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Lead a Healthy Life and Make Healthy Choices**  
*Most (85%) Ontarians Would 'Support' the Ontario Provincial  
Government Increasing Its Investment in Health  
Promotion and Policies*

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# **One Quarter (25%) of Ontarians Admit it's Difficult to Lead a Healthy Life and Make Healthy Choices**

## ***Most (85%) Ontarians Would 'Support' the Ontario Provincial Government Increasing Its Investment in Health Promotion and Policies***

**Toronto, ON** – Many Ontarians are struggling to lead a healthy lifestyle, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. While three quarters (75%) of Ontarians, overall, say that it is 'easy' for them to lead a healthy life and make healthy choices in their daily life to prevent illness, injury and disease, just 24% believe it is 'very easy', while 51% think it's only 'somewhat easy'. Conversely, one quarter (25%) think it is 'difficult' (2% very/23% somewhat) to lead a healthy life and make healthy choices.

When it comes to health promotion, just two in ten (20%) would rate the government's performance as at least 'very good' (3% excellent, 17% very good), while four in ten (38%) would say it's simply 'good'. Three in ten (30%) think the government's performance is 'fair', while one in ten (12%) would assess the provincial government's job in this area as 'poor' (9%) or 'very poor' (3%).

While seven in ten (70%) are 'satisfied' with the policies and programs offered by the Ontario government to make it easier for Ontarians to lead a healthy life, just 12% say they're 'very satisfied' and 58% are 'somewhat satisfied'. Conversely, three in ten (30%) are 'dissatisfied' (6% very/24% somewhat).

Perhaps a result of most Ontarians not being fully satisfied with the government's health promotion programs and policies, most (85%) would 'support' (37% strongly/48% somewhat) the Ontario government increasing its investment in health promotion programs and policies.

Currently the Ontario government spends 46% of its budget treating illness and disease through access to doctors, hospitals and surgeries. In contrast, the Ontario government spends 0.35% of its total budget on health promotion activities like improving health behaviours related to tobacco use, alcohol consumption, physical activity, diet and obesity. While 16% wouldn't want to see any increase to the budgetary allocation for health promotion activities, 39% believe it should be increased to 1% of total budget spend, while nearly half (45%) of Ontarians think it should be increased to more than 1% of total budget spend.

Ontarians appear to place a great deal of importance on healthcare and health promotion. In fact, most (81%) say that a political party's position on the issue of health promotion is 'important' (32% very/49% somewhat) to their decision about who they would vote for in the next provincial election.

Ontarians support all sorts of health promotion policies and programs, including:

- Reintroducing food education or home economics back into school curriculums – 95% (63% strongly/32% somewhat)
- Increased funding to help schools implement a health and physical education curriculum – 92% (62% strongly/30% somewhat)

- More public awareness and education on mental health problems – 92% (48% strongly/44% somewhat)
- Programs to prevent youth from using tobacco products – 91% (61% strongly/30% somewhat)
- Making after school programs more available and affordable – 91% (57% strongly/34% somewhat)
- Fund and support local active, safe routes to school programs – 87% (50% strongly/37% somewhat)
- Subsidies to Ontario farmers – 86% (51% strongly/35% somewhat)
- Public awareness campaigns to educate the public on the health impacts of tobacco use – 84% (43% strongly/41% somewhat)
- Harm-reduction policies to reduce high-risk consumption of alcohol – 84% (37% strongly/47% somewhat)

Nine in ten (90%) ‘agree’ (49% strongly/41% somewhat) that ‘it is imperative that we invest in health promotion and introduce policy changes to promote healthy lifestyles’. Furthermore, eight in ten (81%) ‘agree’ (35% strongly/46% somewhat) that the ‘government should require health promotion and wellness assessments across all government departments and activities’.

Most (82%) Ontarians ‘agree’ (32% strongly/50% somewhat) that ‘Ontario should invest in a 10-year mental health and addictions strategy’, while a similar proportion (79%) ‘agrees’ (28% strongly/51% somewhat) that ‘Ontario should have a provincial alcohol strategy to



reduce harm from high risk alcohol consumption'. Seven in ten (72%) 'agree' (30% strongly/42% somewhat) that 'smoking/tobacco use is an addiction and helping people to quit needs to be a government priority'.

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between January 27 to February 1, 2011, on behalf of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. For this survey, a sample of 1,014 adults living in Ontario from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Ontario been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

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