

Backgrounder

Canadians Attitudes Towards Health Care Spending Pollara National Public Opinion Survey January 2003

The Survey

A national telephone survey of 1,200 Canadians was conducted for the Canadian Union of Public Employees by Pollara between January 11 and 19, 2003. Overall results are considered accurate to within +/- 2.9%, nineteen times out of twenty.

Accountability for Spending

More than three-quarters of Canadians say that the federal and provincial governments are doing a poor (43%) or very poor (34%) job of making sure that every tax dollar intended for health care is spent on health care and reporting these results to Canadians.

An overwhelming number of respondents (96%) believe that both the federal and provincial governments should do a better job of making sure that every tax dollar intended for health care is spent on health care and reporting these results to Canadians.

Earmarking Health Care Dollars

Canadians' have a clear desire for greater accountability of how their tax dollars are being spent to provide health care.

A convincing majority of Canadians (92%) believe that the Prime Minister and Premiers should agree to specially earmark federal funds for health care. This support is high across the country ranging from 91% in the west to 95% in Atlantic Canada.

Eight-in-ten (81%) Canadians believe that the provinces will have to guarantee that public funds are spent on health care and provide clear reporting as a condition of receiving more money from the federal government for health care.

Only a small minority (16%) believe the provinces should not have to meet any conditions in order to receive more federal funds for health care.

Tie Federal Health Care Funding to Public Delivery

Moreover, a strong majority (77%) call on the Prime Minister and Premiers to ensure that earmarked health dollars go exclusively to public, not-for-profit health care. This support ranges from 73% in the west to 85% in Atlantic Canada.

Survey Questions and Results

1. In your opinion, do the federal and provincial governments do a very good, good, poor or very poor job of making sure that every tax dollar intended for health care is spent on health care, and reporting these results to Canadians?

Very Good	2%
Good	19%
Poor	43%
Very Poor	34%
Don't Know	3%

2. Do you believe the federal and provincial governments should do a better job of making sure that every tax dollar intended for health care is spent on health care, and reporting these results to Canadians?

Yes They Should	96%
No, Current Tracking & Reporting Is Adequate	3%
Don't Know	1%

3. The Auditor General of Canada has recently found accounting and public reporting of government health care spending to be inadequate. The recent Romanow commission on health care recommended a number of ways to improve accountability such as having the federal government specially earmark the money it provides to provinces for health care to make it easier to keep track of spending. When the Prime Minister and Premiers meet later this month to discuss health care, do you think they should agree to specially earmark federal funds for health care?

Yes	92%
No	5%
Don't Know	3%

4. The Premiers want the federal government to give them more money to spend on health care. If the provinces were to receive more health care money from the federal government, which of the following statements most closely reflects your own opinion: (READ AND ROTATE)

As a condition of receiving more federal money, the Premiers should guarantee all federal funds for health care will be spent on health care and agree to provide clear and timely reports on their spending	81%
Health care is a provincial matter and the provinces should not have to meet any conditions for more federal money	16%
None Of The Above	1%
Don't Know	3%

5. The Romanow commission on health care found no evidence that private, for-profit health care reduces costs, cuts waiting times or improves care. Some people disagree, saying private, for-profit health care will bring improvements.

The Prime Minister and the Premiers are meeting later this month to discuss health care. Assuming for a moment they asked, would you advise them to earmark federal health dollars exclusively for public, not-for-profit, health care?

Yes	77%
No	18%
Don't Know	5%

The full Pollara report of the survey results including regional data is available at www.cupe.ca/downloads/pollara.pdf