

## Nine in 10 Canadians say all governments should cooperate to develop a National Strategy for Seniors Health Care

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**Ipsos Reid**

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## **Nine in 10 Canadians say all governments should cooperate to develop a National Strategy for Seniors Health Care**

*Canada needs a national strategy for seniors health care that addresses the need for care at home, hospitals, hospices and long-term care facilities and at the end of life. A national strategy on seniors health would improve the entire health care system by supporting elderly patients at home as long as possible.*

**Toronto, ON** – The Canadian Medical Association’s (CMA) annual report card on the health care system reveals that nine out of 10 (93%) Canadians polled by Ipsos Reid support a national seniors strategy and believe it would augment the overall health care system (90%). Canadians overwhelmingly support a national strategy on seniors care that addresses the need for care provided at home, hospitals, long-term care facilities and hospices. In addition, they believe a comprehensive strategy on seniors care would be beneficial to Canada’s health care system overall.

When it comes to building such a strategy, nine out of 10 (89%) believe that development of a national strategy on seniors care should involve federal, provincial, territorial and municipal levels of government. In particular, four in five (78%) say the federal government has an important role to play in developing this strategy. Although governments support provision of care for seniors in their homes, six out of 10 (57%) of Canadians don’t believe there are enough services in their area to help seniors live at home. Furthermore, for those who will not be able to stay at home, six out of 10 (59%) don’t believe that hospitals and longer-term care facilities can handle the needs of seniors in their area.

When thinking about their retirement years, Canadians have many concerns on the health care front. More than four in five (83%) are 'concerned' (50% very/33% somewhat) about their ability to maintain their health in retirement. Other concerns of Canadians when reflecting on retirement include:

- Having access to a high quality acute care health system – 79% concerned.
- Having access to high quality home care and long-term care – 77% concerned.
- Their financial situation – 71% concerned.

The findings suggest many Canadians would like a comprehensive system because they believe they're likely to need the system's support should they require extensive care in retirement. Three in five (60%) say that they would need to rely on a public system if they ever needed home or long-term care, while a minority of just over one in three (34%) say they have plans in place to ensure that they can afford home or long-term care if needed.

Recognition of the need for a comprehensive seniors health care strategy may also stem from the belief among many Canadians that seniors are the heaviest system service users. More than four in five (82%) Canadians 'agree' (45% strongly/37% somewhat) that seniors consume more health care services than younger Canadians.

The results show a majority (63%) believe that home and community care should be the most important focus for governments when improving system quality for senior citizens, compared to one in four (24%) who believe this focus should be on care provided in hospitals and long-term care facilities and one in 10 (12%) who say end-of-life care, designed to make patients' final days and week comfortable, should be given primary emphasis.

In fact, if they were in charge of developing a national strategy on seniors health, the top priorities of Canadians would be emphasizing the importance of home and community-based care. Very high priorities include:

- Increasing training for home and community care givers – 68%.
- Long-term home care for aging Canadians – 66%.
- Community services, like Meals on Wheels, designed to help seniors' live at home longer – 66%.
- Increasing access to long term-care facilities – 60%.
- End-of-life care provided at home – 57%.
- Short-term, rehabilitation home care for patients who have had surgery – 56%.
- End-of-life care provided in hospitals, hospices and long-term care facilities – 51%.
- Home-based mental health care – 48%.

### *Rating the Quality of Health Care in Canada...*

Since 2001, the CMA has asked Canadians to assign letter grades to their health care system overall and to a number of key aspects of the system.

The following section provides these results for all questions asked from 2001 to 2013. The questions asked in years 2001-2009, and then in 2013, were asked via a telephone survey. The questions asked in 2010, 2011 and 2012 were asked via an online survey.



Online surveys typically yield a higher proportion of 'don't know' responses and this can be seen when respondents are evaluating the more specific aspects (where they are not as familiar) of the health system.

If one looks across the entirety of the data collected for the Annual Report there is quite a bit of variation year to year and when there were changes in the data collection method.

