

THE AVENTIS HEALTHCARE SURVEY

*A Look At Diabetes, the Healthcare System, Benefits Plans,
Eldercare and Workplace Stress Among Canadian Employees*



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THE AVENTIS HEALTHCARE SURVEY

A Look At Diabetes, the Healthcare System, Benefits Plans, Eldercare and Workplace Stress Among Canadian Employees

Montreal, QUEBEC – The 5th Annual Aventis Healthcare Survey conducted by Ipsos-Reid on behalf of Aventis Pharma finds that Canadians who have health benefits through their employer are fairly knowledgeable about a list of facts related to diabetes. These “facts” were designed in partnership with the Canadian Diabetes Association.

Nevertheless, more than one third (36%) do not realize that diabetes is “reaching epidemic proportions”. Close to one third (31%) of survey respondents were unaware that heart disease is a leading complication of diabetes. Roughly the same proportion didn’t know that many diabetics have high blood pressure (34%) and incorrectly believe eating sugar can lead to diabetes (34%).

The survey also indicates that more than half (55%) of primary employee health benefit holders anticipate a worsening in their provincial healthcare services over the next few years. Those who believed the healthcare system will worsen cited staff shortages (35%), delays/waiting lists (32%), and access to medical care/facilities (25%) as the top reasons for their perception that the public healthcare system will worsen.

The belief in the importance of the drug component of the health benefit plan is nearly unanimous (94%) followed closely by the dental (91%) portion of their health benefits plan. In addition, fifty-seven per cent indicate they would be willing to pay higher premiums to



maintain their current level of coverage – an increase of seven points over 1999 – if their employer was unwilling or unable to pay the associated increases.

Over half of the respondents (53%) also indicated they would be willing to pay higher premiums if their plan covered elderly family members. In fact, one-third (32%) of respondents indicate they are currently personally responsible for taking care of elderly family members. On average, these Canadians spend over 23 hours each month on eldercare. The survey also revealed that one in five Canadians (17%) with a health benefit plan expect to take more time off work to care for elderly family members within the next two years.

Finally, half (51%) of respondents agree that they experience a great deal of stress in the workplace. And, more than one third (35%) say they find it increasingly difficult to balance their homelife responsibilities with work.

These are the findings of The Aventis Healthcare Survey (2002) conducted by Ipsos-Reid on behalf of Aventis Pharma. Interviews were conducted between January 7th and January 19th 2002. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,500 adult Canadians who are the primary employer-sponsored health benefits plan holder. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population of primary employer-sponsored health benefits plan holders 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 population according to the 1996 Census data.



More Than One Third (36%) Do Not Realize That Diabetes Is Reaching Epidemic Proportions

In general, Canadians who have health benefits through their employer are fairly knowledgeable about a list of facts related to diabetes, designed in partnership with the Canadian Diabetes Association.

- Nevertheless, more than one third (36%) do not realize that diabetes is reaching epidemic proportions.
- Close to one third (31%) of survey respondents were unaware that heart disease is a leading complication of diabetes.
- Also, one in three (34%) respondents did not know that many diabetics have high blood pressure, and incorrectly believed that eating sugar can lead to diabetes (34%).
- Furthermore, one in five (20%) were unaware that diabetes is a major cause of adult blindness and erectile dysfunction.
- Even though diabetes is both a chronic and incurable disease, one in six (16%) respondents believed insulin was a cure.
- Moreover, 28% of survey respondents did not know that being over 45 years of age is a risk factor for the disease.

Nearly two thirds of respondents indicated they are interested in receiving information about diabetes (63% - virtually unchanged since 1997/98 fielding).

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Over Half (55%) Say the Healthcare System Will Get Worse

When asked about the future of their provincial healthcare system, over half (55%) of health benefit plan members anticipate a deterioration in their provincial healthcare services over the next few years, compared to only one in six respondents (16%) who say it will improve in the same time period. Those who believed the healthcare system will worsen cited staff shortages (35%), delays/waiting lists (32%), and access to medical care/facilities (25%) as the top reasons for their pessimism.

Drug (94%) and Dental (91%) are Most Important Components of Health Benefits Plans

While Higher Premiums (57%) Are Chosen Over User Fees (27%) or a Reduction In Benefits (13%)

The belief in the importance of the drug component of the health benefit plan is nearly unanimous (94%) followed closely by the dental (91%) portion of their health benefits plan.

Fifty-seven per cent indicate they would be willing to pay higher premiums to maintain their current level of coverage – an increase of seven points over 1999 – if their employer was unwilling or unable to pay the associated increases. Whereas, 27% (down 4 points since 1999) would rather pay a higher portion of the cost when they actually use medical services. Only 13% would opt to reduce their benefits and pay the same premium.

Eldercare and It's Impact on the Workplace

Over half of the respondents (53%) indicated they would be willing to pay higher premiums if their plan covered elderly family members. One-third (32%) of respondents indicate they



are currently personally responsible for taking care of elderly family members, which includes tasks such as driving to doctors' appointments and making arrangements for medical services. On average, these Canadians spend over 23 hours each month on eldercare. The survey also revealed that one in five Canadians (17%) with a health benefit plan expect to take more time off work to care for elderly family members within the next two years.

Half (51%) Of Respondents Experience A Great Deal Of Workplace Stress

Finally, half (51%) of respondents agree that they experience a great deal of stress in the workplace. More than one third (35%) say they find it increasingly difficult to balance their homelife responsibilities with work.

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