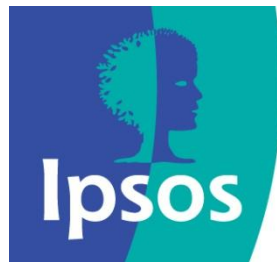


# **Most (85%) Canadians 'Agree' Medicinal Marijuana Should Go Through Same Rigorous Testing and Approval as Other Medicines**

*Seven in Ten (79%) 'Agree' Health Canada Shouldn't Abdicate Its Responsibility for Approving Medical Marijuana for Patient Use*

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**Ipsos Reid**

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## **Most (85%) Canadians 'Agree' Medicinal Marijuana Should Go Through Same Rigorous Testing and Approval as Other Medicines**

### ***Seven in Ten (79%) 'Agree' Health Canada Shouldn't Abdicate Its Responsibility for Approving Medical Marijuana for Patient Use***

**Toronto, ON** – Most (85%) Canadians 'agree' (54% strongly/31% somewhat) that 'if medical marijuana is to be prescribed to patients, it should go through the same rigorous testing and approval as other medicines', according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association. Just 15% 'disagree' (6% strongly/9% somewhat) that medical marijuana should be treated in this fashion.

Health Canada approves prescription medicines for safety and efficacy before physicians can prescribe them to patients. They review clinical trials and provide information to physicians so they can prescribe the appropriate dosage of medication and advise patients about the potential interaction with other drugs as well as side-effects. Canada's physicians feel that medical marijuana should be treated the same way as any other drug. Currently, Health Canada plays a role by authorizing individual patients to obtain medical marijuana, however, Health Canada is proposing to remove itself from the authorization process and leave individual physicians with this responsibility.

In response to this, most (79%) Canadians 'agree' (43% strongly/36% somewhat) that 'Health Canada has a responsibility to maintain its role and continue to authorize the use of medical marijuana for patients'. Just two in ten (21%) 'disagree' (8% strongly/12% somewhat) that Health Canada has a responsibility to maintain this approval role.

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Moreover, seven in ten (70%) 'agree' (38% strongly/32% somewhat) that 'if Health Canada removes itself from the process for authorizing medical marijuana, it is not meeting its commitment and responsibilities to protect the health of Canadians'. Conversely, three in ten (30%) 'disagree' (12% strongly/18% somewhat) that ceasing to provide this oversight would amount to not meeting its commitments and responsibilities to protect Canadians.

In fact, a majority (60%) believes (28% strongly/32% somewhat) that 'until such time as research on the effectiveness and safety of medical marijuana and official guidelines are developed for physicians, including dosage, side-effect and potential interactions with other drugs, physicians should not prescribe marijuana to their patients'. Four in ten (40%) 'disagree' (17% strongly/23% somewhat) that marijuana should stop being prescribed until such conditions are met.

Understanding that most Canadians do not want Health Canada to remove itself from its current responsibility, and that they'd like certain things in place before Health Canada does remove itself from the medical marijuana authorization process, the following highlight some of those conditions that Canadians would like to see met:

- Nine in ten (90%) believe it's important (61% very/29% somewhat) to conduct research on the effectiveness, safety and risks of medical marijuana. Just one in ten (10%) believe this is not important (3% not at all/8% not very).
- A similar proportion (94%) believes it's important (64% very/29% somewhat) to conduct research on the interaction of medical marijuana and commonly-prescribed drugs like those used to control blood pressure and cholesterol before Health Canada



removes itself from its current responsibility. Few believe this kind of research is not important (2% not at all/5% not very).

- Most (92%) also believe it's important (62% very/30% somewhat) to create and provide guidelines for physicians on prescribing the use of medical marijuana, while just 8% don't believe this is an important step to take (2% not at all important/6% not very) before Health Canada steps back from overseeing the process of prescribing medical marijuana.

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between February 22 and February 23, 2013, on behalf of The Canadian Medical Association. For this survey, a sample of 1,012 Canadians 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. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points had all Canadians been surveyed. 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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