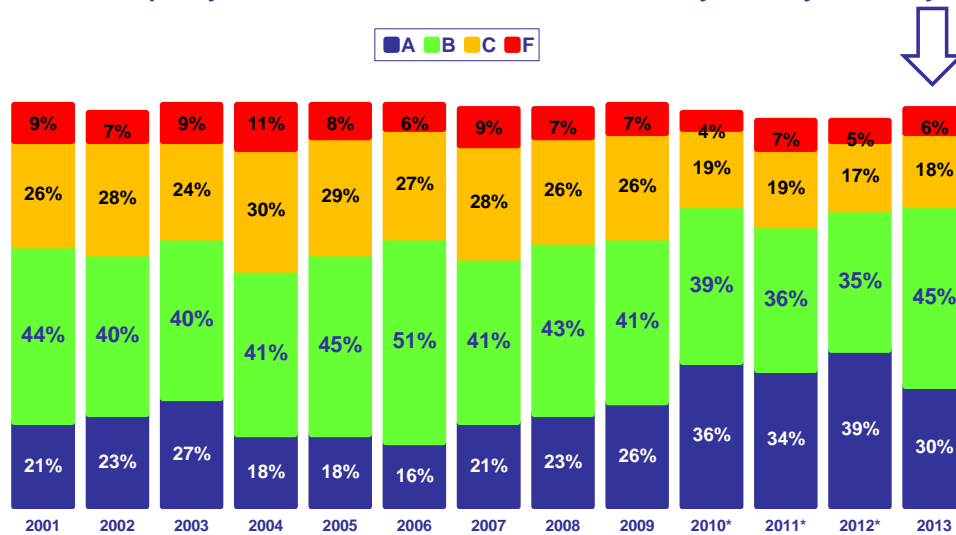
However, overall, the combined A and B marks for the overall system and for most of the key aspects have remained fairly flat, especially from 2009 to 2013.

Please see the 2013 Annual Report Card for a full report on all of the questions asked in this year's survey.

## Three quarters (75%) give overall quality of health services an A or B grade

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

The overall quality of the health care services available to you and your family.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

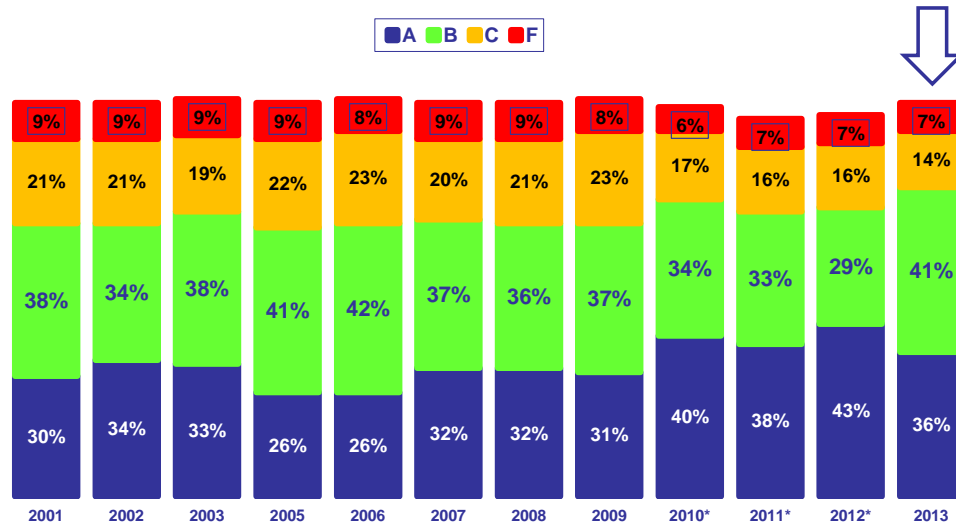
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

\* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

## Most recent experience with the health care system graded an A or B by majority (77%) of Canadians

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Your most recent experience dealing with the health care system in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

