

## Media Release

### **2018 Canada's health care report card indicates pessimism about wait times, support for health care teams**

**OTTAWA, ONTARIO.** August 22, 2018. Results of the 13<sup>th</sup> version of the Health Care in Canada (HCIC) survey were announced today in Ottawa. HCIC survey members are a group of national, multi-institutional health care stakeholders including many of the country's top professional associations, not-for-profit health organizations and institutions.

Since 1998, the HCIC survey has collected data on how the adult public and health professionals in Canada perceive the state of our health care system. This has allowed trending of major strengths and concerns, as well as identifying what doctors, nurses, pharmacists, other health professionals and administrators, and patients and their caregivers support as major opportunities for improvement in health care quality, accessibility and affordability.

The 2018 survey looked at a variety of issues including opinions about the implementation of a national Pharmacare program, whether individuals diagnosed with a chronic disease take their medications as prescribed, timeliness of access to health care, quality of health care, challenges faced by non-professional caregivers as well as options for end-of-life care and the opioid crisis.

Among the highlights of this year's survey:

**Wait times are the top concern.** Some 43% of the public and 31-41% of health professionals identified wait times as the most important health care issue in Canada. According to respondents, timely access to the health care system has decreased over the last 5 years and only health care administrators think timely access will improve in the next 5 years.

**Team based health care is thought to be the best way to increase access to health professionals.**

While 80% of the public support/strongly support encouraging health professionals to work in teams with other types of health care providers, the level of support varies amongst health care providers (62-72%) and stands at only 38% for administrators. According to survey respondents, 99% of nurses and 91% of physicians say they work with at least one other health care professional on a routine basis for the care of their patients.

**Four in ten people** diagnosed with a chronic disease take prescription medications on a regular basis; of these, **six in ten don't take their medicines as prescribed.** The top reported reasons for non-adherence were forgetfulness and taking medication based upon how the individual feels.

When asked to choose **the best option to enhance access to prescription medications**, 32% of the public voted to have the federal government allocate funds to fill in the gaps for drug costs for those not currently covered by any public or employer sponsored drug plan, those who have insufficient funding and those who can not afford their medications, while 29% opted for a single national public Pharmacare plan operated by the federal government and funded by taxes collected by the federal government. Separate

regional public Pharmacare plans in each province and territory, funded by taxes collected by both the federal government and the provincial governments, was ranked first by 12% of the public. Health professional choices also varied, e.g., 46% of pharmacists and 20% of administrators selected the single national Pharmacare option.

According to Dr. Terrence Montague, Principal at *CareNet* Health Management and consultant to the HCIC survey initiative, the raw data and survey results provide important information that health care policy makers can use in informed decision-making, legislators can use to guide our legal and regulatory health-care framework and researchers can use as a starting point for further studies.

“The survey is a comprehensive report card on our health care system and the detailed results are worthy of closer examination.” Montague says. “The HCIC survey provides incredibly rich data and insights on what people in Canada think about their health and their health care system, as well as the diverging and converging opinions of patients, physicians, nurses, pharmacists and others on a specific issue. A second important feature is the survey can track how opinions and beliefs continue to change over time.”

The survey and survey results can be found at: <http://www.mcgill.ca/hcic-sssc/>

### **About the Health Care in Canada Survey**

The Health Care in Canada Survey has been helping stakeholders understand what the public and health professionals in Canada think about their own health and the quality of their health care system since 1998.

The results of the 2018 HCIC Survey were derived from an online survey questionnaire conducted in May and June 2018 of a nationally representative sample of the adult public, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, administrators, other health professionals including nutritionists/dieticians, occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists and social workers. Some 1500 members of the public completed the survey as well as a sample of 100 doctors, 100 nurses, 100 pharmacists, 100 administrators and 100 other health professionals. The estimated margin of error was  $\pm 2.5\%$  among the public and  $\pm 9.8\%$  for each professional group (excluding the group of “other health professionals”).

The Health Care in Canada Survey has been conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights ([www.pollara.com](http://www.pollara.com)) since inception, supported by the HCIC survey partners, with principal funding from Merck Canada. Current members include the Canadian Cancer Society; Canadian Home Care Association; Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association; Canadian Medical Association; Canadian Nurses Association; Canadian Pharmacists Association; Constance-Lethbridge Rehabilitation Centre, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Rehabilitation; McGill University; Health Charities Coalition of Canada; HealthCareCAN; Innovative Medicines Canada; Institute of Health Economics; Studer Group Canada; Merck Canada; Strive Health Management; and, *CareNet* Health Management Consulting.

Further information about the Health Care in Canada Survey please visit [www.mcgill.ca/hcic-sssc](http://www.mcgill.ca/hcic-sssc)

## **About Pollara Strategic Insights**

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