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Attitudes Towards Ontario Health Care Funding

Final Report

July 13, 2000

Submitted to:

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Attitudes Towards Ontario Health Care Funding

Final Report Linked Qualitative and Quantitative Study

July 13, 2000

Study Objectives and Methodology

Objectives

- The study explores some of the underlying public attitudes towards the health care system within the context of the current federal-provincial discussions on the issue.
 - More specifically, the research gauges public awareness and reaction to the Government of Ontario's current public advertising campaign on the issue of health care funding and related issues.
- The research also explores public reaction to a Government of Canada advertisement placed in selected newspapers in response to the Ontario campaign.
 - In addition, draft public information materials were tested in focus groups



Methodology (a)

- A total of eight focus groups were conducted on March 31, 2000 in four locations throughout Ontario
 - ✓ Two groups in each of London, Ottawa, Sudbury and Toronto.
 - ✓ All groups lasted approximately two hours.
- The focus groups were segmented according to two types of participants.
- ✓ Half of the groups included participants who had personally used or taken a family member to use the health care system at least three times in last 12 months.
- ✓ The other half of the groups included participants who had not personally used or taken a family member to use the health care system in the last twelve months
- All focus groups involved the participation of randomly selected members of the general public (with a mix of ages, gender and soci-economic status)
- Members of, and immediate family of, the media, federal or provincial public services and individuals employed in the health care field were not recruited for the groups



Methodology (b)

800 interviews conducted with random sample of Ontario households

- ✓ Provides provincial-wide result accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points at confidence level of 95 per cent
- ✓ Fieldwork conducted March 30 to April 2



Findings: Qualitative

Impacts of Ads

Ads are working

Impressive recall of Ontario ads

- ✓ Television especially almost exclusively
- ✓ Visual of pills (big pile-small pile) immediately recognized and registered

Raising awareness of overall health care issue (funding most dramatic)

Skepticism about the "truth" of Ontario ads

✓ But, still raising significant/serious questions about federal contribution.

Weakening an already eroded federal position

 Quantitative evidence that latest federal Budget missed health care mark



Campaign Not Without Risk for Ontario

Ontario exposed on several fronts

- ✓ Stated dislike of negative tone ("there're all about blame and money")
- ✓ Suspicions about motivation (political/electoral)
- but not surprised to see ads like this from Ontario (linked to previous ad campaigns)
- Raises questions about Ontario's ability to manage/deliver health care
 - suggestion of shifting blame in wake of ineffective stewardship of system



Impact of Canada's Existing Ad

Low recognition/recall

✓ Overall, little unprompted impact registered

Once introduced, mixed reactions

- ✓ Conciliatory tone resonant; but not enough without more details
- ✓ Some sense that ad is reactive and defensive
- ✓ But, clear positive is view that it is less negative than Ontario ads

Quantitative evidence that federal ad advances federal position in a much more subtle fashion than do the Ontario ads for the Ontario position



Reaction to New/Proposed Ads: No Clear Winner (a)

- "Close Hospitals. Open Hospitals...."
- ✓ Seen as true, highly resonant ("this sure tells it the way it happened")
- ✓ Too adversarial for some, while others feel "just telling the truth"
- ✓ Visual image not strong
- "A Strong Commitment ..."
 - ✓ Positive/conciliatory elements well-received
 - ✓ Proportional shares of funding confusing and off-message for many (although curious about "truth" on the money question)
 - ✓ Visual image not strong



Reaction to New/Proposed Ads: No Clear Winner (b)

- **Letter from Prime Minister**
- ✓ Tested well (Toronto exception)
- ✓ Appealing on several points:
 - > straight-facts approach
 - signed by PM
 - perception that it was not meant to be seen by public ("must be true")
- ✓ Less appeal for others:
 - > Too long
 - Scepticism about the numbers (confusion)





Strategic Considerations

- Opportunities for Canada to Proceed with New Ads
 - ✓ Profile of issue high
 - ✓ Expectation for response
 - Not responding seen as validation of Ontario's message
 - ✓ Resonance of Government of Canada as "senior-level" of government national role in broader system (equal access, etc..)

