money should go toward educating Canadians and preventing the blood scandal from happening again rather than compensating for past mistakes. Fewer than two in five disagree with this notion (22% somewhat, 16% strongly).

### ***Canadians Divided on Whether or Not Compensation Demands are Unrealistic***

Canadians are divided on whether or not the demands for compensation are unrealistic. Half (50%) feel (19% strongly, 31% somewhat) the demands *are* unrealistic and that too many people would get money and the health care system cannot afford it. However, virtually the same proportion (45%) disagree (22% somewhat, 23% strongly). Respondents are more likely to *strongly disagree* (23%) that the demands are unrealistic than they are to *strongly agree* (19%) that compensation will result in a financial strain on the health system.

## **ATTITUDES TOWARD HEPATITIS “C” : EDUCATION , INFORMATION AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY**

### ***Strong Majority Say Both Levels of Government Should Make Identifying and Treating Those Who Have Been Infected a Priority, Regardless of Cost***

More than nine in ten (95%) agree (81% strongly, 14% somewhat) that even though it may be costly, people who received blood or blood products between 1979 and 1993 should be identified

and informed that they may have become infected with Hepatitis “C”. Furthermore, as many respondents (95%) feel (73% strongly, 22% somewhat) that since early identification of Hepatitis “C” will save lives, improve the overall health of those infected and reduce costs to the health system, it should be a priority for both levels of government.

### ***95% Cite Moral Obligation to Provide Treatment***

More than nine in ten (95%) believe (79% strongly, 16% somewhat) that the federal and provincial governments have a moral obligation to provide treatments to people who contacted Hepatitis “C” through the blood system. Only five percent disagree.

### ***Nine in Ten (91%) Believe Hepatitis “C” Should be Considered a High Priority: Education is Important.***

Nine in ten (91%) believe (58% strongly, 32% somewhat) that Hepatitis “C” is an important health issues which should be considered a high priority. Only seven percent disagree.

More than nine in ten (94%) agree (69% strongly, 25% somewhat) that it is important for governments to do more to educate Canadians about Hepatitis “C”. Only five percent disagree.

## **GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY**

### ***95% Believe Health Officials Should Make it a Priority to Find and Notify Those Who May Have Been Infected***

Four out of five (79%) think health officials should make it a high priority to find and notify those people who may have been infected with Hepatitis “C” through the blood system between 1986 and 1990. Another one in six (16%) feel it should be somewhat of a priority. Only four percent feel that such actions should be not really a priority (2%) or not at all a priority (2%).

### ***What is the Most Effective Way of Informing People Who May Have Been Infected?***

Given a series of five options, nine in ten (91%) indicate that the most effective way of informing people that they may have been infected with Hepatitis “C” through the blood system is by providing “information that they may have received a blood transfusion and that compensation and treatment it available to them if they have Hepatitis “C”” (65% very effective, 26% somewhat effective).

All other options are also considered effective by at least four out of five respondents. The actual results are as follows:

- Information that they may have received a blood transfusion and how to go about getting tested: 87% (50% very, 37% somewhat)
- Information that they may have received a blood transfusion and that treatment is available to them if they have Hepatitis “C”: 87% (49% very, 38% somewhat)
- Information that they may have received a blood transfusion and that compensation is available to them if they have Hepatitis “C”: 83% (54% very, 29% somewhat)
- Information that they may have received a blood transfusion and a public service announcement about Hepatitis “C” and the importance of getting tested if they have received a transfusion: 81% (43% very, 38% somewhat)

## **PUBLIC PERCEPTION REGARDING HEPATITIS “C”**

### ***Majority (55%) Believe Blood Transfusions Cause Hepatitis “C”***

More than half (55%) believe that people become infected with Hepatitis “C” as a result of blood transfusions. Sexual transmission (22%), intravenous drug use (20%), and the exchange of bodily fluids (14%) are also cited as leading causes. Significantly fewer respondents believe the disease is transmitted by using an infected person’s utensils (2%) or by shaking hands (1%).

### ***Majority (55%) Don’t Know Symptoms of Hepatitis “C”***

More than half (55%) of survey respondents are unable to identify any symptoms of Hepatitis “C”. Of the symptoms that were identified, most common are fatigue (12%), jaundice (12%), enlarged liver (10%) and fever (7%). Less frequently cited symptoms include weakness (6%), nausea (5%), weight loss (3%), muscle aches (1%), and poor appetite (1%).

### ***More than Three Quarters (77%) Believe Hepatitis “C” Can Be Fatal***

Two in five (40%) believe that Hepatitis “C” is fatal for approximately twenty percent of those who get it. One in four (25%) believe it is fatal for about eighty percent of those infected, and a further one in eight (12%) believe Hepatitis “C” is always fatal. Only twelve percent think Hepatitis “C” is rarely fatal.

### ***Fewer than Two in Five (38%) Believe that Majority of Hepatitis “C” Sufferers Respond to Treatment Successfully***

Based on what they have heard or read, only one in six (16%) respondents believe that more than 90 percent of those who get Hepatitis “C” respond to treatment successfully. Another one in five (22%) believe that around 50 percent of those who get Hepatitis “C” respond effectively. One in seven (15%) think that only around 25 percent respond successfully to treatment, while one in

ten (10%) feel that successful treatment only occurs about ten percent of time. Furthermore, one in six (16%) believe that there is no effective treatment for Hepatitis “C”.

## **AWARENESS OF KREVER REPORT**

### ***Three in Five (59%) Aware of Krever Report***

Awareness of Justice Krever’s final report on The Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada is highest among university graduates (75%), Canadians aged 55 and older (71%) and men (62%, compared to 55% of women). Younger respondents (aged 18 to 34) are significantly less likely than all other demographic categories to have heard or read of the report (40%).

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