

# Seven In Ten (69%) Canadians 'Strongly Agree' That Premiers Should Adopt Principles...

Contributed by Ipsos

## To Put Patients First

### Most (77%) Canadians Believe Their Provincial Government could Put in Place Efficiencies to Better Manage Healthcare System

As the premiers are set to meet in Victoria as part of the Council of the Federation, Canadians want their premier to adopt a series of principles that put patients first, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association.

Canada's physicians and nurses have developed a series of principles to make the healthcare system more concentrated on the needs of patients. These principles have been adopted by some 70 organizations including medical, health and patient groups. As such, almost all (95%) Canadians 'agree' (69% strongly/27% somewhat) that they would encourage their premier to 'adopt a series of principles that make the healthcare system more concentrated on the needs of patients' – with Albertans (76%) being most likely to strongly agree, followed by those living in Quebec (72%), Ontario (69%), Atlantic Canada (69%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (63%) and British Columbia (59%).

Moreover, eight in ten (77%) Canadians, overall, 'agree' (38% strongly/39% somewhat) that their province could 'put in place efficiencies to better manage the healthcare system if it decided to do so'. This sentiment is particularly strong in Quebec (83%) and Manitoba/Saskatchewan (82%) when compared to those living in Alberta (77%), Atlantic Canada (75%), British Columbia (75%), and Ontario (74%).

With the principle agenda item of the provincial premiers' meeting, which begins today in Victoria, being the future of healthcare, the poll reveals that just four in ten (43%) Canadians are 'confident' (4% very/39% somewhat) that 'the premiers will be able to agree on a plan to improve healthcare in Canada'. Most (56%) are 'not confident' (18% not at all/38% somewhat) in their ability to agree on a plan.

It's perhaps not surprising that an agreement on national standards for health services is among the top-three desired outcomes of the conference as more than eight in ten (88%) 'agree' (57% strongly/24% somewhat) that they are 'worried that without national standards, Canadians will have different levels of healthcare depending on where they live'.

In particular, when given a list of six possible outcomes from such a conference, and asked to choose the three that they would most like to see come out of the upcoming premiers' meeting, six in ten (60%) would like to see an agreement to take a national approach to long-term care and community care for seniors, a majority (57%) would also like to see an agreement to work together and share best practices in healthcare delivery, while a near majority would like to see an agreement on national standards for healthcare services (46%).

Others would most want to see among the top-three outcomes an agreement on a national plan to expand prescription drug coverage (41%), the development of a national health promotion strategy to reduce obesity (27%), and finally an agreement on a national health promotion strategy for Canada's youth (24%).

Most Unaware of Recent Announcement Extending Federal-Provincial Health Accord  
Given the importance of the Federal-Provincial Health Accord which was set to expire in 2014, it's interesting to note that most (62%) Canadians are generally 'not aware' (38% not at all/23% not very) of a recent announcement by the Government of Canada to extend the federal-provincial health agreement beyond 2014. Just four in ten (37%) are aware (14% very/23% somewhat) of the announcement.

Most Canadians (74%) believe that healthcare is a shared responsibility between the two levels of government. Few believe it is solely a provincial (13%) or federal (11%) responsibility. Reflecting on the federal Government's responsibility for the Canada Health Act, eight in ten (79%) believe the federal government's role is 'very important', with another 18% saying the role is 'somewhat important'. Few (3%) think this federal role is not important (1% not at all/2% not very).

Seven in ten (70%) 'agree' (34% strongly/36% somewhat) that they are 'worried that without accountability to the federal government, provinces will have no incentive to achieve healthcare efficiencies'. Just three in ten (28%) 'disagree' (10% strongly/18% somewhat) that they're worried about this.

Canada's physicians and nurses have offered to work with governments to transform the healthcare system. However, six in ten (66%) Canadians "strongly agree" that they would "be more confident of the outcome if physicians and nurses were part of the development plan to transform the healthcare system. Furthermore, a similar proportion (67%) "strongly agrees" that they'd be "more confident in the outcome if physicians, nurses and representatives of patient groups were part of the development of a plan to transform the healthcare system.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for the Canadian Medical Association from January 4 to 9, 2012. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1,000 adults in Canada was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population living in Canada been polled.

These data were weighted to ensure that the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

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