

# CANADIANS REACT TO SUPREME COURT HEALTHCARE RULING

*Majorities Feel Decision Paves Way To Two-Tiered System (64%) And Their Province Should Use Notwithstanding Clause To Ban Private Insurance And Protect Public System (57%)*

*But They Are Split Over Whether Decision Will Lead To American-Style Healthcare (50% Agree/47% Disagree)*

*Majority (70%) Feel They Should Be Able To Buy Private Services If They Want To And Most Think This Ruling Will Lead To Shorter Wait Lists (60%) And Service Improvements (54%)*



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**Toronto, ON** – In the wake of the Supreme Court's ruling on private healthcare in Quebec, Ipsos-Reid fielded a survey among 1000 Canadians nationally from June 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 2005 that sought to gauge the nation's reaction to this well-publicized judgment. The survey, provided exclusively to CanWest/Global, reveals that Canadians have mixed feelings about these events and their possible effect on the future of Medicare in Canada.

As an introduction to the topic Ipsos-Reid asked respondents to reflect upon last week's decision by the Supreme Court of Canada to strike down the ban on private medical insurance being used to pay for basic services offered by the public healthcare system. They were told that while this ruling only applies to Quebec, it would likely apply to all provinces in the near future. With these considerations in mind they were asked to consider a series of statements about the potential impacts of the ruling.

A majority (64%) think that this ruling "will lead to two-tiered healthcare in Canada – one for the rich and one for the poor", and 57% would like their "province to use the Notwithstanding Clause to ban private insurance and protect public healthcare". Most (57%)



believe “doctors and nurses will be leaving the public system to work in a new private system, which will cause shortages in the public system”.

But Canadians are split when it comes to whether or not they think the court’s ruling will lead to American-style healthcare in Canada – half think it will (50%), the other half does not (47%).

In fact, seven in ten (70%) agree they should be able to buy services from a private healthcare provider if they want to – 37% strongly feel this way, and more than half of Canadians see two potential positive outcomes as a result of this ruling:

- 1) 60% percent think it will lead to shorter waiting lists, and
- 2) 54% think it will lead to improvements in the quality and availability of the healthcare services that their family receives.

When asked which Federal party leader they believe would do the best job of dealing with this new challenge to the future of our healthcare system – Paul Martin or Stephen Harper? Four in ten (41%) chose Paul Martin and 30% chose Stephen Harper, a further 22% chose “neither” of these two leaders.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll provided exclusively to CanWest/Global and fielded from June 14<sup>th</sup> to June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1000 adult Canadians were interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the aggregate 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 each sub-grouping 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.*



## ***Sixty-Four Percent Think Ruling Will Lead To Two-Tiered Healthcare...***

Six in ten (64%) agree that this ruling “will lead to two-tiered healthcare in Canada – one for the rich, and one for the poor” – including 42% who strongly agree (22% somewhat agree). One-third (34%) disagrees with this notion (21% strongly/14% somewhat).

- Level of agreement with this statement is relatively equal across all regions of Canada.
- More educated Canadians with a post-secondary level education or higher are the most likely to agree with this statement (67%).
- Those aged 55 and over (40%) and men (39% vs. 31% among women) are the most likely to disagree with this statement.

## ***More Than Half (57%) Believe Their Provincial Government Should Use Notwithstanding Clause To Ban Private Insurance...***

More than half of Canadians (57%) agree with the statement “the government of my province should use the notwithstanding clause to ban private insurance and protect public healthcare in my province” (36% strongly/21% somewhat), while 39% disagree (20% strongly/19% somewhat). The remaining 4% “don’t know”.

- Residents of Atlantic Canada (69%) and Ontario and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (both at 58%) are the most likely to agree with this statement.
- Residents of Alberta (49%), Quebec (42%), and British Columbia (41%) are the most likely to disagree with this statement.
- Those with a University degree education are significantly more likely than other Canadians to disagree with this statement (48%).

## ***But Canadians Are Split About Whether This Will Lead To American-Style Healthcare In Canada...***

Canadians are split when it comes to their opinions about whether this ruling will “lead to American-style healthcare in Canada”: Half (50%) agree with this view (29% strongly/21% somewhat) and half (47%) disagree (27% strongly/19% somewhat). The remaining 4% “don’t know”.

- Residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (59%) and Atlantic Canada (58%) are the most likely to agree with this statement.
- Agreement with this statement is also highest among younger adults age 18-34 (60%) and among women (55% vs. 45% among men).

## ***As Seven In Ten Canadians (70%) Feel They Should Be Able To Buy Services From A Private Healthcare Provider If They Want To...***

Seven in ten Canadians (70%) agree with the statement “I should be able to buy private services from a private healthcare provider if I want to” – including 37% who “strongly agree” with this statement (33% somewhat agree). Twenty-eight percent disagree with this statement (18% strongly/10% somewhat).

- Residents of Alberta (80%), British Columbia (75%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (74%) are the most likely to agree with this statement.
- Those with higher annual household incomes (\$60,000 or more) are significantly the most likely to agree with this statement (75%).

## ***And Most (60%) Believe This Will Lead To Shorter Waiting Lists...***

Most (60%) agree that this ruling “will lead to shorter waiting lists” (33% strongly/27% somewhat). One-third (36%) does not think this ruling will result in shorter wait times (18% strongly/18% somewhat). The remaining 3% of Canadians “don’t know”.



- Agreement with this statement is highest in British Columbia (67%), Alberta (64%) and Atlantic Canada (62%).

### ***...And To Improvements In The Quality And Availability Of Healthcare Services (54%)...***

Fifty-four percent agree that the ruling will “lead to improvements in the quality and availability of the healthcare services that my family receives” (25% strongly/29% somewhat). Four in ten (42%) do not agree with this statement (23% strongly/20% somewhat). The remaining 3% “don’t know”.

- Residents of Atlantic Canada (67%) are the most likely to agree with this statement, followed distantly by residents of Quebec and Ontario (both at 54%).
- Those with higher annual household incomes (\$60,000 or more) are the most likely to agree with this statement (61%).
- Those aged 55 and over are the most likely to disagree with this statement (49%).

### ***However, 57% Think Doctors And Nurses Will Be Leaving Public System To Work In Private System...***

Most (57%) agree that as a result of this ruling “doctors and nurses will be leaving the public healthcare system to work in a new private system, which will cause shortages in the public system” (30% strongly/27% somewhat). But a substantial minority of 41% disagree with this statement (21% strongly/20% somewhat).

- Agreement with this statement is highest among residents of Atlantic Canada, Ontario, and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (all at 61%), followed closely by residents of Alberta (60%) – and among women (62% vs. 51% among men).
- Those with higher annual household incomes (\$60,000 or more) are the most likely to agree with this statement (61%).



- Disagreement with this statement is highest in Quebec (50%) and British Columbia (45%).

***When It Comes To Which Party Leader Would Do The Best Job Of Dealing With This New Healthcare Challenge – 41% Say Paul Martin Vs. 30% Who Say Stephen Harper...***

When asked which federal party leader they believe would do the best job of dealing with this new challenge to the future of our healthcare system – Paul Martin or Stephen Harper? Four in ten (41%) chose Paul Martin and 30% chose Stephen Harper. One in five (22%) chose “neither” of these two leaders, and a further 6% said they “don’t know”.

- Residents of Ontario (48%), British Columbia (45%), Atlantic Canada (42%) and Quebec (39%) are the most likely to chose Paul Martin as the best leader for this new healthcare challenge.
- Residents of Alberta (53%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (46%) are the most likely to chose Stephen Harper as the best leader for this new healthcare challenge.

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