

Health Care

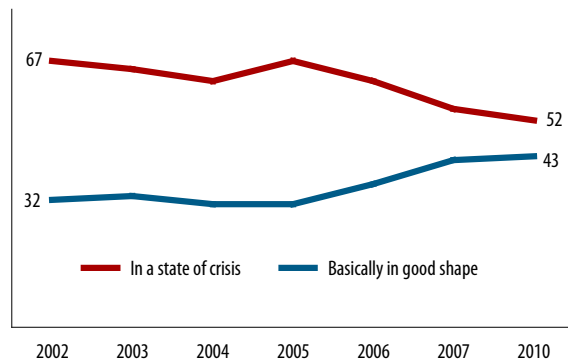
CURRENT STATE OF CANADA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

Health care has not been front and central on the national agenda, and there has been surprisingly little change in the public's broad opinions. Just over four in ten (43%) believe Canada's health care system is basically in good shape (up 1 point from 2007), compared with a bare majority (52%, down 3) who consider it to be in a state of crisis.

This stability masks regional trends, with opinions improving in Atlantic Canada (up 6), B.C. (up 9) and Manitoba (up 16), and declining in Saskatchewan (down 14) and Alberta (down 6). Assessment of the health care system is most positive in Manitoba (63%) and Ontario (50%), and least so in Quebec (25%).

State of Canada's health care system

2002 - 2010



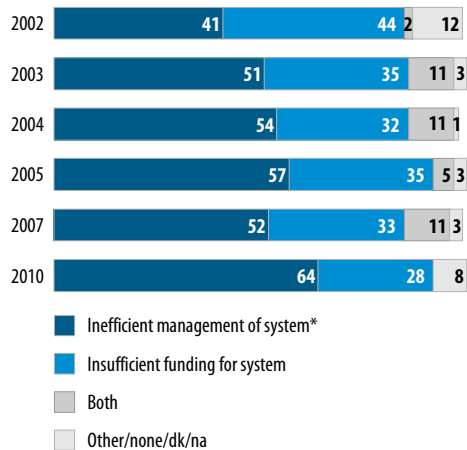
When asked about the main cause of problem in the health care system, an increasing majority of Canadians point to inefficient management of the system (64%) over insufficient funding (28%), continuing a trend dating back to 2003. Emphasis on inefficiency is the majority view across the country, but most widely in Quebec, and least so in Atlantic Canada (53%).

Canadians' assessment of the federal government's performance in managing health care issues is also largely unchanged from 2007. Just over one in three (36%) approve of the government's performance in this area (up 2 points from June 2007), compared with 56 percent who disapprove (down 5).

Since 2007, approval is up in all parts of the country except Saskatchewan (down 20) and Alberta (down 6). Ratings are highest in Atlantic Canada (43%) and the Prairie provinces (42%), and lowest among Quebecers (28%) and women (29%).

Main cause of problems in health care system

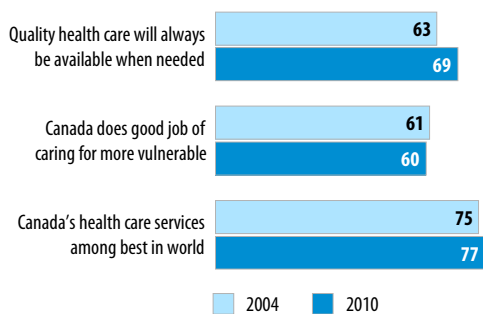
2002 - 2010



* In 2004, "Inefficient management"

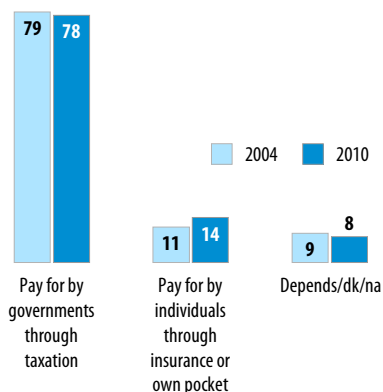
CONFIDENCE IN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. While many Canadians see the country's health care system in crisis, the public's confidence in the system remains remarkably resilient. Seven in ten (69%) believe the quality of the health care system will always be available when needed (up 6 points since 2004), and six in ten (60%, down 1) say it does a good job caring for the vulnerable in society. Three-quarters (77%, up 2) maintain Canada's health care system is among the best in the world. Opinions are largely similar across the country, except in Quebec where the view is more negative.

Confidence in the health care system 2004 - 2010



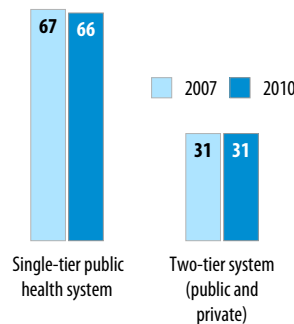
HEALTH CARE FUNDING POLICY. Despite increasing calls from many quarters to relieve pressures on government budgets by introducing private health care options, Canadians remain strongly wedded to the current government-funded single-payer system. Eight in ten (78%) continue to say that their health care expenses should be paid for by governments through tax dollars, rather than by individuals through insurance or other means (14%), largely unchanged from 2004. This view is held widely – voiced by at least three-quarters from every region.

Public vs. private funding of health care expenses 2004 - 2010



Canadians also continue to express a strong preference for a single-tier public health system (66%) over a two-tier system (31%) that includes a private system in which individuals can get faster access by paying directly. These proportions are essentially unchanged since 2007. As before, support for a two-tier system is greater in Quebec (40%), but less so than in 2007 when opinion was evenly split. Support for the current single tier system is strongest in Atlantic Canada and Ontario (73%).

Preferred type of health care system 2007 - 2010



Despite the public's preference for the single-tier system, a small majority (54%) also agree that Canadians should have the right to purchase private health care if they do not receive timely access to services through the public system (up 2 points since 2007). Four in ten (41%, down 4) disagree with this option. Support for private health care continues to be most popular in Quebec (60%), but this is the only part of the country where this view has declined since 2007 (down 9).

Right to buy private health care to ensure timely access 2004 - 2010

