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*Stigma associated with mental illness is prevalent*

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**Ipsos Reid**

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**Toronto, ON** - It appears that personal experience with mental illness is a reality for many Canadians. Fifteen percent report that they have been diagnosed by a doctor as being clinically depressed, while significant numbers report experience with other issues associated with mental illness, such as stress (36%) and feelings of helplessness or worthlessness (23%).

Three in five (59%) Canadians expect the number of people with mental illnesses to increase over the next 10 years. Furthermore, three in ten (30%) Canadians feel that mental illness is hurting Canada's economy.

In addition, a majority of Canadians (60%) agree that the mechanisms for the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness are under-funded, while a greater majority (72%) agree that funding for mental health issues ought to be on par with funding for physical health issues, like cancer and diabetes.

***Stigma Associated with Mental Illness...***

It appears that there may still be a significant amount of stigma attached to the subject of mental illness. Just half of Canadians would tell friends or co-workers if they had a family



member suffering from a mental illness (50%), compared to those who would discuss diagnoses of cancer (72%) or diabetes (68%) in the family.

Moreover, the majority of Canadians say they would be unlikely to hire a person with a mental illness as a lawyer (58%), child care worker (58%), financial advisor (58%) or family doctor (61%). As well, the majority of Canadians (55%) say they would be unlikely to enter into a spousal relationship with someone who has a mental illness.

That said, three in five (58%) Canadians say they would socialize with a friend who has a mental illness. This compares favourably with the proportion who says they would socialize with a friend who has an alcohol (32%) or drug addiction (26%), suggesting that the stigma of addiction is currently significantly greater than the stigma associated with mental illness.

While half of Canadians (50%) disagree that they would feel fearful being around someone with a serious mental illness, nearly three in ten (27%) Canadians still say they would be fearful. As well, nearly half of Canadians (46%) think people use the term mental illness as an excuse for bad behaviour.

### ***Grading Health Care in Canada...***

It appears that the majority of Canadians say the health care services they receive are making the grade. According to a new poll conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of the CMA, two in three Canadians (66%) grade the overall quality of the health care services they receive in the 'A' (23%) or 'B' (43%) range. This represents an improvement of four points since 2007 (62%) and a return to the level measured in 2006 (67%).

Seven in ten (68%) Canadians grade their latest experience with the health care system in their community as either an 'A' (32%) or a 'B' (36%), no different from the levels in 2007

(69%). As well, a majority of Canadians (58%) grade the choice of health services in their community as either an 'A' (21%) or 'B' (37%).

In addition, nearly three in four (73%) grade cooperation among health professionals in their community, including doctors, pharmacists and nurses, as either an 'A' (28%) or a 'B' (45%). This represents a four-point improvement over 2007 (69%). A majority (54%) of Canadians give health care providers and their associations either an 'A' (14%) or 'B' (40%) for their performance in dealing with health care in Canada.

Grades for access to several tested health services have stayed quite steady since 2007. The percentage of Canadians who grade access to a family doctor as an 'A' remains lower than when first tracked in 2003 (29% in 2008 vs. 35% in 2003). The proportion giving an 'A' grade to access to emergency room services has risen slightly (to 20% from 18% in 2007), as have access to health care services for seniors (to 19% from 17% in 2007) and access to health care services on evenings and weekends (to 13% from 11% in 2007).

When it comes to health care quality, service, and access, those with a family physician remain more positive than those without a family physician. One in four (26%) Canadians with a family physician give the overall quality of available health care services an 'A' grade, compared to a significantly lower proportion (9%) of those without a family physician.

The disparity between those who have and those who do not have a family physician appears to be widening. This year, those with a family physician are 17 points more likely than those without a family physician to give an 'A' grade to the overall quality of the health care system (26% vs. 9% among those without a family physician) while in 2007 this difference was only 11 points (23% vs. 12% with no family physician).

## *Rating the Performance of Government...*

One in three (34%) Canadians grade the federal government's performance in dealing with health care as either an 'A' (6%) or a 'B' (28%), consistent with 2006 (33%). Two in five Canadians (40%) graded their provincial government's performance in dealing with health care services as an 'A' (7%) or a 'B' (33%). This represents a slight increase since 2007, when roughly one in three (35%) graded their provincial government's performance as an 'A' or a 'B'; this level still remains lower than that measured in 2006 (43%).

With the exception of Alberta, every region saw provincial governments receiving more 'A' grades in dealing with health care than the federal government. This discrepancy is most marked in Quebec, where roughly one in three (35%) residents give the provincial government an 'A' or 'B' grade, compared to one in four (25%) who gives the federal government an 'A' or 'B' grade.

## *Patient-Centred Care...*

Four in five Canadians (81%) say health care in Canada is centred around financial constraints, while an additional nine percent (9%) say health care is centred on the needs of health care workers. Just one in ten (10%) says health care in Canada is centred on the needs of the patients themselves.

## *Perspectives on the Future of Health Care...*

Canadians remain divided as to whether health care services will improve or worsen over the next couple of years, with half (49%) saying health care services will get better and a similar proportion (48%) saying they will get worse.



*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association from June 10 to June 12 (telephone) and between June 13 and June 25 (online), 2008. The survey component conducted by telephone included 1,002 Canadian adults, while the online survey of 2,024 Canadian adults was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The results are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. An unweighted probability sample of this size would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.2 percentage points for the telephone component and +/- 2.2 percentage points for the online component, 19 times out of 20.*

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