Exposures for Canada in Proceeding with New Ads

- ✓ Cynicism with overall process of ad war
 - Waste of public tax dollars that might go to health care
 - No clear win in wading into funding war (Or, more generally, an ad "war")
- ✓ Public's patience eroding, little tolerance of any perceived stalling
- No clear "win" in responding, yet response expected
- ✓ Clear expectation to "set record straight" on funding question



Conclusions: Qualitative

Conclusions (a)

Proceed with response, but exercise caution

- ✓ Clear public expectation
- ✓ But, little potential or likelihood of "thank you"
- ✓ Tone and substance critical
- ✓ Apply lessons from Ontario campaign so far
 - > Low appeal of blame and numbers
 - stronger appeal of co-operation and plan

Positive messages best, even though not as "memorable"

- ✓ No one states preference for negative ads but they remember them
- Federal advantage appears to be focus on role in improving and securing health care system for the future



Conclusions (b)

Key Messages

- ✓ Commitment
- ✓ Cooperation
- ✓ Plan
 - details (easy to get, easy to digest)
- ✓ Leadership (bringing players together)

Television the primary medium (TV and print need to be complementary- tone and look)

✓ Swift and brief (must provide opportunity for public to access more info.

 1-800, Canada site, etc...)



Recommendation

Proceed with two-part (positive) message

✓ Highlight national role in ensuring that all partners work together for the future of the health care system

Correct provincial interpretation of funding

- ✓ Quickly and in a matter-of-fact manner
- ✓ Federal government is doing its part on funding
- ✓ Already made commitment to do more

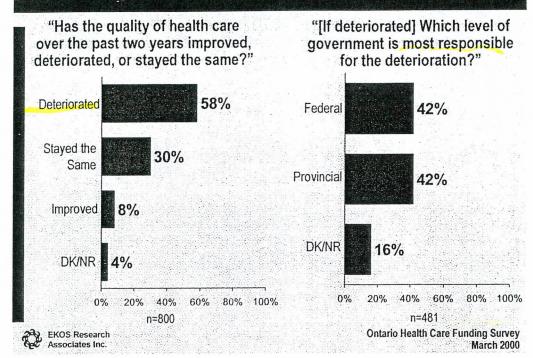
Turn focus and emphasis to "truly" important issues

- ✓ Commitment to action and money
- ✓ Use context of a "real" plan with examples (e.g., home care)
- ✓ Stress that plan is not excuse for inaction



Findings: Quantitative

Perceptions of Health Care System



Quality of Health Care

Deteriorated

Age

<25 (--)

45-64 (++++)

Gender

Women (++++)

Education

LSHS (--)

University (+++)

Region

(613)(-)

(416)(++)

Higher among those who recall all ads, inserts and news coverage

Level of government most responsible

Federal

Gender

Women (---)

Provincial

Age

65+ (--)

Education

LSHS (-)

University (++)

Region

(519)(--)

DK/NR

Gender

Women (++)

Age

65+ (++)

Education

LSHS (+)

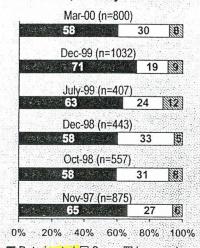
University (---)

Region

(519) (++)

Tracking Perceptions of Health Care System

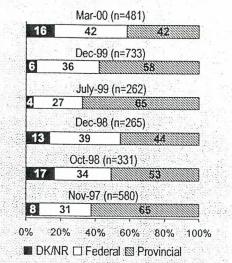
"Has the quality of health care over the past two years improved, deteriorated, or stayed the same?"



Deteriorated ☐ Same ☑ Improved

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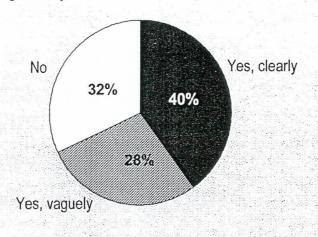
"Which level of government is most responsible for the deterioration?"



Rethinking Government

Recall of Issues (a)

"Recently, the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada have been talking about the federal and provincial contributions to health care funding. Have you heard or seen anything about this?"





n=800

Ontario Health Care Funding Survey March 2000

RECALL CLEARLY

Age

<25 (----)

25-44 (---)

45-64 (++++)

65+ (+++)

Education

LSHS (----)

University (++++)

Income

20-39K (--)

60K+ (++)

NO RECALL

Age

<25 (++++)

45-64 (----)

Education

LSHS (++++)

University(----)

