

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) have put forward a number of principles to guide the transformation of the health care system in Canada. The purpose of this research was to examine the public's views on these proposed principles. The study involved a nationally-representative telephone survey of 1,001 Canadians, 18 years of age and older. The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/-3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The survey was conducted from November 10-15, 2011. Key findings from the study include:

- Over three-quarters (76 per cent) of Canadians identify improving health care as the number one priority for the federal government, ahead of issues such as reducing the national debt and deficit (62 per cent) and reducing taxes (45 per cent).
- Almost three in ten Canadians (28 per cent) feel the quality of health care has deteriorated over the past two years, while the plurality believe the quality of the system has stabilized (50 per cent feel it is the same as it was two years ago).
- Seven in ten Canadians (70 per cent) feel that if they or a family member became seriously ill, they would be able to access the necessary health care services.
- The quality of the health care system remains the most important aspect to Canadians (selected by 46 per cent of respondents), followed by equal access to the system (selected by 38 per cent). Relatively few assign primary importance to the health of the Canadian population (10 per cent), or the costs of the system (five per cent).
- Fully 85 per cent of Canadians feel it is important that the CMA/CNA principles be adopted as part of the 2014 Health Accord discussions.
- When asked which of the principles is most important in improving the health care system, results are fairly split, with roughly equal proportions feeling that improving the overall health of the population (32 per cent), improving accountability in the health care system (29 per cent), and improving value for money in the health care system (26 per cent) are of greatest importance
- The federal government is seen as currently having the greatest responsibility for health care (41 per cent), and is also seen as most appropriate to bear this responsibility (38 per cent).
- When asked which of a range of issues posed the greatest threat to the health care system in Canada, responses are largely split, with about one in four selecting insufficient accountability for the money spent (27 per cent), a lack of doctors and nurses (24 per cent), or the costs associated with our aging population (23 per cent). Growing inequalities between the rich and poor, and debt and deficits/fiscal challenges are seen as somewhat less pressing issues for Canadians (selected by 15 per cent and nine per cent, respectively).
- More than three in four Canadians (77 per cent) support a national strategy to address the needs of our aging population (e.g., through increased homecare and long term care), even if this increases our taxes or increases our debt/deficit levels.