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*But 86% Think the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term
Care Cares More About Containing Costs than About Quality
Healthcare*

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Nine in Ten (85%) Ontarians Agree Pharmacists Put their Patients Before Profits

But 86% Think the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Cares More About Containing Costs than About Quality Healthcare

Toronto, ON – Ontarians hold the advice of pharmacists in high regard, with nearly all (97%) Ontarians saying that they ‘trust’ (56% completely/41% somewhat) pharmacists as a source of information about prescription drugs. According to the Ipsos Reid poll, conducted on behalf of the Independent Pharmacists of Ontario, more Canadians trust their pharmacists as a source of information about prescription drugs than trust doctors (95%, 50% completely/45% somewhat), nurses (92%, 28% completely/64% somewhat), a provincial government department (59%, 9% completely/50% somewhat), or drug manufacturers (47%, 6% completely/41% somewhat).

Furthermore, 85% of Ontarians ‘agree’ (34% strongly/52% somewhat) that ‘pharmacists put the health of patients before economic gain’. A different point of view is expressed when it comes to the government, though, with a similar proportion (86%) agreeing (37% strongly/49% somewhat) that Ontario’s Ministry of Health and Long Term Care cares ‘more about containing costs than about quality healthcare’. Moreover, most (94%) ‘agree’ (55% strongly/39% somewhat) that they ‘trust pharmacists more than the government on issues relating to prescription drugs’.

Nearly all Ontarians ‘agree’ (61% strongly/36% somewhat) that they ‘trust a pharmacist to provide full information about the prescription drugs that they are taking’. In stark contrast,

just three in ten (29%) 'agree' (4% strongly/25% somewhat) that they 'trust the government to make decisions about prescription drugs on their own'.

Thinking about the individuals or groups that should be responsible for choosing which drugs are available in pharmacies, Ontarians are split between whether it should be medical doctors (41%) or pharmacists (37%). Some even think that researchers and scientists (14%) should take on that responsibility, while few believe that it should be left up to the provincial government department (7%) or drug manufacturers (2%).

Focusing on pharmacies in general, the interaction that Ontarians have with their pharmacy, and the idea of community pharmacies, eight in ten (81%) 'agree' (50% strongly/32% somewhat) that the closure of their local pharmacy would be 'very inconvenient'. Perhaps this is a result of the fact that only one in three (31%) say they typically use multiple pharmacies, and so they'd have to transfer their prescriptions over to other pharmacies.

Three quarters (76%) of respondents agree (23% strongly/53% somewhat) that 'independent pharmacies put patients before profits', but, interestingly, this proportion drops to 52% (8% strongly/45% somewhat) when asked about chain store pharmacies putting patients before profits. In fact, it appears that the majority (58%) of Ontarians have an affinity for the small entrepreneur pharmacist, agreeing (17% strongly/41% somewhat) that they 'prefer a wide selection of small pharmacies to a small selection of large pharmacies'.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Independent Pharmacists of Ontario from August 29 to September 3, 2008. This online survey of 1010 adults living in Ontario 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 Ontarian 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, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, if all adults living in Ontario had been polled.

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