

**CARP Physician Salary Poll Report
June 4, 2012**

Key Findings

CARP members agree that cuts to doctors' and specialists' fees are just a drop in the bucket, and will not by themselves solve the health care spending crisis. Nevertheless, they want them to go ahead, and they want the provinces to cooperate in setting national fee schedules for doctors to prevent the kind of 'jurisdiction-shopping' some fear might occur as a result of fee cuts.

While members claim to be 'light' users of the health care system (up to four times a year), they recognize older patients are not well-served, either by family doctors or by specialists, and this is seen to be a failure in the medical profession itself, led by doctors unwilling to take on senior patients.

The Conservative Party has returned to the lead in CARP voter preference, although the NDP is now firmly in second place, supplanting the Liberals.

ATTITUDES TO FEE CUTS

The strong majority of CARP members disagree that health care spending can be controlled by cutting fees for family doctors (70%) and specialists (60%).

How much do you agree health care spending can be controlled by freezing or cutting family doctors' fees?/ How much do you agree health care spending can be controlled by freezing or cutting fees for specialists like radiologists, cardiologists and ophthalmologists?

	GPs	Specialists
AGREE	21%	31%
Agree strongly	3%	6%
Agree	18%	25%
DISAGREE	70%	60%
Disagree	46%	41%
Disagree strongly	24%	19%
DON'T KNOW	10%	9%

When it comes to costs savings with respect to physicians' practices, few support the most direct route (reduce fees for all doctors - 2%, reduce fees for specialists - 1%), and instead, buy into the somewhat dated presumption that there are efficiencies yet to be found in the system (review procedures - 32%, reduce non-medical administrative salaries - 26%). The most concrete suggestion is supported by 1-in-7 (fewer doctors, more nurse practitioners, etc - 14%).

Which of the following initiatives do you think would be most acceptable if the goal of governments were to control spending on healthcare?

Review procedures for efficiencies and best practices	32%
Reduce non-medical administrative salaries	26%
Fewer doctors, more nurse practitioners etc	14%
Independent review of billing practices	9%
Reduces fees for all doctors	2 %
Reduce fees for specialists only	1%
OTHER	6%
DON'T KNOW	9%

The majority agree with cutting fees for some procedures which have become simpler or more routine (57%).

The province of Ontario has decided to reduce the rates it pays specialists, such as cardiologists, radiologists and ophthalmologists, for some procedures which have become simpler and less expensive due to technological advances. How much do you agree with this idea?

AGREE	57%
Agree strongly	12%
Agree	45%
DISAGREE	34%
Disagree	24%
Disagree strongly	11%
DON'T KNOW	9%

One half of members fear that fee cuts will lead to an exodus of family doctors from the province (49% likely).

It has been suggested this will cause specialists to close their practices and leave the province. How likely do you think this is?

LIKELY	49%
Very likely	14%
Somewhat likely	35%
NOT LIKELY	45%
Not very likely	38%
Not at all likely	7%
DON'T KNOW	6%

Two thirds of members agree that all provinces should cooperate on setting doctors' fees to prevent jurisdiction-shopping (63%).

The Ontario government has suggested to the other provinces that they should all agree on common rates for doctors, to control costs and prevent doctors from moving from one province to another for higher pay. How much do you agree with this idea?

AGREE	63%
Agree strongly	19%
Agree	44%
DISAGREE	31%
Disagree	23%
Disagree strongly	8%
DON'T KNOW	6%

Most believe cutting fees for some procedures will lead to trouble (44%).

Do you believe cutting fees for some procedures would lead to negative health outcomes?

Yes	44%
No	38%
DON'T KNOW	18%

USAGE OF HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Virtually all CARP members have a personal physician (97%).

Do you have a family doctor or personal physician?

Yes	97%
No	3%

The wide majority of members say they visit their doctor or use the health care system rarely or sometimes, equivalent to 4 or fewer times a year in each case (79% visit doctor, 75% use health care system)

How often do you visit your personal physician?/How often do you use the health care system, including visiting doctors, specialists and clinics and getting lab tests?

