

13th Annual National Report Card on Health Care

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2013 National Report Card Report

August 2013

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Introduction

These are the findings of the Canadian Medical Association's 13th annual National Report Card on the health care system in Canada. Since 2001, the CMA has asked Canadians to assign letter grades to their health care system overall and to a number of key aspects of the system.

In addition, each year the National Report Card also examines a specific area of the health care system. This year, Canadians were asked a series of questions about their views on the future of seniors' health care.

Methodology

Between July 17 and July 26, 2013, Ipsos Reid surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Canadian adults (18 and over) over the phone using random digit dialling.

This sample provides a ± 3.1 percentage point margin of error for the overall national findings at a 95% confidence interval.

The data was weighted by region, age and gender to ensure that the sample accurately reflects the population according to Census data.

Prior to asking questions about seniors' care, respondents were read a description of the types of care covered by "seniors' care" in the context of the survey:

Health care for seniors involves three distinct types of care. These include home and community care, which is designed to help seniors live at home longer; care provided in institutions such as hospitals and long-term care facilities; and, end-of-life care, which is designed to make a person's final days and weeks as comfortable as possible.

Questions and evaluative statements were included about each type of seniors' health care.

Executive Summary

The Future of Seniors' Health Care

- While the results of this year's National Report Card find improvement in perceptions of the system overall, and on key services like ER and diagnostics, perceptions of care for seniors show room for improvement.
- Nearly all Canadians recognize the need for a national strategy on health care for seniors, and while provincial and municipal governments are on the front lines of delivery, most see an important role for the federal government to play.
- Similarly, nearly all Canadians say having a strategy on seniors' care would improve the entire health care system, which is not a surprise given the wide recognition that seniors consume more health care services than younger Canadians.
- Canadians want an approach that prioritizes home- and community-based care to help seniors stay at home longer, but they aren't unrealistic. Most expect a national health care strategy to also prioritize long-term care in facilities and the needs of seniors at the end of their lives.
- Six in ten Canadians say that they will need to rely on a public system of home care and long term care if they need it later in life.
- The same proportion of Canadians says they lack confidence in the current health system's ability when it comes to caring for Canada's ageing population. Those most concerned include women, Canadians between 35 to 54 years old, and Canadians already caring for an elderly person outside their home.

Grading the Health Care System

- If one looks across the entirety of the data collected for the Annual Report there is quite a bit of variation year to year and when there were changes in the data collection method.
- However, overall the combined A and B marks for the overall system and for most of the key aspects have remained fairly flat, especially in recent years from 2009 to 2013.



The Future of Seniors' Health Care

The Future of Seniors' Health Care

Over four in five say Canada needs a comprehensive seniors' health care strategy

When asked to choose between two statements, over four in five Canadians (85%) feel that (it is time for Canada to develop a comprehensive seniors' strategy for long term care and home care given the aging population of baby boomers who are increasing pressure on the health care system. Conversely, only 17% say that Canada doesn't really need to focus on a seniors strategy given all of the issues facing the health care system today. . Regionally, views are fairly consistent on this question, with Ontario containing the highest proportion who feels that there is a need for a comprehensive seniors' strategy (89%).

Which one of the following two statements is closest to your opinion?



Base: All respondents n=1,000

Those who are more likely to say that Canada needs a comprehensive seniors' health care strategy include:

- Residents of Ontario (89%) compared to British Columbia (81%) and Quebec (82%);
- Women (88%) compared to men (81%);
- Those aged 55-65 (88%) compared to those aged 65+ (80%);
- Those with moderate levels of income (87% of those earning \$30k-\$60K, and 92% of those earning \$60K-\$100K) compared to those with low income (74% of those earning less than \$30K) and those with high income (82% of those earning \$100K or more);

- Those with some post-secondary education (87%) compared to university graduates (81%);
- Those who have a family doctor (86%) compared to those who don't (78%); and,
- Those responsible for supporting and caring for other adults outside their home (89%) compared to those with no dependents (82%).

Nine in ten Canadians agree having a national health care strategy for seniors would improve the entire health care system

There is a clear perceived need for a national strategy on health care for seniors – with over nine in ten (93%) who agree, including two thirds (64%) who strongly agree. A similar proportion (90%) agrees that a national strategy on seniors' health would improve the entire Canadian health care system.