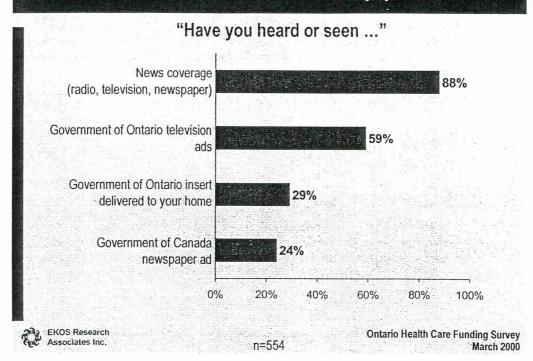
Income

20-39K (++)

40-59K (+++)

60K+ (---)

Recall of Issues (b)



Government of ON TV ads

Age

45-64 (--)

Income

20-39K (+++)

60K+ (---)

Government of ON insert

Age

25-44 (--)

65+ (++)

Income

60K+ (--)

Employed in Health Care (++++)

Government of Canada newspaper ad

Age

45-64 (++)

Education

College (++)

News coverage

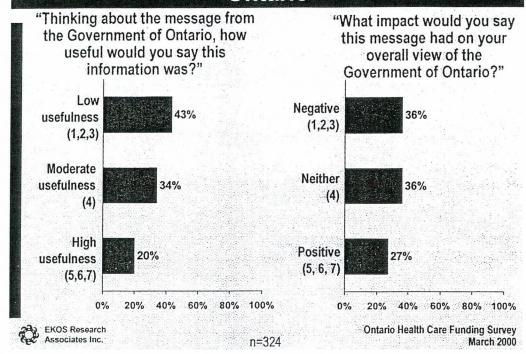
Education

LSHS (-)

Income

60K+ (+)

Rating Information from Government of Ontario



Usefulness

Low usefulness

Education

University (++)

Impact of message

Negative

Gender

Women (+++)

Neither

Income

<20K (--)

60K+ (++)

Positive

Gender

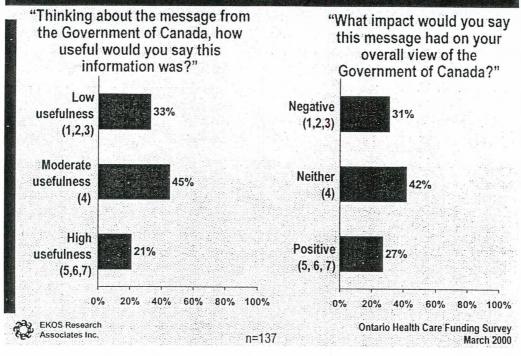
Men (++)

Income

<20K (+)

60K+ (-)

Rating Information from Government of Canada



Usefulness

Low Usefulness

Region

(519)(--)

Education

LSHS (--)

Income

40-59K (--)

60K+ (++)

Higher among those who recall Ontario Insert

High Usefulness

Region

(519)(+)

Education

LSHS (+)

Income

40-59K (++)

Impact of message

Neither

Education

LSHS (-)

Age

45-64 (++)

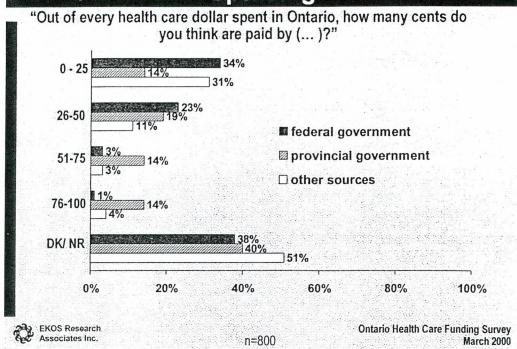
Higher among those who recall Ontario Insert

Positive

Region

(519) (++)

Perception of Portion of Health Care Spending



Federal Gvt 0-25		ONT Gvt 0-25		Other sources 0-25	<u>3</u>
Gender	Men(++)	Age	<25 (+)	Region	(613) (+++)
Age	25-44 ()		65+ ()	Gender	Men (+++)
Region	20 44 ()	26-50		Education	LSHS ()
rtegion	(613) (-)	Income	<20K ()		University (++++)
Higher among				Income	<40K (-)
	those who saw	51-75			60K+ (++++)
	government ads	Education	University (++++)	26-50	
on TV		Income	60K+ (++++)	Age	<25 (++)
26-50		76-100		51-75	
Age	65+ ()	Gender	Men (++++)	No significant vari	ation
Income		-	ose who saw the ON		
	<20K ()	governme	nt ads on TV	76-100	
	60K+ (+++)			Region	(613) ()
Higher among	those who saw	DK/NR		Age	<25 (+++)
	Govt newspaper	Age	65+ (+++)		
ad	out nonepape.	Gender	Women (+++)	DK/NR	
uu		Income	<20K (+++)	Region	(905) (++)
E4 7E				Age	65+ (+++)
51-75				Gender	Women (++)
No significant va	ariation			Education	LSHS (+++)
					University ()
76-100				Income	<20K (++)
No significant va	ariation				60K + ()

