

CARP Premier's Conference Poll Report August 9, 2013

Key Findings

CARP members look to the premiers for leadership on very important files related to health care reform in general and generic pharmaceutical purchasing specifically, as well as setting national health care standards, but they regard the Premiers' Conferences themselves with some scepticism.

Health care files are seen to be the most important priority for the premiers, followed by pensions and job training, which they see as better managed provincially, even if they don't see any government job training programs as very effective. The shedding of health care and taking back of job training by the federal government is seen as a case of swapping the hard file for the easy one, and making for better campaigning.

CARP members favour abolishing the senate.

Areas where the premiers are seen to be active and effective are cyber-bullying and bullying, affordable housing strategies, generic and brand name drug purchasing and home care, which is seen to be a national priority, while needing provincial funding.

More than half do not think the provinces have handled their health care responsibilities well since they were devolved last year, and most do not think a set of national health care standards will come from the provinces. There is little consensus that progress has been made on the generic drug purchasing and pricing file, which is seen to be extremely important. Pharmacare is also seen to be an important priority for the premiers.

On CPP enhancement, the wide majority agree it is important the premiers work on this goal, which is seen to be necessary and affordable, and which will require lobbying from seniors' organizations to achieve. More media and publicity, especially on the plight of seniors in poverty, is seen to be the best way to move popular and political opinion in the direction of CPP enhancement.

While these conferences are seen to be important for national planning by a third, many see them as photo ops which produce empty promises. Brad Wall of Saskatchewan is seen to be the single most effective of the premiers.

The Liberals are tied with the Conservatives in voter preference, and have been for weeks, while the NDP continues to occupy distant second place.

Detailed Findings

There is strong agreement that health care is the issue most demanding of the Premiers' attention - either national standards (23%) or health care reform (20%). Other issues seen to be important are job training (15%) and enhancing CPP (14%).

The Premiers of the Provinces and Territories met in Ontario this week. As far as you know, what is the most pressing issue they needed to deal with?

| | |
|--|-----|
| National standards for health care | 23% |
| Health care reform | 20% |
| National job training funds and policies | 15% |
| Enhancing CPP | 14% |
| National pharmacare plan | 9% |
| Protecting the environment | 7% |
| Funding OAS replacement from 65 to 67 | 3% |
| Amending PRPP legislation | 2% |
| Older workers | 1% |
| OTHER/DON'T KNOW | 7% |

Two thirds of members agree the provinces are better positioned for job training than the federal government (66%).

The federal government has indicated it will claw back job training funds already destined for the provinces in order to create the new Canada Jobs Grant instead, in which the federal government, the provinces and employers will each share the expense of training and retraining workers. Do you agree or disagree the provinces are better positioned to spend job training money than the federal government?

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| AGREE | 66% |
| Agree strongly | 25% |
| Agree | 41% |
| DISAGREE | 25% |
| Disagree | 15% |
| Disagree strongly | 10% |
| DON'T KNOW | 9% |

Regardless of whether the provinces handle job training better than the federal government, close to two thirds of members say both provincial and federal job training programs are ineffective (61%).

How effective do you think government job training programs have been for older workers, including both federal and provincial programs?

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| EFFECTIVE | 15% |
| Very effective | 1% |
| Somewhat effective | 14% |
| NOT EFFECTIVE | 61% |
| Not very effective | 40% |
| Not at all effective | 21% |
| DON'T KNOW | 24% |

When asked why the federal government wants to shed responsibility for health care, yet take on responsibility for job training, the answers are political - health care is a difficult file with no easy wins (20%), job training is an easy file to campaign on (18%), and the government has an ideological bias against public health care (14%). A significant minority sees job training as a genuine national issue (16%)

Last year the federal government announced block funding to the provinces for health care, with no strings attached. This year, the federal government wants to bring job training back inside the federal government. Why do you think the government would want to shed responsibility for health care yet expand responsibility for job training?

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Health care is difficult file/no easy wins | 20% |
| Job training easy file to campaign on | 18% |
| Jobs and economy are national issues | 16% |
| Government has ideological bias | 14% |
| Health care has always been provincial responsibility | 8% |
| Fixing job training better than fixing health care | 6% |
| Feds administer health care inefficiently | 5% |
| Job training is critical to economic management | 4% |
| Provinces administer job training inefficiently | 2% |
| OTHER/DON'T KNOW | 6% |

About two thirds of CARP members agree with abolishing the senate (62%), and most agree strongly (39%).

Premier Brad Wall of Saskatchewan brought up the issue of abolishing the senate, which Saskatchewan favours. Do you agree or disagree the senate should be abolished?

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| AGREE | 62% |
| Agree strongly | 39% |
| Agree | 23% |
| DISAGREE | 34% |
| Disagree | 25% |
| Disagree strongly | 9% |
| DON'T KNOW | 4% |

More than half of CARP members agree cyber-bullying is an appropriate topic for the Premiers' Conference (59%).

