

Health Care Issues Poll Report October 7, 2011

KEY FINDINGS

CARP members think the biggest obstacle to better health care in Canada is a lack of doctors and long wait times, and they expect the federal-provincial health accords of 2014 to deal first with wait times and home care/long term care. Members expect the federal-provincial accords to be negotiated on national basis, not with individual provinces.

Among the things members agree with are requiring provinces to account for their federal health care transfers. Among the areas where they are equally likely to agree or disagree are a greater role for the for-profit, private sector health care industry in Canada's system, whether this kind of role could reduce wait times, whether private clinics should be able to charge for preferred access to a doctor and whether the member would pay such a fee. On these topics, members are about evenly split.

While members initially are neither warm nor cold to the increased patent protection offered by CETA (the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement), they disagree strongly when told it will mean higher prices for prescription drugs.

One fifth of members have had Shingles, and, for many, it was very painful and uncomfortable. Members strongly agree with the idea of a government vaccination program for shingles, mostly because it's good public health practice.

CARP members are very likely to be engaged in their own health care, and the wide majority say they get all the time they need with their doctor, which is a strong predictor of positive engagement.

One tenth of Ontario members watched the CARP provincial debate, and one half watched the televised provincial leaders' debate. The CARP debate is seen to be a draw, as is the leaders' debate, with both Dalton McGuinty and Tim Hudak scoring well. Although close to the two other leaders in points, Andrea Horwath does not resonate as strongly with our members as did Michael Prue in the CARP debate.

Members favour Brian Topp to lead the federal NDP and Frank McKenna to lead the federal Liberals.

The Conservative party has half the vote among members, the Liberals have a quarter, and the NDP are fading into distant third place.

Health Care Issues

Members see the lack of doctors and nurses as the biggest obstacle to better health care in Canada (25%), followed by wait times (16%), the single payer system (14%) , lack of home care (13%) and lack of long term care beds (11%).

Which ONE of the following do you think presents the biggest obstacle to better health care in Canada?

Not enough doctors/medical providers	25%
Long wait times	16%
Single payer, not enough private sector	14%
Not enough home care	13%
Not enough long term care beds	11%
Not enough funding	7%
Single payer eroding, too much private sector	5%
Queue jumping and favouritism	2%
Poor end-of-life/hospice care	1%
DON'T KNOW	7%

When the national health accords are renegotiated in 2014, members clearly want to see one national deal (70%), rather than deals with individual provinces (22%).

The national health accords of 2004 come up for renegotiation in 2014. Do you think the federal government should negotiate a single national deal for the whole country to guarantee fair access for all Canadians, or separate deals with the individual provinces and territories to take into account regional differences?

Single national deal	70%
Separate provincial deals	22%
DON'T KNOW	8%

There is strong agreement (83%) that provinces must be accountable to the federal government for health care funds, and one half express the strongest view (“agree strongly” - 51%).

How much do you agree that any money distributed by the federal government to the provinces for health care must be accountable to the federal government, and not at the discretion of the individual province?

AGREE	83%
Agree strongly	51%
Agree	32%
DISAGREE	15%
Disagree	10%
Disagree strongly	4%
DON'T KNOW	3%

There is equal concern that the 2014 health accords should deal with wait times (24%) AND home care and long term care (22%). Following these two leading concerns are training more doctors and nurses (18%) and illness prevention (14%).

When the national health accords are renegotiated, which one area of health care do you think requires the most attention?

Wait times for surgery/treatment	24%
Home care/long term care	22%
Training more doctors/medical providers	18%
Illness prevention/pre-emptive care	14%
National pharmacare program	8%
Health care teams	5%
Emergency medicine/facilities	3%
Chronic disease management	2%
OTHER	3%
DON'T KNOW	2%

There is an even split of opinion over whether the for-profit, private sector health care industry should have a role in Canada's health care system, with one half agreeing (50%) and one half disagreeing (47%). Those who disagree, however, are proportionately more likely to take the most extreme position ("disagree strongly" - 24%).

At their annual convention recently, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) tabled a paper calling for all options in funding health care to be explored, including private sector, for-profit providers charging fees to patients outside the Canada Health Act. How much do you agree that the for-profit private sector health care industry should have a role in Canada's health care system?

AGREE	50%
Agree strongly	17%
Agree	32%
DISAGREE	47%
Disagree	23%
Disagree strongly	24%
DON'T KNOW	3%

Once again, there is a split in opinion on whether allowing the private sector to operate in Canada's health care system would help reduce wait times, with one half agreeing that it would (49%) and just less than one half disagreeing (45%). Once again, those who disagree are more likely to disagree strongly.

How much do you agree that allowing private pay for-profit private sector health care providers to operate in Canada could solve the problem of wait lists for surgery and treatment?

AGREE	49%
Agree strongly	12%
Agree	37%
DISAGREE	45%
Disagree	26%
Disagree strongly	20%
DON'T KNOW	6%

A majority of members do not agree with private clinics charging fees for preferred access to doctors (53%), but a substantial minority approve (43%). Once again, those who disagree are more passionate in their attitudes.

