

MOST CANADIANS (67%) LACK CONFIDENCE THAT GOVERNMENTS WILL LIVE UP TO COMMITMENT TO ESTABLISH WAIT TIME BENCHMARKS

Majority (86%) Say If Province/Territories Fail To Meet Their Commitments That The Federal Government Should Establish These Benchmarks Based On The Recommendations Of Canada's Health Professionals

Three-Quarters (76%) Feel That Failure To Establish Benchmarks Will Increase The Demand For Private Care



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Ottawa, ON – A new Ipsos Reid survey conducted on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association finds that over two of every three Canadians (67%) say that they are not confident that governments will live up to their First Ministers September 2004 commitments to produce waiting time benchmarks by December 2005.

Over eight in ten Canadians (86%) agree that if the provinces and territories fail to live up to their commitments to establish wait time benchmarks then the federal government should establish these benchmarks based on the recommendations of Canada's health professionals.

Over three in four Canadians (76%) agree that if the federal and provincial governments fail to establish benchmarks for health services it will lead to a greater demand for private care.

The majority of Canadians (65%) believe that federal and provincial/territorial governments should work together to establish national benchmarks that will provide comparable wait time standards across Canada. In comparison, 33% would rather have each province and territory establish their own wait time benchmarks that might not provide comparable standards across Canada.

Two in every three Canadians (65%) are concerned that meeting the wait time benchmarks in the five priority areas of cancer and heart ailments, diagnostic imaging, joint replacements, and sight restoration, will come at the expense of other health service areas.

However when asked to specifically name other additional treatments or conditions for which benchmarks could be set, one in three Canadians (33%) do not do so. Aside from the five priority areas, the other two key areas cited are organ transplants (6%) and diabetes (5%).

If their doctor advises a medically necessary service, and the waiting lists were too long in their community, close to three in four Canadians (73%) agree that they would go to another



province or territory for that service, and close to three in five (56%) Canadians agree that they would go to another country for the same purpose.

To facilitate necessary medical care out of province or territory, four in five Canadians (79%) say that the federal government should establish a fund that would cover the cost for patients including travel and accommodation.

The full details of the data points listed below are available in the detailed tables.

- 97% of Canadians agree that wait time benchmarks should be based on ensuring that patients get the care they need when needed.
- 90% of Canadians agree that wait time benchmarks should be based on the best available medical evidence.
- 86% of Canadians agree that it is very important to them that Canadians are subject to the same wait time standards regardless of which province or territory they live in.
- While 72% of Canadians say that Medicare is a national program and the responsibility for guaranteeing timely access to health care is shared between the federal and provincial/territorial governments, 27% believe that guaranteeing timely access to health care is the responsibility of their provincial/territorial government.

These are the findings of Ipsos-Reid/Canadian Medical Association polls among the public. The poll among Canadians was conducted from September 27th and September 29th to 6h, 2005. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1,014 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 survey population.



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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.

-30-

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