Among the issues the premiers discussed are bullying and cyber-bullying. Do you agree or disagree this is an appropriate topic for this conference?

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| AGREE | 59% |
| Agree strongly | 16% |
| Agree | 43% |
| DISAGREE | 38% |
| Disagree | 29% |
| Disagree strongly | 9% |
| DON'T KNOW | 4% |

The vast majority see it as important that there is a national affordable housing strategy (85%), and one quarter see it as extremely important (25%).

The premiers discussed initiatives related to affordable housing. How important is it that there is a national affordable housing strategy?

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| IMPORTANT | 85% |
| Extremely important | 25% |
| Very important | 28% |
| Important | 32% |
| NOT IMPORTANT | 14% |
| Not very important | 11% |
| Not at all important | 3% |
| DON'T KNOW | 1% |

National home care (32%) and provincial funding for home care (23%) are seen to be the solutions to seniors occupying beds unnecessarily, while other focus on new plant (17%) or empowering nurses and nurse practitioners to work on their own with the elderly (20%).

Premiers Robert Ghiz and Brad Wall, co-chairs of the health care working group, have called on provinces to share ideas on moving seniors out of hospital beds and into their own homes. Which of the following do you think is the best way to do this?

| | |
|---|------------|
| Nationwide home care program | 32% |
| Increased provincial funding for home care | 23% |
| Empower nurses/nurse practitioners | 20% |
| Build more retirement/care facilities | 17% |
| National wait time guarantees/assessments/visits | 4% |
| Awareness building on high cost of filled beds | 2% |
| OTHER/DON'T KNOW | 2% |

Virtually all members think it important that the list of price controlled pharmaceuticals grows (94%) and almost half think it extremely important (43%).

Premiers Ghiz and Wall have announced they will add about a dozen brand-name pharmaceuticals to the list of price-controlled generic drugs. This move could save up to \$10 million a year. How important is it that the provinces continue to add brand name drugs to the list of pharmaceuticals for which they pay reduced prices?

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| IMPORTANT | 94% |
| Extremely important | 43% |
| Very important | 33% |
| Important | 18% |
| NOT IMPORTANT | 3% |
| Not very important | 2% |
| Not at all important | 1% |
| DON'T KNOW | 3% |

The majority do not think the provinces have handled their health care responsibilities well (55%), most saying not very well (40%).

Last year, the federal government said it would continue to help fund health care, but that responsibility for planning and priorities are a provincial responsibility. How well do you think the provinces have handled the health care file since last year?

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| WELL | 34% |
| Very well | 2% |
| Fairly well | 32% |
| NOT WELL | 55% |
| Not very well | 40% |
| Not at all well | 15% |
| DON'T KNOW | 11% |

Most disagree the provinces can set national health care standards without the federal government (60%).

Do you agree or disagree the provinces will set national standards for health care without the participation of the federal government?

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| AGREE | 31% |
| Agree strongly | 5% |
| Agree | 26% |
| DISAGREE | 60% |
| Disagree | 44% |
| Disagree strongly | 16% |
| DON'T KNOW | 10% |

Opinion is split on whether progress has been made on generic drugs (36%), whether it has not (31%) or whether this is unknown (33%).

Among the issues the premiers dealt with last year was generic drug purchasing and pricing. As far as you know, how much progress has been made on this initiative?

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| PROGRESS MADE | 36% |
| A great deal of progress | 7% |
| Some progress | 29% |
| PROGRESS NOT MADE | 31% |
| Not very much progress | 25% |
| No progress at all | 6% |
| DON'T KNOW | 33% |

Virtually all members think it's important the premiers agree on a bulk drug purchasing protocol (96%) and the largest group think it is extremely important (42%)

How important is it that the premiers agree on a protocol for bulk purchasing and reduced pricing of generic drugs for all provinces?

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| IMPORTANT | 96% |
| Extremely important | 42% |
| Very important | 35% |
| Important | 19% |
| NOT IMPORTANT | 3% |
| Not very important | 2% |
| Not at all important | 1% |
| DON'T KNOW | 2% |

Virtually all members think it important that a national pharmacare program be developed (92%) and most say it is extremely important (40%).

How important is it that the premiers begin work on a national pharmacare plan?

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| IMPORTANT | 92% |
| Extremely important | 40% |
| Very important | 31% |
| Important | 21% |
| NOT IMPORTANT | 6% |
| Not very important | 5% |
| Not at all important | 1% |
| DON'T KNOW | 2% |

Almost all agree it is important the premiers work on enhancing CPP (89%), and many say it is extremely important (37%).

How important is it the premiers begin work on consensus to enhance CPP?

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| IMPORTANT | 89% |
| Extremely important | 37% |
| Very important | 28% |
| Important | 24% |
| NOT IMPORTANT | 10% |
| Not very important | 8% |
| Not at all important | 2% |
| DON'T KNOW | 2% |

More than two thirds agree CPP enhancement is needed (69%), mostly because it will help end senior poverty (33%). Those who don't agree (20%) are most likely to say the economy can't afford this yet (14%).