17

DK/NR

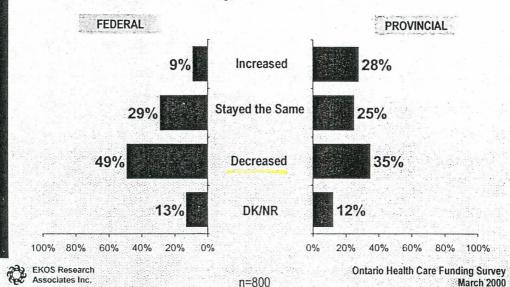
Age

<25 (--)

65+ (+++)

Changes in Share of Spending

"Over the past three years, would you say that the share of Ontario's health care contributions paid by the (...) government has increased, decreased, or stayed the same?



FEDERAL

Increased

Employed in Health Care (+++)
Higher among those who recall
fed. gvt newspaper ad
(++)

Same

Age 45-64 (-) Education University (--)

Decreased

Region (613) (++) Age <25 (-) 45-64 (++) 65+ (-)

University (++)

DK/NR

Education

Age 65+ (++++)

PROVINCIAL

Increased

Gender Men (++)
Education University (+++)
Income 20-39K (---)
Higher among those who recall
Federal Government ad &
Ontario Government TV ad

Same

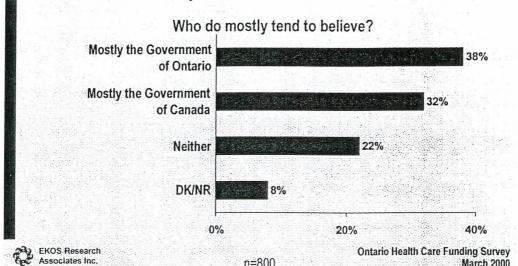
Age 45-64 (--) Region (905) (--)

Decreased

Age 45-64 (+++) 65+ (---) Gender Women (+)

Believability of Messages

The Government of Ontario claims that the Government of Canada is only paying roughly 11 cents out of every dollar of annual health care costs in Ontario. The Government of Canada claims that it pays roughly 34 cents out of every dollar of annual health care costs in Ontario.



n=800

Mostly Government of Ontario

Region

(613)(+)

(416)(--)

Age

25-44 (++)

Gender

Men (+)

Education

University (---)

Mostly Government of Canada

Region

(416)(++)

Age

<25 (+++)

Gender

Women (++)

Education

University (++)

Income

60K+ (+)

Neither

Age

<25 (---)

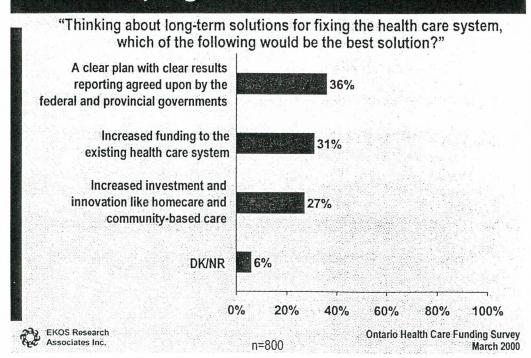
45-64 (++)

DK/NR

Age

65+ (+++)

Long-Term Solutions



Increase funding

Age

45-64 (---)

Education

LSHS (++)

University (--)

Income

20-39K (++)

40-59K (-)

Lower among those who recall Ontario insert , Federal Gvt ad

· Increase investment in new programs

Education

LSHS (--)

Employed in Health Care (++)

Clear plan

Income

<20K (---)

60K+ (++)

