

CANADIANS OPTIMISTIC THAT WAIT TIME BENCHMARKS FOR HEALTH SERVICES & TARGETS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE HEALTH SYSTEM

*At The Same Time, They Are Doubtful That Governments Will
Meet These Commitments*

*More Than Half Are Less Optimistic About The Future Of Health Care
Than They Were A Year Ago*



Public Release Date: - September 15th, 2005 -7:30 am (EDT)

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Ottawa, ON - On the eve of the first anniversary of the “10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care” Canadians believe the First Ministers September 2004 commitments to produce waiting time benchmarks and health professional targets will contribute to improving the health care system. At the same time, they are doubtful that Government will deliver these commitments on time and a majority are less optimistic about the future of health care services in their community than they were one year ago.

A key component of the First Minister’s “10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care” was to establish benchmarks for medically acceptable wait times for treatments for cancer and heart ailments, diagnostic imaging, joint replacements and sight restoration by December 1, 2005.

Three out of four Canadians agree that wait time benchmarks are a good idea because they will lead to better access to health services (76%) and that establishing them is a first step toward making lasting improvements to Canada’s health care system (74%).

However only one out of three Canadians (33%) is confident that the federal government and their provincial/territorial government will live up to their commitment to establish these wait time benchmarks by December 2005.



As part of the 10-Year Plan, First Ministers also committed to establish targets for the training, recruitment and retention of health professionals by December 31, 2005.

Almost 9 out of 10 Canadians agree that establishing targets for health professionals is a good idea because they will lead to better access to health services (89%) and that this is the first step in ensuring that enough health professionals are trained and educated in Canada to meet our own country's needs (88%).

Similarly to the wait time benchmarks however; only one in three Canadians (34%) is confident that governments will live up to this commitment to establish their targets for health professionals by December 31, 2005.

When asked what the federal government should do if a province or territory does not meet its commitments to establish wait time benchmarks or health professional targets, a majority of Canadians (62%) agree that the federal government should withhold some (41%) or all (21%) of the increased health funding not yet transferred to the provinces/territories that do not meet the commitments until they are met. Just one out of three Canadians (34%) agrees that increased funding should not be withheld and that the provinces/territories should be given an extension to meet their commitments.

One the eve of the first anniversary of the 10-Year Plan, a majority of Canadians (54%) are less optimistic about the future of health care services in their community than they were one year ago.

These are the findings of Ipsos-Reid/Canadian Medical Association polls among the public and physicians. The poll among Canadians was conducted from September 6th and September 8th, 2005. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1,001 adult Canadians were interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.2 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



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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.

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