Ontario Premier Wynne, the conference chair, has said she and several premier colleagues want to discuss enhancements to CPP to help Canadians who can't save enough. The Premiers of Saskatchewan and Alberta have said the economy can't afford CPP enhancement yet. Which of these positions do you believe?

| | |
|--|------------|
| CPP ENHANCEMENT NEEDED | 69% |
| Will help end senior poverty | 33% |
| Canadians can't save enough to retire | 18% |
| Economy will benefit from increased spending | 18% |
| NEITHER POSITION | 8% |
| CPP ENHANCEMENT NOT NEEDED | 20% |
| Economy can't support it yet | 14% |
| PRPPs are preferable | 3% |
| CPP is adequate for needs now | 3% |
| OTHER/DON'T KNOW | 3% |

Lobbying by CARP and other organizations is seen as the best way to convince the provinces to agree to CPP enhancement (28%), followed by electoral strategies and media awareness (17% each), more media campaigns (15%) and traditional MP calling (14%).

Federal finance Minister Flaherty insists CPP enhancement can't be done now because there isn't enough agreement among the provinces. How could agreement among the provinces be encouraged?

| | |
|---|------------|
| Organizations like CARP lobbying government | 28% |
| Vote only for candidates who support enhancement | 17% |
| More media awareness of senior poverty | 17% |
| Widespread media campaign | 15% |
| Citizens contacting their MPs | 14% |
| OTHER/DON'T KNOW | 10% |

Members believe the provinces must engage in a widespread media campaign to convince the federal government to act on CPP enhancement (32%), followed by a joint statement (27%), taking the message to the Prime Minister (11%) or holding national consultations (10%). A significant minority (13%) think the provinces can do little.

Changing the rules for CPP requires the consent of two thirds of the provinces containing two thirds of the population plus the federal government. With the recent support expressed by Quebec, only the federal government's consent is required. What should the provinces do to convince the federal government to act on CPP?

| | |
|---|------------|
| Widespread publicity/media campaign | 32% |
| Joint statement demanding federal action | 27% |
| Provinces can't compel feds to act | 13% |
| Take the message directly to PM | 11% |
| Hold national consultations on CPP enhancement | 10% |
| OTHER/DON'T KNOW | 6% |

The wide majority see it as important that the premiers work on long term care insurance (88%).

How important is it that the premiers begin to work on a plan to create national long-term care insurance?

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| IMPORTANT | 88% |
| Extremely important | 29% |
| Very important | 32% |
| Important | 27% |
| NOT IMPORTANT | 8% |
| Not very important | 6% |
| Not at all important | 2% |
| DON'T KNOW | 4% |

While most see these conferences as necessary (34%), a sizable minority are skeptical, calling them a photo op or a bunch of missed promise (16% each) or meaningless without federal involvement (10%). In this vein, a tenth want to see the Prime Minister attend (12%).

What is your reaction to premiers' conferences in general?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Necessary for coordination of national plans | 34% |
| Mostly a photo op for Premiers | 16% |
| Premiers promise much/achieve little | 16% |
| PM should attend Premiers' Conferences | 12% |
| These are meaningless without federal involvement | 10% |
| Most important political gathering in Canada | 4% |
| Best forum to discuss health care | 2% |
| More gets done at finance ministers conferences | 2% |
| Best forum to discuss pension reform | * |
| OTHER/DON'T KNOW | 3% |

Despite few members being from Saskatchewan, Brad Wall's reputation precedes him, and he is seen to be the most effective premier (30%), followed by Kathleen Wynne of Ontario (because of the large number of members from Ontario - 22%). Alberta's Alison Redford (18%) and BC's Christy Clark (13%) are also seen to be effective.

Which of the premiers do you think is doing the best job?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Saskatchewan's Brad Wall | 30% |
| Ontario's Kathleen Wynne | 22% |
| Alberta's Alison Redford | 18% |
| BC's Christy Clark | 13% |
| Newfoundland's Kathy Dunderdale | 5% |
| PEI's Robert Ghiz | 4% |
| Manitoba's Greg Selinger | 3% |
| Quebec's Pauline Marois | 2% |
| Nova Scotia's Darrell Dexter | 2% |
| New Brunswick's David Alward | 1% |

Electoral Preference

The Liberals surpassed the NDP as second place party in CARP members' electoral preference in February, and passed the Conservatives as first place party in the past month, only to have the Conservatives catch up again. The Liberals are now at 41%, the Conservatives at 39%, the NDP at 17%, and the Greens at 3%.

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decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

More than 1600 CARP Poll™ panel members responded to this poll between July 26 and 30, 2013. The margin of error for a probability sample this size is about plus or minus 2%, 19 times out of 20