

# CANADIANS AND NURSING ISSUES

***Nine in Ten (89%) Canadians Say There Is a Nursing Shortage in Canada***

***Majority Prefer Increasing Number of Nurses Over New Healthcare Facilities, Aid to Businesses, Tax Cuts or New Healthcare Equipment***

***Increasing Hospitals' Hiring Budgets for Nurses Chosen Among a List of Six Options Tested as Most Effective Method to Attract and Retain Nurses***



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**Toronto, ON** – A new poll conducted by Ipsos-Reid on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions shows that nine in ten Canadians (89%) say that in their opinion there is a nursing shortage in this country. When asked to make a number of tradeoffs between increasing the number of nurses and other government priorities, three-quarters (75%) of Canadians chose increasing the number of nurses over building new healthcare facilities (23%) and the same number (75%) chose increasing the number of nurses over providing aid to businesses in the form of direct aid or tax breaks (23%). Meanwhile, a full two-thirds (67%) would choose increasing the number of nurses over providing a tax cut (31%). Given a list of six options to attract and retain nurses, thereby solving the forecasted shortage, the largest number of Canadians (92%) say "increasing hospitals' hiring budget" would be an effective option.



*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions between May 15<sup>th</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1000 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual adult Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.*

## ***Nine in Ten (89%) Canadians Say There is a Nursing Shortage in Canada***

Canadians (89%) overwhelmingly say that there is a nursing shortage in this country. In fact, Canadians feel strongly about this with 69 percent who say "yes, definitely", while another one in five (20%) say "yes, somewhat". Only one in ten (10%) say there is not a nursing shortage including 3 percent who say "no, not at all" and another 7 percent who say "no, not really".

- Women (74%) are more likely than men (63%) to say that there is "definitely" a nursing shortage.
- On the heels of recently negotiated settlements with Alberta nurses, Albertans (42%) are less likely than residents of other provinces to say that there is "definitely" a nursing shortage — but an additional 38% indicate that there is "somewhat" of a nursing shortage.

- Canadians 35 years or older (72%) are more likely than those under 35 (62%) to say that there is "definitely" a nursing shortage.

### ***Majority Prefer Increasing Number of Nurses Over New Healthcare Facilities, Aid to Businesses, Tax Cuts or New Healthcare Equipment***

When Canadians are asked to make a number of tradeoffs between increasing the number of nurses and other government priorities, they consistently choose increasing the number of nurses. The two top tradeoffs Canadians would make to increase the number of nurses (75% in both cases) are: "building new healthcare facilities" (23%) and "providing aid to businesses in the form of direct aid or tax breaks" (23%). Meanwhile, two-thirds (67%) of Canadians would rather increase the number of nurses versus "providing a tax cut" (31%) and a majority (52%) would rather increase the number of nurses versus "providing new healthcare equipment" (45%).

- Ontarians are the most likely to prefer increasing the number of nurses (75%) versus providing a tax cut (23%) while Albertans are the least likely to make this tradeoff (48% versus 45%).

### ***Increasing Hospitals' Hiring Budgets for Nurses Chosen Among a List of Six Options Tested as Most Effective Method to Attract and Retain Nurses***

Given a number of possible options to attract and retain nurses, thereby reducing the shortage, Canadians are most likely to say that "increasing hospitals' hiring budgets" (92%) would be an effective option. This includes a majority (57%) who say that this option would be "very effective" and a third (35%) who say it would be "somewhat effective" in attracting



and retaining nurses. In second place, at 89 percent, is "the Federal government increases the amount of money it transfers to the provinces for healthcare" (50% "very effective", 38% "somewhat effective") and in third place is "governments increase the salaries paid to nurses" (87%). Although Canadians are less likely to say the remaining three options are as effective as the first three, each option is still considered effective by at least a majority of Canadians. The options are: "the Federal government uses a portion of employment insurance monies for nursing education" (72%), "the government mandate the maximum number of patients per nurse" (69%), and "the government end the use of forced overtime for nurses" (56%).

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