For each of the following statements about Seniors' Care, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree

Canada needs a national strategy on health care for seniors which addresses the need for care provided at home, care provided in hospitals, hospices and long-term care facilities and care provided at the end of life



A national strategy on seniors' health would improve the entire Canadian healthcare system by finding ways to keep elderly patients living at home for as long as possible, and not in hospitals or long-term care facilities



Base: All respondents n=1,000

Those who are more likely to 'strongly agree' that Canada needs a national strategy on health care for seniors include:

- Residents of Alberta (71%), Ontario (65%) and Atlantic provinces (71%) compared to residents of Quebec (55%);
- Women (69%) compared to men (58%);
- Those approaching retirement age (72% of those aged 55-65) compared to those aged 18-34 (58%) and those aged 65 and over (59%);
- Those with higher income (peaking at 70% among those with an income of \$100K or more);
- Those with more education (peaking at 68% among university graduates); and,
- Those who rely on their family doctor as their primary source of medical care (67%), compared to those who rely on emergency departments (50%).

Those who are more likely to 'strongly agree' that a national strategy on senior's health would improve the entire Canadian health care system include:

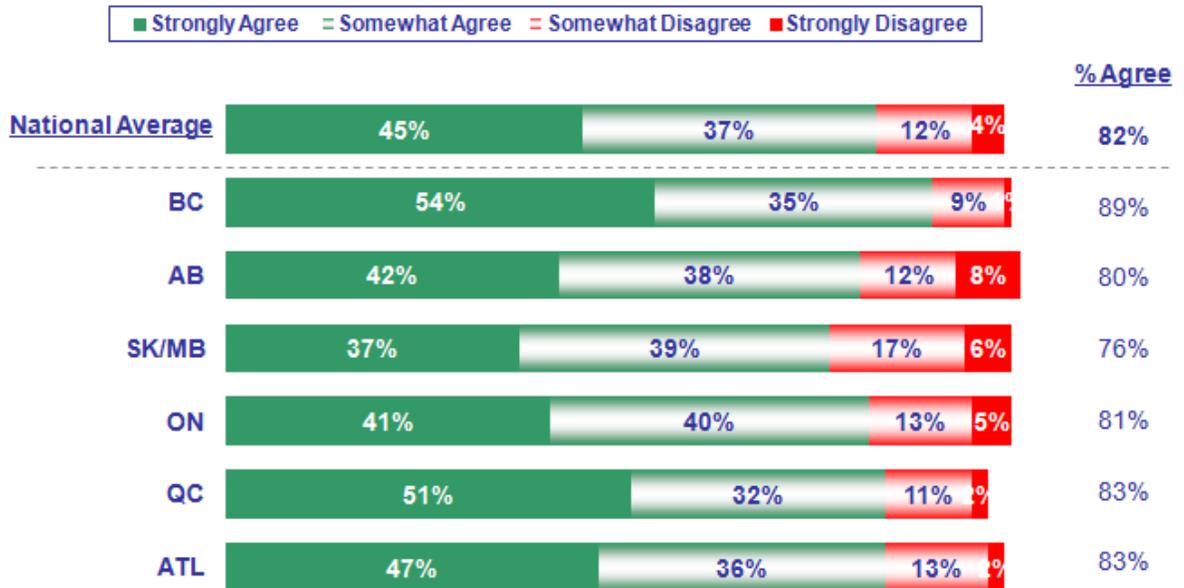
- Residents of Ontario (63%) compared to those of Quebec (52%);
- Older Canadians (peaking at 65% of those aged 65 and over); and,
- Those who have a family doctor (60%) compared to those who don't (48%).

Over four in five believe that seniors consume more health care than younger Canadians do

Over four in five Canadians (82%) believe that seniors consume more health care services than younger Canadians do. Regionally, residents of British Columbia are most likely to agree that seniors consume more health care services.

For each of the following statements about Seniors' Care, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree:

Seniors consume more health care services than younger Canadians do.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

Those who are more likely to 'strongly agree' that seniors consume more health care services than younger Canadians do include:

- Residents of British Columbia (54%) and Quebec (51%) compared to those in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (37%);
- Men (49%) compared to women (42%);
- Those with an income of \$100K or more (53%) compared to those with an income of \$30K-\$60K (39%);
- University graduates (52%) compared to those with some post-secondary education (41%); and,
- Those who have graded the quality of the health care system an A in 2013 (51%), compared to those who have graded it a B (43%) or C (41%).

Most Canadians see seniors' care as a national problem requiring cooperation among governments – with an important role for the federal government to play

Most (89%) agree that delivery of health care to seniors is a national problem requiring all levels of government to work closely together. A majority (78%) also agrees that the federal government has an important role to play in this strategy.

Which of these views is closest to your own?