	Visit Doctor	Use System
Rarely (2 times a year or less)	38%	32%
Sometimes (3/4 times a year)	41%	43%
Often (5/6 times a year)	12%	16%
Frequently (>6 times a year)	7%	9%
AVG. # TIMES PER YEAR	3.2	3.5
DON'T HAVE FAMILY DOCTOR	2	n/a

The majority characterize their usage of the health care system as "light" (63%), and, given the results above, this would seem to translate into about 4 visits or fewer each year.

How would you describe your use of the health care system, including doctors, clinics, specialists and lab tests?

Non-user	1%
Light user	63%
Moderate user	31%
Heavy user	5%

Very few members have consulted a geriatrician or gerontologist (4%).

Have you ever consulted a geriatrician or gerontologist?

Yes	4%
No	96%

Two thirds of members agree their family doctor is trained in the needs of older patients (66%), although close to one fifth claim this is not the case (18%).

How much do you agree your personal physician is adequately trained and knowledgeable about the specific medical needs of older patients?

AGREE	68%
Agree strongly	17%
Agree	51%
DISAGREE	18%
Disagree	15%
Disagree strongly	3%
DON'T KNOW	13%

Three quarters feel they are given enough time with their family doctors (75%).

How much do you agree you are given adequate time with your personal physician and don't feel rushed at appointments?

AGREE	75%
Agree strongly	22%
Agree	53%
DISAGREE	22%
Disagree	17%
Disagree strongly	6%
DON'T KNOW	2%

There is wide agreement that there aren't enough GPs, specialists and geriatricians, but it is GPs which are seen to be the biggest worry (fewer than needed - 77%), rather than specialists (55%) or geriatricians (57%).

How would you describe your province's supply of family doctors?/How would you describe your province's supply of specialists like cardiologists and ophthalmologists?/How would you describe your province's supply of geriatricians?

	GPs	Specialists	Geriatricians
More than needed	2%	2%	1%
About right	14%	23%	7%
Fewer than needed	77%	55%	57%
MARGIN BY "TOO MANY"	-75	-53	-56
DON'T KNOW	7%	19%	35%

On average, CARP members wait just more than a week to see their primary physician, whereas they wait, on average, more than 8 weeks to see a specialist.

How long do you typically have to wait for a routine appointment with your personal physician?/How long do you typically have to wait for a routine appointment with a specialist, like a radiologist, cardiologist or ophthalmologist?

	GP	Specialist
Same day/one day	18%	*
Several days	34%	3%
A week or so	20%	7%
More than a week	18%	18%
More than a month	6%	40%
More then 3 months	1%	22%
More than 6 months	*	9%
More than a year	*	1%
AVG WAIT	1.3 weeks	8.2 weeks
DON'T HAVE FAMILY DOCTOR	2%	n/a

Two thirds have experienced difficulties, or know someone who has, in finding a new doctor who is taking on patients (67%).

Have you or has anyone you know been unable to find a family doctor or personal physician because none were accepting new patients?

Yes	67%
No	33%

The wide majority agree it would be difficult to find a new doctor now (70%).

How easy or difficult do you think it would be if you had to find a new family doctor or personal physician?

EASY	5%
Very easy	1%
Easy	5%
Neither easy nor difficult	20%
DIFFICULT	70%
Difficult	42%
Very difficult	28%
DON'T KNOW	6%

While one third support the idea of special support teams to encourage family doctors to treat older patients (37%), relatively few support the most direct method, compensating doctors extra for the service (12%).

Which one solution do you think would be most successful at persuading family doctors to accept older patients who may have one or more chronic diseases, like diabetes or COPD?

Support teams of nurses, geriatricians, etc	37%
Extra pay for doctors treating older patients	12%
OMA/government to raise awareness	12%
More gerontology in med school	10%
Register of doctors specializing in older patients	7%
“Navigator” to help with system	5%
OTHER	2%
DON'T KNOW	16%

ELECTORAL PREFERENCE

The Conservative Party leads (42%), but at a diminished level since the OAS and F-35 issues made news. After leading the Conservatives for one polling cycle, the NDP (30%) have outstripped the Liberals (24%) and are firmly in second place.

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decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

More than 3300 CARP Poll™ panel members responded to this poll between May 25 and 28. The margin of error for a probability sample this size is plus or minus 1.7%, 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