

**Canadians' Attitudes Towards
Health Care Spending**

**A Report to the
Canadian Union of Public Employees**

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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	2
II.	Methodology	2
III.	Health Care Spending Accountability	3
IV.	Earmarking Health Care Funds	5



I. Introduction

POLLARA is pleased to present the Canadian Union of Public Employees with the following report of Canadians' attitudes towards health care financing issues.

II. Methodology

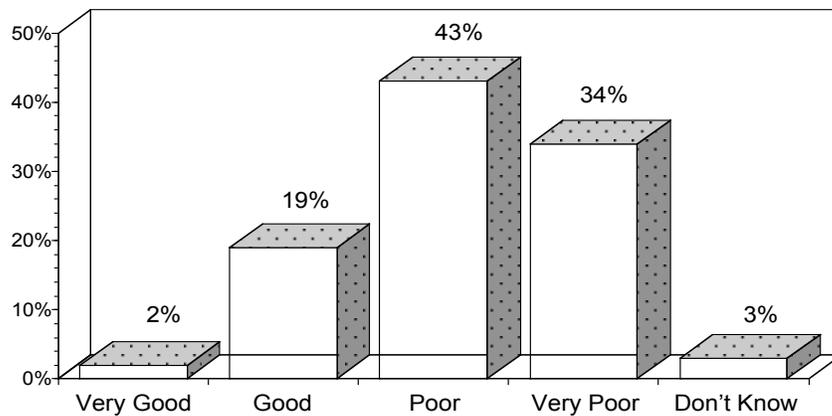
The results in this report are based on the results of a national telephone survey of 1,200 Canadians over the age of 18 conducted between January 11 and 19, 2003. Overall results are considered accurate to within +/-2.9%, nineteen times out of twenty.



III. Health Care Spending Accountability

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. Just over two-in-ten say the government is doing a very good (2%) or good (19%) job.

Figure 1
Opinion of Government Performance on Health Care Spending Accountability



Question: 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?

Regionally, those living in Quebec have a slightly more positive view, a quarter of residents characterizing the government’s performance as very good (1%) or good (25%). In contrast, British Columbian residents are more critical (0% very good, 11% good).

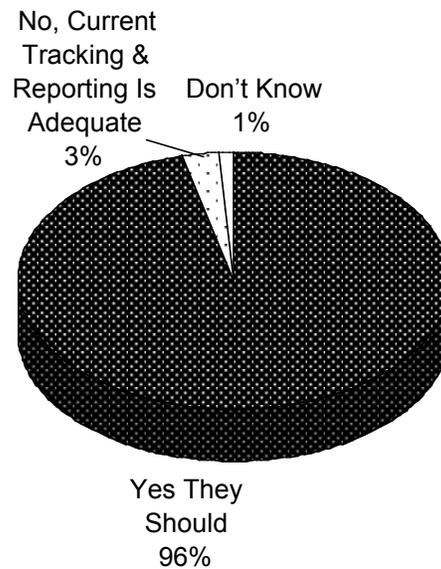
	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Poor (%)	Very poor (%)
Atlantic	5	19	42	31
Quebec	1	25	41	30
Ontario	2	18	42	35
Prairies	2	19	42	36
BC /Territories	0	11	46	40

Both men and women have similar views on this topic. However, younger Canadians tend to have the most positive view of the government's performance in this area, as nearly four-in-ten of those under the age of 25 consider the government to have done a very good (1%) or good (38%) job.

Given the poorly perceived performance, it is not surprising that a very high number of Canadians believe that the federal and provincial governments should do a better job of making sure that every tax dollar intended for health care is spend on health care, and reporting these results to Canadians.

Figure 2

Should the Government Do A Better Job?



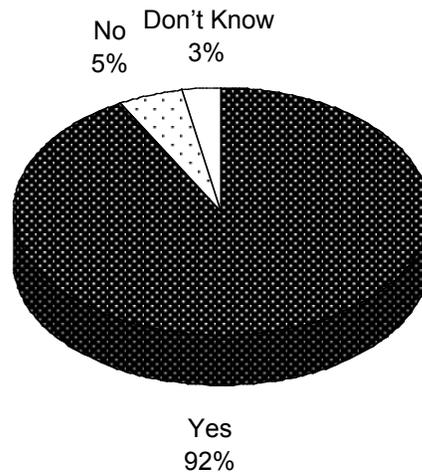
Question: Do you believe the federal and provincial governments should do a better job of making sure that every tax dollar intended for health care is spent on health care, and reporting these results to Canadians?