Base: All respondents n=1,000

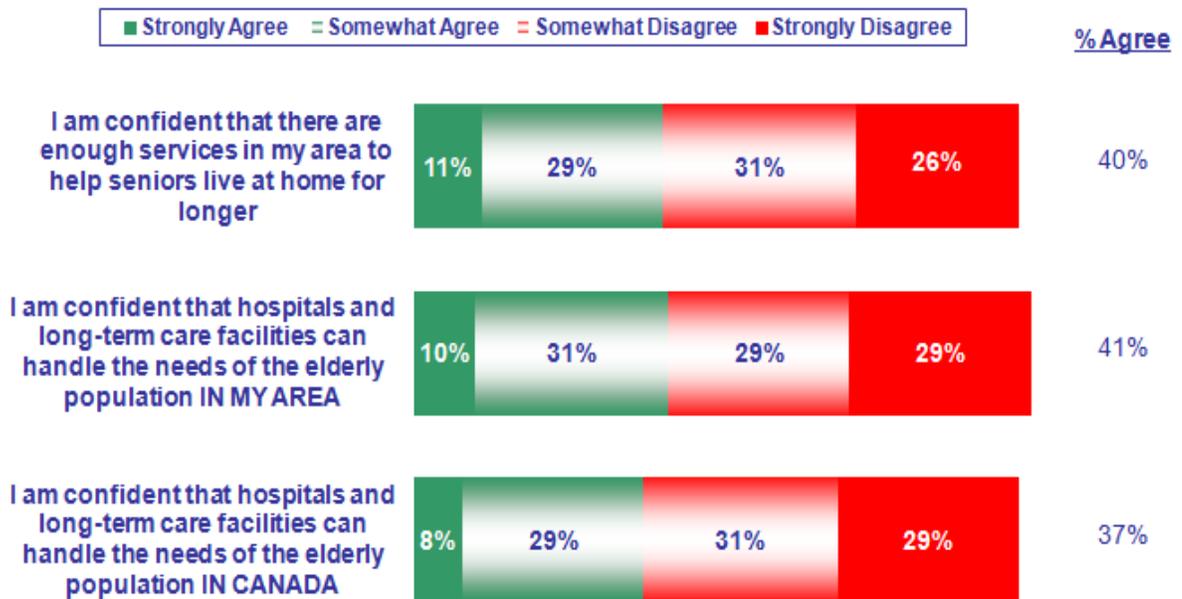
Those who are more likely to say that the federal government has an important role to play in developing a national seniors' strategy include:

- Residents of Alberta (85%), Ontario (81%) and Atlantic provinces (87%) compared to those in Quebec (71%);
- Women (83%) compared to men (73%);
- Older Canadians (peaking at 84% of those aged 65 and over);
- Those with less education (peaking at 86% of those with high school or less);
- Those who have a family doctor (80%) compared to those who don't (70%); and,
- Those who are responsible for supporting and caring for adults in their home (82%) or outside their home (83%).

Most Canadians lack confidence that enough services exist to help seniors live at home longer or that hospitals and long-term facilities can handle the demand for care

Canadians are more confident in the abilities of hospitals and long-term care facilities in their *area* to handle the needs of the elderly population (40% agree), compared to their confidence in hospitals and long-term facilities in Canada in general (37% agree). Confidence in the current system's ability to handle the needs of seniors is lowest among those who are responsible for supporting and caring for other adults outside their home, and among those approaching retirement age (aged 55 to 65).

For each of the following statements about Seniors' Care, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree. And what letter grade would you give to...? How about...?



Base: All respondents n=1,000

Those who are more likely to 'strongly disagree' that they are confident there are enough services in their area to help seniors live at home longer include:

- Women (31%) compared to men (20%);
- Those aged 35-54 (30%) compared to those aged 65 and older (21%);
- Those who have graded the quality of health services in their community poorly (peaking at 51% of those who gave an F grade);
- Those whose main source of medical care is emergency departments (43%) compared to those who rely primarily on their family doctor (24%) or walk-in clinics (20%); and,
- Those who support and care for adults outside their home (31%) compared to those with no dependents (21%).