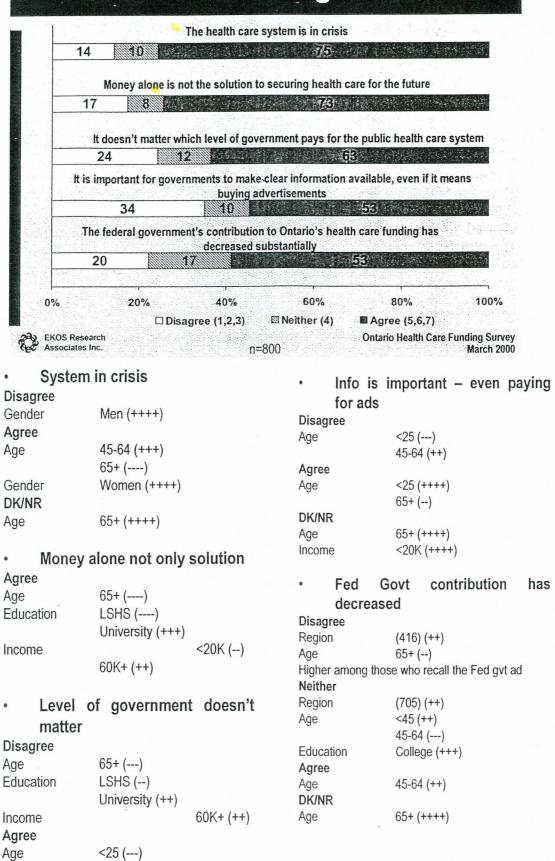
Higher among those who recall Ontario insert , Federal ad and news coverage

DK/NR

Age

65+ (++++)

Health Care Funding in Ontario



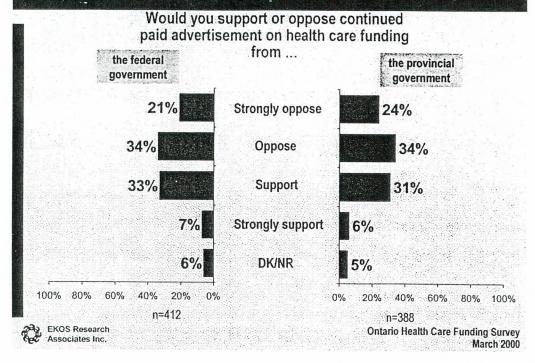
21

45+ (++)

Education

LSHS (++)

Paid Advertisements on Health Care Funding



Federal government ads

Strongly oppose

Age

Opposition higher among those who recall Ontario insert and news coverage

Support

Age

Provincial government ads

Strongly oppose

Region

$$(613)(--)$$

$$(905) (+++)$$

Age

NOT employed in Health Care (++)

Opposition higher among those who recall Ontario insert

Support

Age

Conclusions: Quantitative

The Ads (a)

Ontario campaign is having an impact...

- Recall high, especially for TV ads (the "pills" are easily remembered)
- ✓ Awareness of funding issue, federal and provincial share
- ✓ Federal advantage over province vis-à-vis responsibility for perceived deterioration of health care is eroding
- ✓ Those who've seen the ads more likely to place federal share below 25 cents of every dollar

...BUT

- ✓ Stated reaction tends to be muted
- ✓ Plurality say the Ontario message is not useful, strong majority say it has had negative or neutral impact on views of Ontario government



The Ads (b)

- With smaller (and uniquely print) buy, Federal ad has much lower recall than Ontario TV ad, close to tied with direct-to-home flyer
- ✓ As with Ontario message, low usefulness and stated impact on views of federal government
- Marginally higher believability for Ontario's stance on funding versus Ottawa's (but 1 in 5 believe neither)

Few will say they "like" ads, portrayed as

- ✓ American, negative, attack (possibly more expected from Ontario than Ottawa)
- ✓ Missing the point "This isn't about health care!"
- ✓ Inter-jurisdictional squabbling, and "it's all our tax dollars"
- Acceptance/belief that a response is appropriate if misinformation exists in Ontario ads, but few (no one?) likely to thank either side
 - ✓ Support and opposition to further advertising is essentially tied



Health Care

- Possible rebound in perceived state of health care in Ontario, but those who say it is worsening outnumber those saying status quo by 2:1
 - While pluralities believe both feds and province have decreased funding, this sentiment is stronger when thinking about Ottawa
 - ✓ For Queen's Park, residents are much more closely split between believing funding has increased, stayed stable or decreased

It's about more than money

✓ While \$ are important, other issues are far more resonant.