In some provinces, private clinics charge an annual fee for services that include 24 hour availability, longer appointments and quicker referrals. How much do you agree these clinics should be allowed to charge these fees for these services?

AGREE	43%
Agree strongly	11%
Agree	33%
DISAGREE	53%
Disagree	29%
Disagree strongly	24%
DON'T KNOW	4%

The majority disagree they would pay out of pocket for faster access to or more time with a medical professional (54%), but a substantial minority say they would (41%). Once again, those who disagree, disagree strongly.

How much do you agree you would pay out of your own pocket to get a quicker medical referral or a more leisurely doctor's appointment?

AGREE	41%
Agree strongly	10%
Agree	31%
DISAGREE	54%
Disagree	32%
Disagree strongly	22%
DON'T KNOW	5%

Members are asked if they agree with stronger patent protection in Canada to match the US and Europe, and just a third agree (34%), compared to a similar proportion who disagree (39%). The key finding here is that more than one quarter of members have no opinion on the subject without further information (28%).

When members are faced with the pharmaceutical price implications of patent extension, all doubt disappears. Fully three quarters of members disagree with the idea of stronger patent protection if it leads to higher prices (76%), and very few no longer have an opinion (7%).

Canada is currently negotiating the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), one of whose provisions will change Canada's intellectual property laws by extending patent protection to the same extent as the US and Europe. How much do you agree with this idea?/ One result of extended patent protection is that the cost of brand name prescription drugs in Canada will be higher for longer. How much do you agree this is a good idea?

	Patent Protection	Higher Prices
AGREE	34%	17%
Agree strongly	8%	2%
Agree	26%	15%
DISAGREE	39%	76%
Disagree	25%	43%
Disagree strongly	14%	33%
DON'T KNOW	28%	7%

One fifth of members have had shingles (21%).

Have you ever had a case of shingles, or 'Herpes Zoster'?

Yes	21%
No	79%

It is clear shingles are painful, as fully one third describe their experience as one of “extreme” pain and discomfort (36%), while a further 4-in-10 describe “some” pain and discomfort (42%).

How would you characterize the discomfort you experienced?

Extreme pain and discomfort	36%
Some pain and discomfort	42%
Discomfort	10%
Annoying but not that bad	12%

There is wide agreement with free vaccinations for shingles (83%), mostly because it’s good public health (46%) or saves money in the long run (34%). Just one tenth don’t agree with free vaccinations (12%).

Shingles are derived from the virus that causes chicken pox, and can be prevented with a simple vaccine. Most provinces pay for the vaccine for seniors. Do you think the government should pay for vaccinations against shingles for all Canadians?

YES	83%
Yes, good public health	46%
Yes, saves money	34%
Yes (OTHER)	3%
NO	12%
No, people should be responsible	6%
No, too costly	4%
No (OTHER)	2%
DON’T KNOW	5%

The wide majority of members say they are engaged in their health care (80%), and one third say they are “very engaged” (32%).

How engaged do you feel you are in your own health care? That is, are you involved, informed, kept in the loop and consulted by medical professionals?

ENGAGED	80%
Very engaged	32%
Engaged	48%
NOT ENGAGED	20%
Not very engaged	16%
Not at all engaged	4%
DON’T KNOW	*

Time spent with one's doctor is a key indicator of engagement in one's health care. Members are overwhelmingly likely to say they had enough time at their last medical appointment (82%).

The last time you consulted a medical professional, do you believe you were given the time you needed to learn what you needed to know?

Yes	82%
No	17%
DON'T KNOW	1%

Ontario Political Issues

One tenth of CARP members in Ontario members say they watched or listened to the CARP Provincial Debate (11%), mostly on Vision TV's rebroadcast (5%).

Did you watch or listen to the CARP Ontario Provincial election debate on September 27?

YES	11%
On Vision TV	5%
On AM 740	3%
On a CARP website	3%
NO	89%

Among those who watched or listened to the debate, there is a tie between Christine Elliott, the Conservative Health Critic (21%) and Deb Matthews, the Liberal Minister of Health (19%) for the debater who best addressed CARP's issues. Somewhat fewer thought Michael Prue, NDP Critic for Disability, addressed these issues (13%).

Which party's candidate do you think best addressed the issues you think are important to older Ontarians?

Christine Elliott, PC	21%
Deb Matthews, Liberal	19%
Michael Prue, NDP	13%
Mike Schreiner, Green	3%
NONE OF THEM	19%
DON'T KNOW	25%

Just more than one half of Ontario members watched the televised Ontario leaders' debate on September 27 (54%).

Did you watch the Ontario provincial leader's debate on Tuesday, September 27?

Yes	54%
No	46%

Once again, Ontario members are split, with one quarter thinking Dalton McGuinty, Liberal leader best addressed the issues (26%) and a similar proportion thinking Tim Hudak, Progressive Conservative leader did (24%). Andrea Horwath, NDP leader, falls somewhat behind (21%).

