

# Contradictory Canadians: While Almost All (95%) Would Take an Organ Donation When in Need, Only Two Thirds (65%) Have Made Arrangements to Give

*Canadians Receive a 42% Average on First National Organ Donor Quiz*

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**Ipsos Reid**

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## **Contradictory Canadians: While Almost All (95%) Would Take an Organ Donation When in Need, Only Two Thirds (65%) Have Made Arrangements to Give**

### *Canadians Receive a 42% Average on First National Organ Donor Quiz*

**Toronto, ON** – A recent survey of Canadian's knowledge of organ donation reveals that almost all (95%) Canadians say that they would take a donated organ when in need; contradictorily, only two thirds (65%) have made arrangements to donate their own organs upon death. In other words, three in ten (30%) Canadians would willingly receive a donated organ, but not donate an organ in kind. The survey was administered along with a quiz conducted by Ipsos Reid exclusively for CanWest Global. The findings show that Canadians might not be as generous as they might think, with three in ten (30%) saying that they would take an organ if needed, but have not made arrangements to give in kind.

On Canada's first national organ donation quiz, Canadians put in a valiant effort, but came up short of earning a passing grade. Three in ten (27%) Canadians were able to provide correct responses to at least half of the questions posed to them, while the average mark for Canadians on the whole approached a passing grade. Canadians obtained a national average score of 42%.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CanWest Global from April 19 to April 23, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 2459 adults was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 2$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult 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 that the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.*

## ***Canadians More Willing to Receive than Give...***

Although Canadians are known for their generosity, the survey results find that substantially more Canadians are willing to receive a donated organ than to donate one themselves. Almost all Canadians (95%) say that, if they were told that they needed a transplant, they would accept one if that organ became available. Conversely, almost no (5%) Canadians said that they would refuse the treatment. Despite being so willing to receive the gift of life, Canadians are less anxious to donate their organs. Only two thirds of Canadians (65%) have signed a donor card or have made legal arrangements to have their organs donated upon their death, meaning that three in ten (30%) would receive an organ, but not donate themselves. One in three (35%) Canucks have not made any formal arrangements to donate.

- Residents of Atlantic Canada are the most likely (98%) to accept a donated organ, while those in Ontario are slightly less willing (94%) than the rest of Canada.
- Older Canadians, aged 55 and over, are the least likely age group to accept an organ transplant, with only 93% indicating their willingness to receive. Equally, Canadians in the lowest income bracket (under \$30,000 household income a year) are among the least likely (93%) of all demographic segments to accept a donated organ.
- Individuals with kids are slightly more likely than individuals without kids (96% to 94%, respectively) to have indicated their willingness to receive an organ transplant if needed.

## *Have You Already Made Your Arrangements to Donate?*

Across the nation, Canadians are not uniform in their responses. While, nationally, two in three (65%) Canadians have made arrangements to donate, Canadians in certain parts of the country have indicated that they have already made arrangements to donate at a rate higher than the national average. Residents of Saskatchewan are the most generous of all provinces, with seven in ten (70%) claiming to have made formal arrangements to donate upon their death. On the other hand, Albertans, where just over half (56%) have signed a donor card or have given legal notice, are the least inclined to donate.

- Women are more likely than men to have made arrangements to donate (67% to 62% respectively).
- Middle-Aged Canadians are the most prepared of all age categories, with seven in ten (68%) indicating that they have made formal arrangements to donate. Young adults are the least likely age group (62%) to have already made their arrangements, followed by seniors (63%).
- Those who have attended a post-secondary institution are five points higher than those with no post-secondary education, and ten points higher than those who have not completed high school, to have already made arrangements for organ donation upon their death (67%, 62%, and 57% respectively).
- Similarly, those in the highest income bracket (over \$60,000 annual household income) are more likely to have formally indicated their intentions. Seven in ten (68%) have made formal arrangements to donate, compared to those families that earn less than \$30,000 a year, where only six in ten (59%) of those Canadians have already made

arrangements. Two in three (64%) Canadians whose families earn between \$30,000 and \$60,000 have made formal arrangements.

## ***Organ Donation Could Cause Family Feud...***

Naturally, the best way to avoid a family feud would be for family members to indicate their intentions to each other prior to death and to proactively identify areas of disagreement. From among those individuals who say that they have signed a donor card or have given official legal notice of their intentions to donate their organs upon death, three in four (75%) have spoken to their families about their wishes. Conversely, one quarter (25%) of those individuals have not let their intentions be known to their families. Despite having these discussions and knowing the intentions of their loved ones, nearly one in ten (7%) Canadians would be 'uncomfortable' with donating a family member's organs upon their untimely death. Further, if a family member has made their intentions known, but there are other family members who didn't feel comfortable in fulfilling those requests, three quarters (77%) of Canadians would 'strenuously object' to those wishes not being followed. On the other hand, one quarter (23%) of individuals put in that situation would opt to 'keep the peace' to avoid an argument.

### **Most (75%) are Discussing Organ Donation Wishes with Family**

- Quebecers are the most likely (78%) residents of all provinces in Canada to claim that they have spoken with family members regarding their wishes once they have made arrangements to donate. One in three (31%) Canadians living in Atlantic Canada have avoided that same discussion.

- While seniors are not among the most likely age category to have filled out their donor cards, from among those that have, eight in ten (81%) have made those intentions known to their family members.
- Women are more likely than men to have made their intentions known to their family members (78% to 71%, respectively).

### **Some (7%) Uncomfortable with Family Member's Wishes**

- Canadians that do not have a High school diploma are the most likely (10%) of all demographic cohorts studied to be uneasy about a family member's wishes to donate.
- Albertans are the most likely residents of any province within Canada to be uneasy about the wishes of their loved ones if those wishes included organ donation. Nearly one in ten (9%) Albertans suggested that they would be 'uncomfortable' with this arrangement. This could be a result of the largely fundamentalist religious views in Alberta.
- Quebecers, as well as residents of the Prairie provinces (both at 94%), are more likely than residents of other regions to be comfortable with the wishes of their family members, even if those wishes include the donation of organs upon death.

### **Most (77%) Would Object to Family Members Who Do Not Follow Wishes of Deceased**

- Residents of Ontario are the most likely of any region in Canada to object to family members who do not uphold the wishes of their deceased loved ones. Eight in ten (78%) say that they would 'object' to an incident of this nature. One in four (27%)

residents of British Columbia, however, would opt to ‘keep the peace’, with only three quarters (73%) saying that they would ‘object’ to such an event.

- Women are seven points more likely to object than men (80% to 73%), making women the most likely of all demographic categories studied to object to family members who do not keep the wishes of their deceased family members in mind.

### *Close, But no Cigar...*

Canadians have proven that they have a fair understanding of the issue of organ donation; however, there is still room for improvement. The results of the nine-question test reveal that Canadians, on the whole, received an average grade of 42%. Furthermore, nearly three in ten (27%) Canadians were able to correctly answer at least half of the questions posed to them. The multiple-choice quiz was made up of questions ranging from ‘how many Canadians are waiting for an organ transplant this year’ to ‘how many lives can be saved from one organ donor’. The questions also addressed some common misconceptions about organ donation.

- University graduates fared the best among all demographic groups studied, with an average grade of 43%, and a solid three in ten (30%) providing correct responses to at least half of the questions posed.
- Older Canadians, aged 55 and over, are among the most ripe for improvement, with just under a quarter (22%) providing correct responses to at least half of the questions posed.



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