Debates over funding can turn people off

- ✓ Either missing the point, or
- "Playing with numbers you can make them say what you want"



Annex: Survey Questionnaire

Hello, my name is...and I work for Ekos Research Associates. We are conducting a survey on behalf of the Government of Canada concerning the views of Ontario residents 18 years of age and older, on several important issues in the news today. The interview will take approximately 8 minutes and I think that you will find it interesting. All of your responses will be kept completely confidential. May I begin?

@intro

1- Continue, SHIFT +? to terminate

*** DO NOT MENTION THAT IT IS A SURVEY ON HEALTH CARE FUNDING *** **INTRO** see screen Continue......1 ROT1 => * if IF((ROT1==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT1) rot for Q11 SEX DO NOT ASK Record gender of respondent Male......1 O1A In your opinion, has the quality of health care in Canada over the past two years deteriorated, improved, or stayed the same? Please respond using a 7-point scale where 1 means greatly deteriorated, 7 means greatly improved, and the mid-point 4 means stayed the same. 22 33 4 Stayed the same _____4 55 6......6 DK/NR.....9

Q1B	
=> +1 if NOT Q1A=#1-#3	
Which level of government, federal or provincial, would you say is most responsible for the deterioration? Federal	
Provincial2	
DK/NR9	
Q2	
IF YES, PROMPT FOR CLEAR OR VAGUE RECALL	
Recently, the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada have been talking about federal and provincial contributions to health care funding. Have you heard or seen anything about this?	
Yes, clearly1	
Yes, vaguely2	
No	
DK/NR9	
Q3	
=> Q6A if NOT Q2=#1-#2	
READ LIST, SELECT ALL THAT APPLY	
Have you heard or seen	
Rotation => 4	
Government of Ontario television ads	
Government of Canada newspaper ad	
News coverage (radio, television, newspaper)	
(DO NOT READ) None of the above5	X
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR9	\rangle
Q4A	
=> +2 if NOT Q3=#1	
Thinking about the message from the Government of Ontario, how useful would you say this information was? Please respond using a 7-point scale where 1 is not at all useful, 7 is extremely useful, and the mid-point 4 is	
moderately useful.	
1 Not at all useful	
22	
3	
4 Somewhat useful	
5	
×	



-	-	4	-	
	n	л		ď
•	,	4		0

What impact would you say this message had on your overall view of the Government of Ontario? Please respond using a 7-point scale where 1 is extremely negative, 7 is extremely positive, and the mid-point 4 is neither negative or positive.

1 Extremely negative	
2	
3	
4 Neither	
5	5
6	
7 Extremely positive	
DK/NR	g

5ab

Q5A

=> +2 if NOT Q3=#3

Thinking about the message from the Government of Canada, how useful would you say this information was? Please respond using a 7-point scale where 1 is not at all useful, 7 is extremely useful, and the mid-point 4 is moderately useful.

1 Not at all useful	1
2	
3	3
4 Somewhat useful	4
5	5
6	6
7 Extremely useful	7
DK/NR	9

Q5B

What impact would you say this message had on your overall view of the Government of Canada? Please respond using a 7-point scale where 1 is extremely negative, 7 is extremely positive, and the mid-point 4 is neither negative or positive.

I Extremely negative	1
2	
3	
4 Neither	
5	
6	
7 Extremely positive	7
DK/NR	9

aharc

Broadly speaking, out of every health care dollar spent in Ontario, how many cents do you think are paid by:

The federal government:

@q6a

The provincial government:

@q6b

Other sources (e.g., private

@q6c insurance plans, average citizens)

*** FOR EACH QUESTION, ENTER A NUMBER BETWEEN 0 AND 100, OR 999 FOR DK/NR***

*** NOTE: IN ORDER TO CONTINUE THE SURVEY, THE THREE RESPONSES MUST ADD UP TO 100, UNLESS AT LEAST ONE RESPONSE IS A DK/NR

O₆A

Federal government

DK/NR.......999

Q₆B

Provincial government

DK/NR.......999

Q6C

Other sources (e.g., private insurance plans, average citizens)

DK/NR999

CHECK

=> Q6A else => +1 if Q6A+Q6B+Q6C<>100 AND NOT (Q6A=#1 OR Q6B=#1 OR Q6C=#1)

Check to see if three valid responses add up to 100, skip back if not ***Note that if there is one or more DK/NR response, it will not skip back

Q7A

Rotation => Q7B

Over the past three years, would you say that the share of Ontario's health care contributions paid by the FEDERAL government has increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Decreased ______2 Stayed the same ______3

Q7B

Over the past three years, would you say that the share of Ontario's health care contributions paid by the PROVINCIAL government has increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Increased	1
Decreased	
Stayed the same	3
DK/NR	

O8

READ LIST

The Government of Ontario claims that the Government of Canada is only paying roughly 11 cents out of every dollar of annual health care costs in Ontario. The Government of Canada claims that it pays roughly 34 cents out of every dollar of annual health care costs in Ontario. Who do you mostly tend to believe?

