Media, Public Opinion & Health Policy

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The opinion measure is based on the following question, asked yearly by Environics: Do you think the federal government should spend more, spend less, or spend the same amount on health care? ‘Net Preferences’ is the % saying ‘more’ minus the percent saying ‘less’ each year. These opinion data are lagged by one year in this figure to account for the timing of the budgetary cycle.
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The spending measure is consolidated federal, provincial and local government spending on health, from CANSIM matrix 385-0001. Figures shown are for yearly changes in billions of constant (2000) Canadian dollars.
Public Opinion on Health Care

For each of the following items, do you tend to agree or disagree that they would result in a fundamental change to the nature of Canada?

- Eliminating public health care
- Abandoning English and French as Canada’s two official languages
- Eliminating peacekeeping operations for the Canadian military
- Canada becoming closer with the US than it is now.
- Not having a national publicly financed broadcaster like the CBC
- Growing proportion of visible minorities
- Cutting ties with the monarchy

Source: Environics & CROP, for CRIC, Portraits of Canada, 2005 (N=~3200)
Public Opinion on Health Care: The Importance of Health Care

In your opinion, what is the single most important problem facing Canada today?

% Respondents

Source: CRIC, as reported in Portraits of Canada, 2005 (N=~1000/survey)
Public Opinion on Health Care: Concern About Health Care

Now thinking more generally, would you say you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about the following issues?

% Very Concerned

- Standard of health care
- State of the environment
- Standard of education
- Level of (federal) taxation

Source: CRIC, as reported in Portraits of Canada, 2005 (N=~1000/survey)
Public Opinion on Health Care: Priorities and Performance

**Priorities**: Canada is facing a set of difficult challenges. Thinking not just of today but over the next five years, what priority should the Government of Canada place on each of the following areas? Please rate you response on a 7-point scale where 1 means the lowest priority, 7 means the highest priority and the midpoint 4 means middle priority. How about...?

**Performance**: How would you rate the Government of Canada’s performance in each of the following areas? Please use a 7-point scale where 1 is terrible, 7 is excellent and the midpoint 4 is neither. How about...?

Source: Ipsos and GPC for Communications Canada, Listening to Canadians, Spring 2002 (N=5400)
Public Opinion on Health Care: Federal Government Satisfaction

% respondents

- Improving health care

Source: Decima, Spring 2005 (N=~1000)
Public Opinion on Health Care: Provincial Government Satisfaction

‘Improving health care’.

% respondents saying ‘good job’

Source: Decima surveys (N=~1000)
Public Opinion on Health Care: Trends in Perceived Quality

Has the quality of health care over the past two years improved, deteriorated, or stayed the same? Source: EKOS surveys

Source: Ekos surveys (N=~1000/survey)
Public Opinion on Health Care: Policy Priorities

Thinking about the state of health care in Canada, what is the one improvement that would make you feel more confident about the state of the health care system?

- Access – more beds/doctors/hospitals/nurses: 25%
- Reduce waiting list/waiting times: 12%
- More money in the system: 9%
- Keeping medical professionals in Canada: 4%
- Stop two-tier system: 2%
- Allow more privatization: 2%
- More efficiency: 2%

Source: The Strategic Council, for Health Canada, Feb 2003 (N=~2000)
Public Opinion on Health Care: Pay for Quicker Access

Individuals should be allowed to pay extra to get quicker access to health care services.

Net Support (% agreeing – % disagreeing)

Source: Ekos surveys (N=1000)
Public Opinion on Health Care: Public and Private

Spending: Should the government spend more, spend less or spend the same amount as now on the following areas. Keep in mind that spending more in one area means spending less in another area or increasing taxes... Health care. Hospitals: Do you favour or oppose having some private hospitals in Canada?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health care spending</th>
<th>Private hospitals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>Don’t support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease /Same</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cells show the percent of total respondents.

Source: 2004 Canadian Election Study (N=~2800)
Do Media Matter? Media Coverage, Canada only, excluding disease & fitness

Monthly Totals, based on all health stories in G&M, TS, CH. N=~27,000

Lowess-smoothed Monthly Totals, based on all Canadian health stories in G&M, TS, CH. N= ~12,000
Media Effects? Coverage of Privatization Issues

Individuals should be allowed to pay extra to get quicker access to health care services. (% agreeing – % disagreeing)

Lowess-smoothed Monthly Totals, based on all Canadian health stories in G&M, TS, CH. N=~12,000
Media Effects? ‘Crisis’ in news stories

Lowess-smoothed Monthly Totals, based on all Canadian health stories in G&M, TS, CH. N~12,000

Now thinking more generally, would you say you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about the following issues?...(% very concerned)
Media Coverage: Negativity, and Asymmetric Responsiveness

Impact of **Positive** Outcome on News Content

Impact of **Negative** Outcome on News Content
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