

HEALTHCARE IN ALBERTA: PREMIUMS AND PRIVATE SERVICES

Six-in-ten Albertans (62%) say they should be able to pay for private health care services if they want

Most Albertans (80%) say they would support the Alberta government using oil revenues to eliminate healthcare premiums



Ipsos Reid

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Calgary, AB – With days to go before the first PC Leadership ballot – and policy issues such as healthcare very much on the minds of Albertans and candidates alike – a new Ipsos Reid / Calgary Herald poll shows that six-in-ten (62%) of Albertans agree that they should be able to pay for their own private health care services if they want, with more than one-third (37%) saying that they should not. Further, a majority (80%) state that they would support the Alberta government using oil revenues to eliminate healthcare premiums for Albertans, while 19% say they would not support such an initiative.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll fielded between November 14th and November 20th, 2006 and is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult Albertans. Results based on a sample size of 800 are considered accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Albertan population been polled. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Alberta population according to the 2001 Census data.

Six-in-ten Albertans (62%) say they should be able to pay for private health care services if they want

Healthcare has traditionally received much attention in Alberta and across the country. From the Health Assurance Act and Bill 11, to doctor shortages, surgical wait times and healthcare premiums, there have been numerous healthcare challenges, initiatives, and new policies. And now, with a new leader of the Progressive Conservatives being chosen only days away, the quality of healthcare and health policy is looming even larger in Albertans' minds. Overall, almost two-thirds (62%) agree that they should be able to pay for private health care services if they want, with three-in-ten (28%) saying they "strongly agree," and one-third (34%) saying they "somewhat agree." Slightly less than four-in-ten (37%) disagree they should be able to pay for private health care services if they want, with one-quarter (24%) saying they "strongly disagree" and slightly more than one-in-ten saying they "somewhat disagree" (13%).

- Those who are more likely to think that they should be able to pay for private service include:
- residents of Central Alberta (73%), Southern Alberta (70%) and Calgary (66%) compared to residents of Edmonton (53%);
- Those who supported the Progressive Conservatives (73%) in the last provincial vote;
- Albertans between the ages of 35-54 (64%) compared to those 55 years of age and older (55%); and,
- Albertans who earn more than \$70,000 per year (70%) compared to those who earn less than \$30,000 (55%), between \$30,000 and \$50,000 (57%), and between \$50,000 and \$70,000 (57%).

Most Albertans (80%) say they would support the Alberta government using oil revenues to eliminate healthcare premiums

Healthcare has been a long standing hot-button issue in many Canadian provinces, and a booming Alberta awash in oil revenues is no exception. A large majority (80%) of Albertans agree that they would favour the provincial government using oil revenues to eliminate healthcare premiums, with one-half (51%) who “strongly agree” and three-in-ten who “somewhat agree” (28%). About two-in-ten (19%) disagree, with 10% who “strongly disagree” and 8% who “somewhat disagree.”

Those who are more likely to think that the Alberta government should use oil revenues to eliminate healthcare premiums include Albertans who earn \$30,000 to less than \$50,000 annually (85%) compared those who earn less than \$30,000 annually (74%).

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Peter Weylie
Vice-President
Public Affairs
Ipsos Reid
(403) 390-7052*

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