



# Canadian Views on Health Care Privatization

## **SUMMARY REPORT**

Submitted to:

The Canadian Health Coalition

**EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INC.**

February 2018

# 1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The Canadian Health Coalition (CHC) commissioned EKOS to conduct a survey of Canadians' views on the importance of a publicly funded health care system, and their attitudes toward the privatization of the system.

The survey was conducted using EKOS' unique, hybrid online/telephone research panel, Probit. Our panel offers exhaustive coverage of the Canadian population (i.e., Internet, phone, cell phone), random recruitment (in other words, participants are recruited randomly, they do not opt themselves into our panel), and equal probability sampling. All respondents to our panel are recruited by telephone using random digit dialling and are confirmed by live interviewers. Unlike opt-in online panels, Probit supports margin of error estimates.

The field dates for this survey were January 23-30, 2018. In total, a sample of 1,096 Canadian adults aged 18 and over responded to the survey: 943 online, and 153 by phone. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/- 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted by age, gender, and region to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

## 2. SURVEY FINDINGS

### 2.1 PREFERRED RESPONSE TO UNLAWFUL BILLING

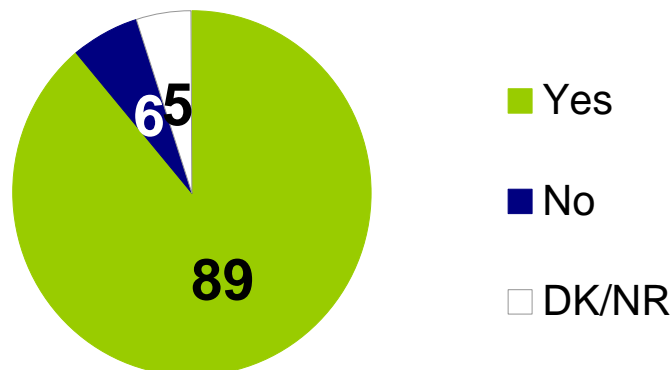
Results reveal strong public support for government intervention when patients are unlawfully billed for health care services. Nine in ten respondents (89 per cent) would like to see the federal government intervene, compared to just six per cent who would prefer that the government not take action.

Canadians are highly supportive of public solutions that would strengthen health care. Two-thirds of respondents (66 per cent) expressed strong support while one in five (22 per cent) indicated they were somewhat supportive. Just five per cent said they were opposed to such action.

Tracking reveals that the overall proportion of Canadians who support these solutions is consistent with the historical average; however, there has been a weakening of the strength of this support. Since 2014, there has been a 14-point decrease in strong support and a corresponding 16-point increase in moderate support.

#### Preferred response to unlawful billing

Q. *If patients are being unlawfully billed for health care services (for example, they pay for upgraded cataract lenses not knowing similar lenses are covered by the public system, or they have to pay for anesthesia before a colonoscopy even though it should be publicly covered), would you like to see the federal government intervene to stop this?*



## 2.2 IMPORTANCE OF STRONG PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Results reveal that Canadians place a great deal of importance on public health care. Fully nine in ten respondents (93 per cent) say access to a strong national system of publicly-funded health care is important. Just three per cent assign a moderate level of importance and the same proportion (three per cent) say it is of little to no importance. Tracking reveals a slight increase in the perceived importance of a strong national system of publicly-funded health care since 2012.

### Importance of strong public healthcare system

Q. How important is it to you to have a strong national system of publicly-funded health care?

#### January 2018



BASE: Canadians; January 24-30, 2018, n=1,096, MOE +/- 3.0%, 19 times out of 20

#### April 2012



BASE: Canadians; April 2012, n=2,036, MOE +/- 2.2%, 19 times out of 20

- DK/NR
- Not very important (1-3)
- Moderately important (4)
- Very important (5-7)

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## 2.3 PERCEIVED FAIRNESS OF PRIVATE HEALTH CARE

By a margin of two-to-one, Canadians believe that a two tier health care system under which citizens can pay for quicker access to health services would be unfair. Six in ten respondents (62 per cent) would rate this system as unfair, while one-third (32 per cent) are amenable to such as system.

- The perceived fairness of two tier health care declines steadily with age (38 per cent of those under 35 agree that such a system is fair, compared to 23 per cent of those ages 65 and over).
- Perhaps not surprisingly, perceived fairness rises with household income (from 21 per cent among those with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 to 39 per cent to those earning \$100,000 or more).

### Perceived fairness of private health care

Q. Do you think it's fair to have a two tier system of health care in Canada that enables those who can afford it to pay to get faster access to health care services?