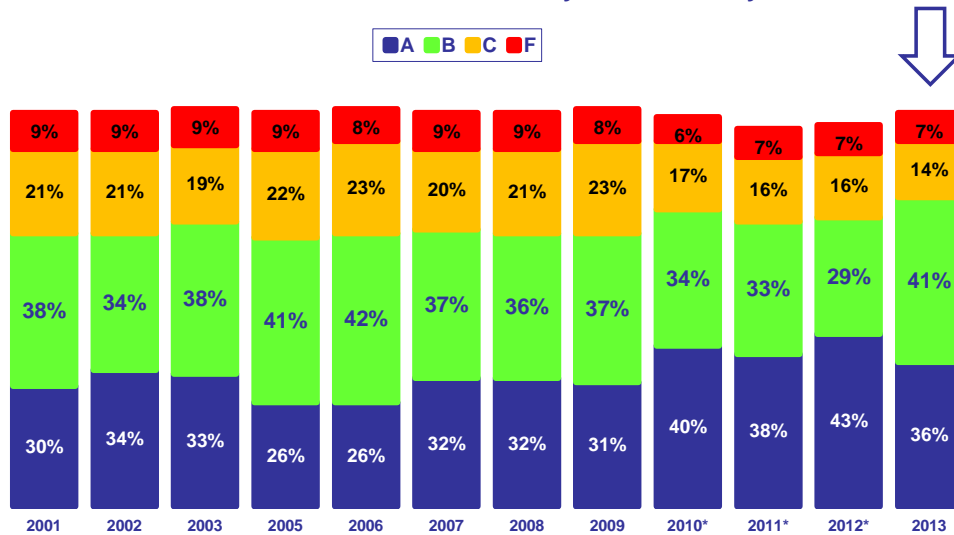
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

\* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

## Choices of health services given an A or B grade by about eight in ten (77%)

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

The choice of health services in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

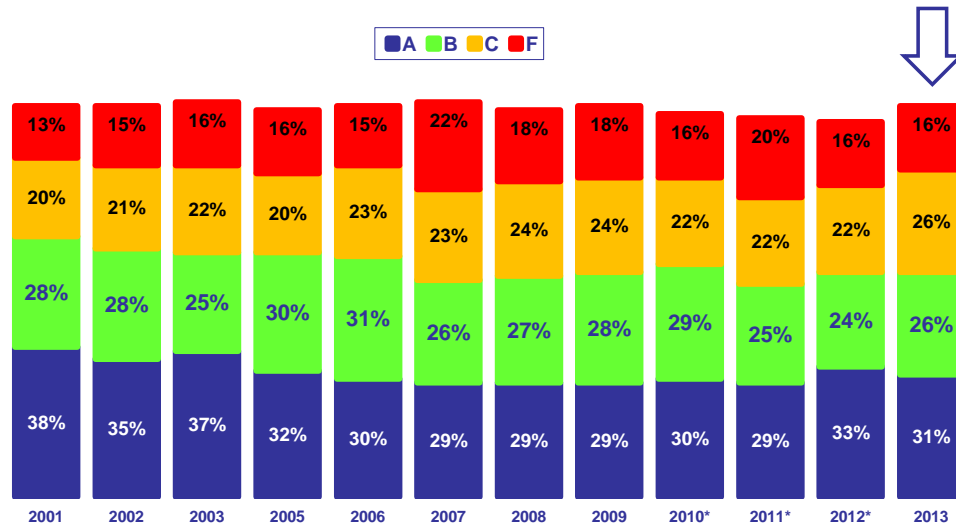
\* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone



## About six in ten give A or B grade to access to a family doctor

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to a family doctor in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

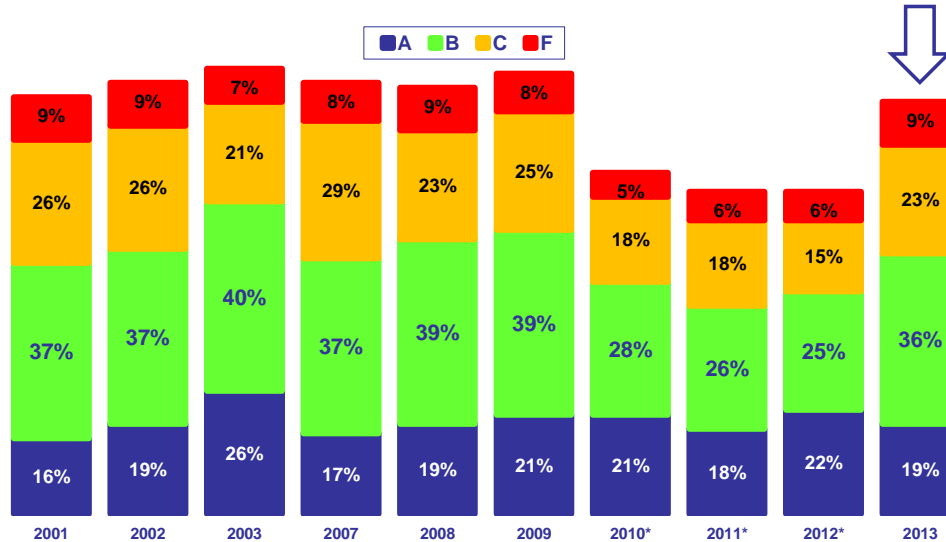
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

\* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

## Access to seniors health care services receives A or B grade from majority (55%)

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to health care services for seniors in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

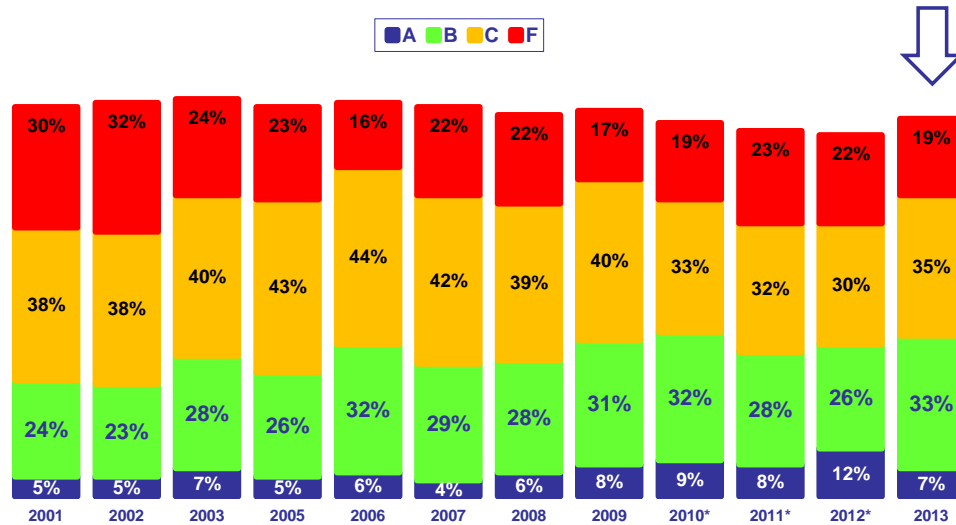
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

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## Few (29%) give the Federal government an A or B grade in dealing with health care in Canada

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

The federal government's performance in dealing with health care in Canada.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

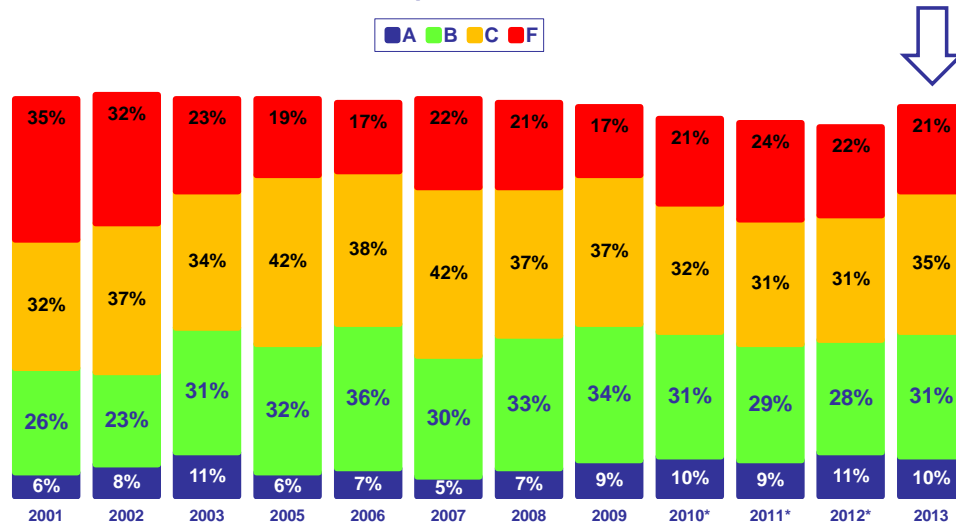
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

\* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

## Provincial government given more A and B grades (41%) than Federal government for performance in dealing with health care

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Your provincial government's performance in dealing with health care in your province.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

\* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone



*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid survey conducted between July 17 and 26 on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA). For this survey, a nationally-representative sample of 1,000 Canadians adults (ages 18 and over) were interviewed via telephone using random digit dialing. 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 survey is accurate to within +/- 3.1 percentage points had all Canadians adults 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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