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CANADIANS AND THE CANADA HEALTH ACT: RENEWED COMMITMENT TO NATIONAL PRINCIPLES

In the midst of controversy over healthcare, Canadians in most regions are placing more importance than ever before on the principles of Universality, Accessibility, Portability and Comprehensiveness embedded in the Canada Health Act, although support for the principle of Public Administration of medicare is dropping. According to results recently released by *The Berger Population Health Monitor* from the 21st survey, conducted in May 2000, 85% of respondents consider the principle of Universality “very important,” similar to the response in 1994.

The principle of Accessibility was called “very important” by 81% of Canadians, up from 77% in 1994. The principle of Comprehensiveness was ranked “very important” by 78%, up from 73% in 1994. The principle of Portability was considered “very important” by 75%, down slightly from 78% in 1994.

Quebec was the only region where the “very important” rating for the first four principles did not increase from 1994. Nonetheless, the great majority of Quebecers consider each of the principles to be very or somewhat important.

The biggest change in public attitudes was over the importance given to the principle of Public Administration. In 1994 it received a rating of “very important” from 63% of respondents, but in 2000 only 56% of respondents felt it was very important. Even so, almost nine-in-ten Canadians considered the principle of Public Administration to be very or somewhat important, unchanged since 1994.

Overall, the average “very important” ratings for the five principles combined increased in every province except Quebec. Some of the largest increases are in Alberta, which at the time of the survey was in the midst of the dispute over private hospitals.

Seven-in-ten Canadians outside Quebec believe there should be national healthcare principles rather than each province having its own principles. In Quebec only 47% want national principles; higher than in 1991 when only 38% wanted national principles.



Data supplied by *The Berger Population Health Monitor*, and based on results from the May 2000 survey administered by Environics Research Group among 2,436 Canadians 15 years of age and older.

Topics in *The Berger Population Health Monitor*, which continues *The Canada Health Monitor* surveys of health issues in Canada, are prepared in consultation with The Hay Health Care Consulting Group. For more information contact: Earl Berger, Managing Director by telephone at 416 815-6405 or email at Earl_Berger@haygroup.com.