

CANADIANS AND SUSTAINABILITY: A REPORT CARD



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Toronto, ON – An Ipsos-Reid study conducted on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has found that the majority of Canadians continue to assign the overall quality of the healthcare system a fairly positive rating. Six in ten (59%) Canadians give the healthcare system a B grade or better in terms of overall quality.

The vast majority of Canadians (90%) agree that “the Government of Canada can afford to put more money into the healthcare system” and eight in ten (78%) agree that their “provincial government can afford to put more money into the healthcare system.”

Seven in ten (72%) Canadians say that the statement “the federal government is not paying its fair share and should increase the funding it provides to the provinces and territories for health care” comes closest to their own point of view.

Two-thirds (67%) of Canadians say that the statement “the federal government should increase the amount of federal funds for healthcare with conditions that would see more monitoring of how the healthcare system works and make the healthcare system more accountable” is closest to their own point of view.

A majority (83%) of Canadians agree that “a fixed portion of the Goods and Services Tax should be transferred from the federal government to the provinces to ensure long term funding of our health system.”

Virtually all (97%) Canadians agree that “any discussion about making the healthcare system more sustainable also needs to guarantee timely access for essential health services.”

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As outlined in the pages that follow, majorities give an A or B to the sustainability of Canada's emergency services, education system, and water and sewer system but less than half of Canadians give an A or a B to the sustainability of Canada's healthcare system, the Canada Pension Plan/Quebec Pension Plan and Canada's roads and highways.

Finally, two-thirds (65%) of Canadians give healthcare providers and their efforts to adopt innovative and more efficient practices an A or a B for their contributions to sustaining the healthcare system.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Canadian Medical Association poll conducted from July 9th to July 12th, 2004. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1,057 adult Canadians were interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 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 weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.

Overall, the Healthcare System Receives a B Rating

Canadians continue to assign the overall quality of the healthcare system a fairly positive rating. Six in ten (59%) Canadians give the healthcare system a B grade or better in terms of overall quality; two in ten (18%) Canadians give an A rating and four in ten (41%) give a B rating. However, 30% of Canadians give the healthcare system a C and 11% give it an F.



Funding the Healthcare System

Thinking about whether the federal and provincial governments can afford to spend more on healthcare, the vast majority of Canadians (90%) agree that “the Government of Canada can afford to put more money into the healthcare system” with just 9% who disagree. Eight in ten (78%) agree that their “provincial government can afford to put more money into the healthcare system,” while 21% disagree.

After being told that in the past few years the provincial and territorial premiers have been calling on the federal government to provide more money for healthcare. Seven in ten (72%) Canadians say that the statement “the federal government is not paying its fair share and should increase the funding it provides to the provinces and territories for health care” comes closest to their own point of view, while one-quarter (24%) say the statement “the provinces and territories already receive sufficient federal funding and that it is simply a question of the premiers spending priorities” comes closest to their own point of view.

Asked which of another set of statements about healthcare funding is closest to their own opinion, two-thirds (67%) of Canadians say that the “federal government should increase the amount of federal funds for healthcare with conditions that would see more monitoring of how the healthcare system works and make the healthcare system more accountable” is closest to their own point of view. One-third (32%) say that statement “the federal government should increase the amount of federal funds for healthcare without any conditions and let the provinces administer their healthcare systems as they see fit” is closest to their opinion.



A majority (83%) of Canadians agree that “a fixed portion of the Goods and Services Tax should be transferred from the federal government to the provinces to ensure long term funding of our health system.” Just one in six (16%) Canadians disagree with this statement.

Rating of Sustainability of Public Services

Canadians were asked to think about the future and the sustainability of Canada’s public systems in terms of whether or not these systems will be available to the next generation of Canadians with the same level and quality of service as they are today. For each system Canadians were asked to assign a letter grade.

Majorities give an A or B to the sustainability of Canada’s emergency services, education system, and water and sewer system.

- 33% of Canadians give an A to the sustainability of Canada’s emergency services like fire departments and ambulances, 50% gave a B, 15% a C, and 2% an F.
- 15% of Canadians give an A to the sustainability of Canada’s education system, 45% a B, 33% a C, and 6% an F.
- 17% of Canadians give an A to the sustainability of Canada’s water and sewer systems, 41% a B, 31% a C, and 8% an F.



Less than half of Canadians give an A or a B to the sustainability of Canada's healthcare system, the Canada Pension Plan/Quebec Pension Plan and Canada's roads and highways.

- 11% of Canadians give an A to the sustainability of Canada's healthcare system, 34% a B, 40% a C, and 15% an F.
- 15% of Canadians give an A to the sustainability of the Canada Pension Plan/Quebec Pension Plan, 30% a B, 35% a C, and 17% an F.
- 10% of Canadians give an A to the sustainability of Canada's roads and highways, 35% a C, 37% a C, and 17% an F.

Two-thirds Give Healthcare Providers an A or B for their Contributions to Sustaining the Healthcare System

Canadians were asked to think about various groups' contributions over the past couple of years towards making the healthcare system more sustainable and then asked to assign a letter grade to each group.

- 7% of Canadians give an A to all governments for working together to make the system more accountable to Canadians, 27% a B, 37% a C, and 28% an F.
- 6% of Canadians give an A to the federal governments for providing sufficient funding for the system, 26% give a B, 38% a C, and 29% an F.



- 8% of Canadians give an A to their provincial government for providing sufficient funding to the system, 30% a B, 37% a C, and 22% an F.
- 8% of Canadians give an A to individuals Canadians and their efforts to improve their personal health and reduce demands on the system, 41% give a B, 39% a C, and 11% an F.
- 16% of Canadians give an A to healthcare providers and their efforts to adopt innovative and more efficient practices, 49% give a B, 27% a C, and 7% an F.
- 12% of Canadians give an A to hospitals and their efforts to reduce waste and inefficiencies, 40% give a B, 33% a C, and 13% an F.

The vast majority (97%) of Canadians agree that “any discussion about making the healthcare system more sustainable also needs to guarantee timely access for essential health services.” Just 2% of Canadians disagree with this statement.

Three in ten (29%) Canadians agree that “the current Medicare system covers too much and we should cut it back to only essential services than can be delivered within current budgets.” A majority of seven in ten (69%) Canadians disagree with this statement.



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