

Public Opinion on Healthcare:
Widespread Support for Medical Choice/2-Tier
in the Wake of Supreme Court Decision



COMPAS Inc.
Public Opinion and Customer Research
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Overview

Across the country irrespective of region, Canadians have become highly receptive to what the political left calls 2-tier medicine and what the political right calls medical choice. The Supreme Court decision may have been a major factor in Canadians' thinking.

Key findings:

- ❑ Canadians judge the Supreme Court decision to be reasonable rather than unreasonable by a 4:1 margin (table 1)—71% say reasonable, 18% unreasonable;
- ❑ Only about one in seven Canadians opposes in principle Canada's following or considering the experience of countries that offer parallel government and non-government systems (table 2)—14% vs. 75% (49% would consider carefully the experience of these countries, 26% would follow in the footsteps of other countries that report better healthcare delivery by allowing both governmental and non-governmental services);
- ❑ By 6:1 Canadians would encourage rather than discourage a friend's looking at medical services outside the single-payer system (table 3)—76% vs. 12%;
- ❑ If Canadians had a choice between only two hypothetical parties—one that would allow health services outside the governmental system and one that would not, the former would outpoll the latter by more than 2:1 (table 4)—61% vs. 28%; and
- ❑ Canadians from coast to coast are largely uniform in their views.



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These are the principal findings from a national survey undertaken by COMPAS on behalf of CIMCA, the Canadian Independent Medical Clinics Association.¹

Tables

Table 1: (Q1) In a recent legal case brought to the Courts by a Quebec doctor, the Supreme Court of Canada decided that non-profit, independent, and other non-governmental medical organizations should be allowed to offer services as a way of putting an end to wait lists and patient suffering. Was the Supreme Court of Canada's decision...[ROTATE POLES]

	ATL	QUE	ON	PR	BC	CDA
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very reasonable	9	21	15	22	16	17
Reasonable	72	51	55	47	57	54
Unreasonable	7	14	15	14	12	14
Very unreasonable	1	6	3	5	5	4
[UNPROMPTED] Party reasonable, partly unreasonable	0	3	2	2	2	2
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know, not sure, refuse to answer	11	6	10	11	8	9

¹ Contact person: Zoltan Nagy, (604) 688-6364.



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*Table 2: (Q3) Should Canada's elected leaders...
[ROTATE THE FOLLOWING TWO SETS]*

	ATL	QUE	ON	PR	BC	CDA
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Follow in the footsteps of other countries that report better healthcare delivery by allowing both governmental and non-governmental services	20	30	26	27	22	26
Consider carefully the experience of these countries	51	46	49	49	50	49
Rule out non-governmental services on principle	16	14	13	13	15	14
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know, uncertain, not sure, refuse to answer	13	10	13	11	12	12

Table3: (Q2) Supposing a friend with a very sick spouse, child, or parent came to you for advice, would you...[ROTATE]

	ATL	QUE	ON	PR	BC	CDA
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Support your friend's looking at non-governmental options as a way of overcoming the problem of long waiting periods	77	75	76	76	79	76
Oppose your friend's looking at non-governmental options as a way of overcoming the problem of long waiting periods	7	13	12	10	14	12
[UNPROMPTED] In between, not sure, would discuss pros and cons	3	9	8	8	3	7
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know, refuse to answer	13	3	5	7	4	5



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Tqable 4: (Q4) Supposing for a moment that there was an entirely new election and the only choice was between two new parties... Which would you support? [ROTATE]

	ATL	QUE	ON	PR	BC	CDA
	%	%	%	%	%	%
One would allow both governmental and non-governmental health services	61	63	63	58	60	61
The other would allow only governmental health services	27	28	26	32	29	28
[UNPROMPTED] Depends on the parties' other policies or leaders or track record; would refuse to vote on the basis of healthcare only	7	7	3	3	3	4
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know, uncertain, not sure, refuse to answer	5	3	9	7	8	7

Methodology

A national representative sample of n=1015 was interviewed by professional interviewers using CATI January 9-15, 2006. Samples of this size are normally deemed accurate to within 3.2 percentage points 19 times out of 20. In this study, Atlantic Canada was over-sampled slightly and Ontario under-sampled slightly with the regional responses re-weighted to allow accurate nation-wide figures. The initial overweighting of Atlantic Canada makes this region's figures more accurate than normal while the margin of error for the country as a whole is fractionally lower than normal for a n=1015 national sample.

The principal investigators on this study were Dr. Conrad Winn and Tamara Gottlieb (416-598-0310).