Rotation \Rightarrow 2

Mostly the Government of Ontario	1
Mostly the Government of Canada	2
(DO NOT READ) Neither	3
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR	

Q9

READ LIST

Thinking about long-term solutions for fixing the health care system, which of the following three would be the best solution for fixing the health care system?

Rotation => 3

Totalion 5 0	
ncreased funding to the existing health care system	1
ncreased investment and innovation like homecare and community-based care	
A clear plan with clear results reporting agreed upon by the federal and	
provincial governments	3
DO NOT ŘEAD) DK/NR	9

PRQ10



For each of the following questions, please indicate your level of agreement by using a 7-point scale where 1 is totally disagree, 7 is totally agree, and the mid-point 4 is neither agree nor disagree.

Q10A

X	
Rotation => Q10E	
I don't really think it matters which level of go	overnment pays for the public
health care system because it is all our tax dol	
1 Totally disagree	
2	
3	
4 Neither	4
5	5
5	6
7 Totally agree	
DK/NR	
JN/ 1410	
Q10B	
think that it is important for government	
available about health care, even if that me	ans using tax dollars to buy
ndvertisements	,
Totally disagree	1
}	
Neither	
j	
Totally agree	
DK/NR	9
2400	
Q10C	
The health care system is in crisis	
Totally disagree	1
10 may along tee	
Neither	
Totally agree	
DK/NR	9
2400	
Q10D	
The federal government's contribution to Onto	ario's health care funding has
lecreased substantially	
Totally disagree	4
	_
N. 1.1	
Neither	
	5
	6
Totally agree	

1	$\boldsymbol{\alpha}$	1
		\blacksquare

Money	alone	is not	the	solution	to	securing	the	health	care	system	for	the
future										,		

1 Totally disagree	1
2	
3	
4 Neither	4
5	
6	
7 Totally agree	7
DK/NR	0

Q11

Thinking about the <rot1 > government, would you strongly oppose, oppose, support, or strongly support continued paid advertisements on health care funding?

Strongly oppose	1
Oppose)
Support 3	3
Strongly support	L
DK/NR)

STATS

Now I have a few more questions to be used for statistical purposes only.

HOUSE

One person, living alone	01
One adult with child/children	02
A married or common-law couple, without children	03
A married or common-law couple, with children	04
Two or more unrelated persons	05
Living with relatives other than parents	06
More than one adult with child/children	07
Other (please specify)	98
DK/NR	99

O

EDUC

13 WI

	EMPLO	
	Which of the following categories best describes your CURRENT	
4	employment status?	
1	Self-employed01	
	Employed full-time	
	Employed run time	
	Seasonal employment	
	Term/casual employment	
	Unemployed	
	Student	
	Retired	
	Homemaker	
	Disability / sick leave	
	Maternity / paternal leave	
	Other (please specify)	О
	DK/NR	O
	DK/14K	
	HLTH	
	Are you or anyone in your household employed in the health care field,	
15	either directly or indirectly?	
	Yes1	
	No	
	DK/NR	
	DK/ WK	
	AGE	
	READ CATEGORIES IF NECESSARY	
	What is your age, please?	
1	Under 2501	
b	25-34 years	
	35-44 years	
	45-54 years	
	55-64 years	
	65 years or older	
	(DO NOT READ) DK/NR	
	(DO NOT KEILD) DIQ NK IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	
	INCOM	
17	What is your annual HOUSEHOLD income from all sources before taxes?	
1+	<\$20,000	
	\$20,000-\$39,999	
	\$40,000-\$59,999	
	\$60,000-\$79,999	
	\$80,000 or more	
	DK/NR	
	7	
	THNK	
	End of Interview	
	Thank you for your cooperation and time!	
	Completion	D
	1	