Which party's leader do you think best addressed the issues you think are important to older Ontarians?

Dalton McGuinty, Liberal	26%
Tim Hudak, PC	24%
Andrea Horwath, NDP	21%
NONE OF THEM	25%
DON'T KNOW	4%

Few members say the debate changed their minds on who to vote for (13%).

Did anything you saw or heard in the leaders' debate cause you to change your mind on who to vote for?

Yes	13%
No	87%

Once again, members are split, with one third preferring Dalton McGuinty for premier (34%) and a similar proportion preferring Tim Hudak (32%). Andrea Horwath picks up just half this level of votes (14%).

Which party's leader do you would make the best premier of Ontario?

Dalton McGuinty, Liberal	34%
Tim Hudak, PC	32%
Andrea Horwath, NDP	14%
Mike Schreiner, Green	1%
NONE OF THEM	13%
DON'T KNOW	6%

Two thirds have no opinion on who would make the best NDP leader, but Brian Topp leads among those who do (10%), followed by Tom Mulcair (8%), Paul Dewar (6%) and Olivia Chow (5%).

Who do you think would make the best leader for the federal NDP?

Brian Topp	10%
Thomas Mulcair	8%
Paul Dewar	6%
Olivia Chow	5%
David Miller	2%
Nycole Turmel	1%
Romeo Saganash	1%
Adam Giambrone	*
OTHER	4%
DON'T KNOW	63%

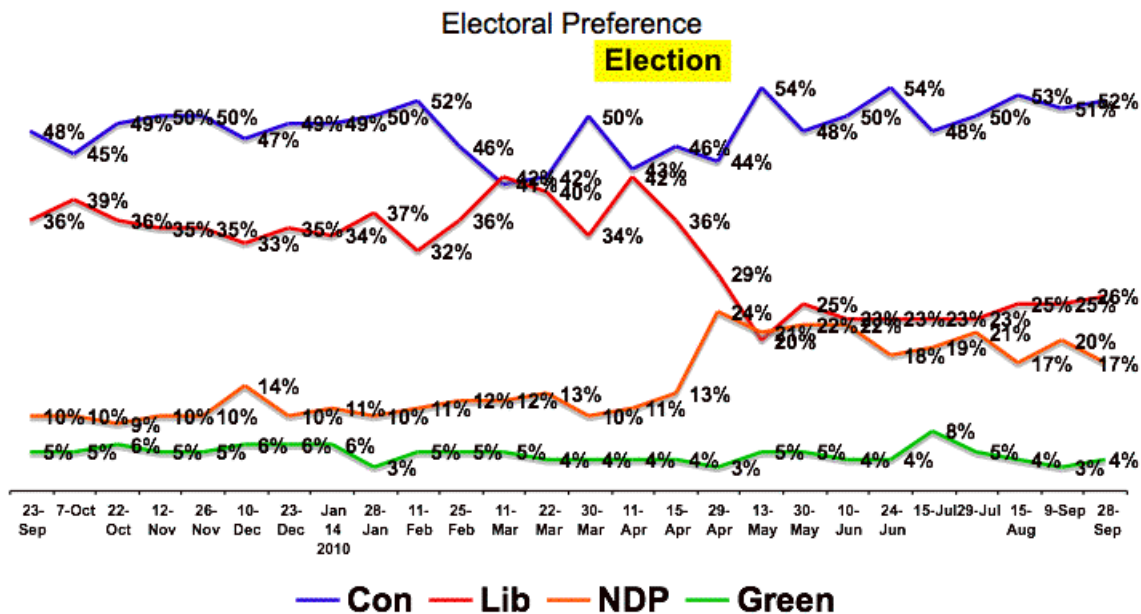
Just more than one third do not know who would make the best Liberal leader federally (38%), but among those who have an opinion, Frank McKenna has the clear lead (19%), followed by Bob Rae (15%) and Justin Trudeau (11%).

Who do you think would make the best leader for the federal Liberal party?

Frank McKenna	19%
Bob Rae	15%
Justin Trudeau	11%
Gerard Kennedy	8%
Dominic LeBlanc	4%
Marc Garneau	2%
Robert Ghiz	1%
Martin Cauchon	*
OTHER	3%
DON'T KNOW	38%

ELECTORAL PREFERENCE

While the Conservative Party remains dominate (52%), the Liberals (26%) have drawn ahead of the NDP (17%) and now occupy second place on their own. The NDP have declined (from 20% to 17%) since the last wave of polling, and this may be due to the wearing off of the wave of sympathy following Jack Layton's death..



Over 2000 CARP Poll™ panel members responded to this poll between September 28 and October 1. The margin of error for a sample this size is plus or minus 2.2%, 19 times out of 20. That is, if you asked all members of the CARP Poll™ panel the identical questions, their responses would be within 2%, either up or down, of the results shown here, 95% of the time