This view is consistent across both genders, all age categories, income levels, regions and education levels.

IV. Earmarking Health Care Funds

Canadians' have a clear desire for greater accountability of how their tax dollars are being spent to provide health care. More than nine-in-ten (92%) support the idea of the Prime Minister and Premiers agreeing to specially earmark federal funds for health care.

Figure 3
Attitudes Towards Earmarking Health Care Funds

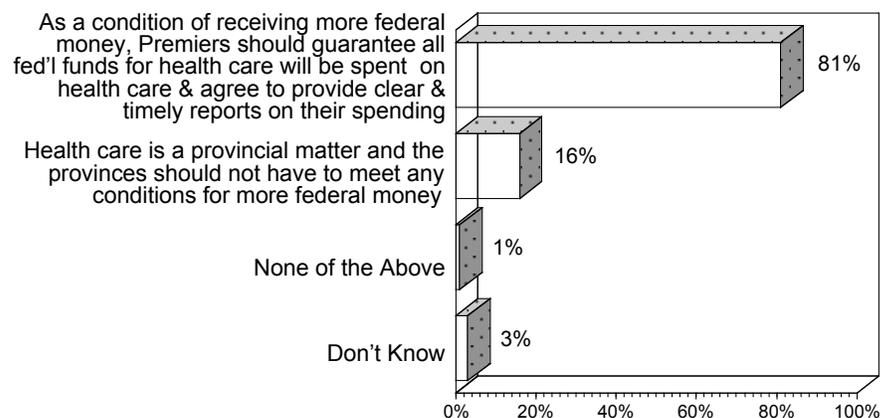


Question: The Auditor General of Canada has recently found accounting and public reporting of government health care spending to be inadequate. The recent Romanow commission on health care recommended a number of ways to improve accountability such as having the federal government specially earmark the 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?

Support for this initiative is high across all regions of the country (ranging from 91% in the west to 95% in Atlantic Canada). A sizable majority of Canadians from all socio-economic backgrounds also support this initiative.

More than eight-in-ten (81%) Canadians believe that the provinces will need to guarantee that funds are spent on health care and provide reporting to Canadians if they are to receive more money from the federal government for health care. A small minority (16%) believe the provinces should not have to meet any conditions if they are to receive more federal funds for health care.

Figure 4
Provincial Accountability for Health Care Spending



Question: 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)

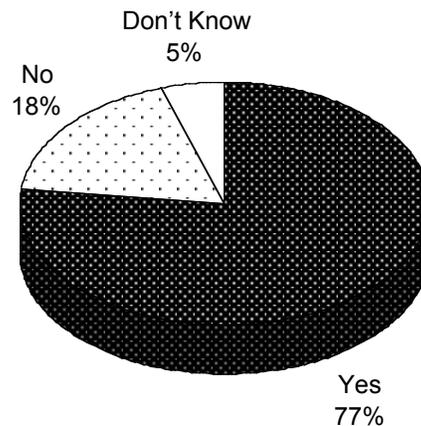
Support for provincial autonomy is highest in Quebec, however even in this province, the majority (68%) believe that the provincial government will need to be accountable for any new federal funds.

	Provinces should guarantee funds spent on health care and provide reporting (%)	Provinces should not have to meet any conditions for increased federal money (%)
Atlantic	92	7
Quebec	68	28
Ontario	84	11
Prairies	79	18
BC/Territories	91	8

More than three-quarters (77%) of Canadians say they would advise the Prime Ministers and Premiers who are meeting to discuss health care to earmark federal health dollars exclusively for public, not-for-profit health care.

Figure 5

Attitudes Towards Earmarking Funds Exclusively for Public, Not-for-profit Health Care



Question: 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?

Support for exclusively earmarking funds for public, not-for-profit health care is highest in Atlantic Canada (85%) and slightly lower in the west, as the following table illustrates.

	Yes, earmark funds exclusively for public not-for-profit health care (%)	No, do not earmark funds exclusively for public not-for-profit health care (%)
Atlantic	85	12
Quebec	80	17
Ontario	77	18
Prairies	73	20
BC/Territories	73	21

Women (80%) are slightly more likely than men (74%) to support earmarking funds for the exclusive use of public, not-for-profit health care.