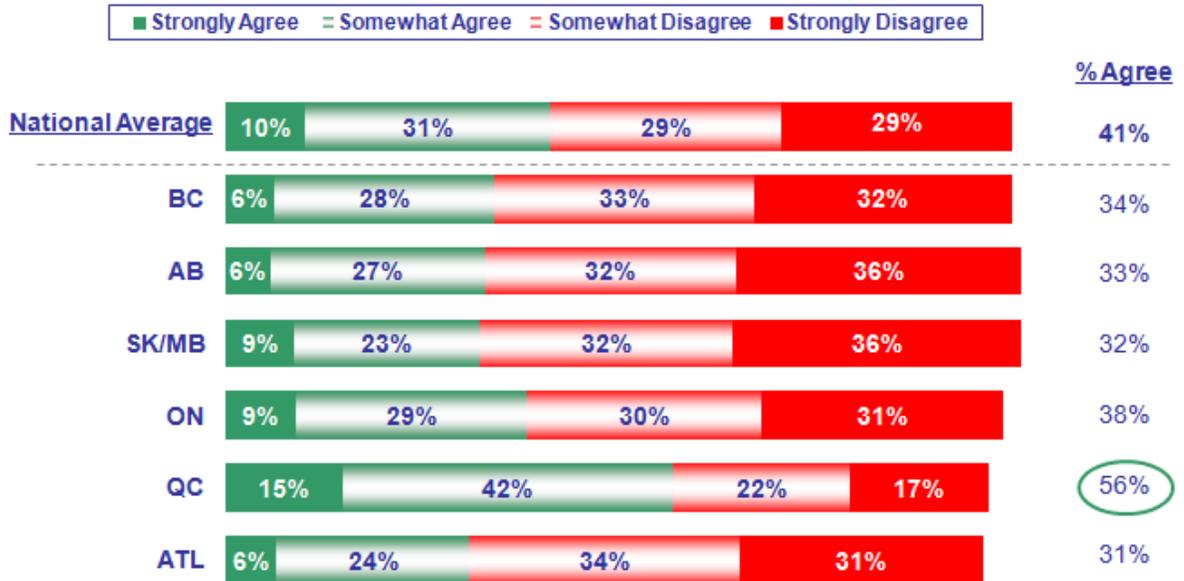
Those who are more likely to 'strongly disagree' that they are confident that hospitals and long term care facilities can handle the needs of the elderly population in Canada include:

- Women (38%) compared to men (20%);
- Those nearing retirement age (36% of those aged 55-65) compared to those aged 18-34 (24%);
- Those who have graded the quality of health services in their community poorly (peaking at 49% of those who gave an F grade);
- Those who have had to find a new family doctor recently (40%) compared to those with more exposure to the health system (hospitalized – 31%, had a visit to emergency – 32%, or had a visit with a medical specialist – 31%); and,
- Those who support and care for adults outside their home (36%) compared to those with no dependents (26%).

Only in Quebec does a majority believe that hospitals and long-term care facilities in their area are sufficient to meet the needs of the elderly population

Quebec residents (56%) are significantly more likely than other Canadians to agree that the hospitals and long-term care facilities in their area can handle the needs of the elderly population. Residents of Atlantic (31%) are least likely to agree.

For each of the following statements about Seniors' Care, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree: I am confident that hospitals and long-term care facilities can handle the needs of the elderly population IN MY AREA.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

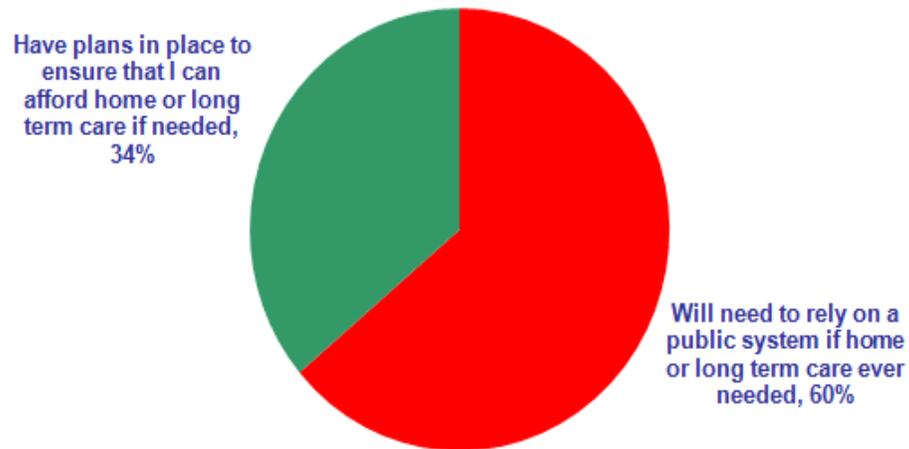
Those who are more likely to 'strongly disagree' that they are confident that hospitals and long-term care facilities can handle the needs of the elderly population in their area include:

- Women (34%) compared to men (23%);
- Canadians who are approaching retirement (33% of those aged 55-65 and 31% of those aged 35-54) compared to those aged 18-34 (22%);
- Those who have graded the quality of health services in their community poorly (peaking at 55% of those who gave an F grade); and,
- Those who have had to find a new family doctor recently (37%) compared to those who have had a visit to emergency (30%) or who have had a visit with a medical specialist (29%).

Three in five Canadians say they will need to rely on a public system for home or long-term care in their retirement years

Three in five Canadians (60%) say they'll have to rely on a public system if there is ever a need for home care or long term care in their retirement years.

Which of the following statements best represents your personal situation?



Base: All respondents n=1,000

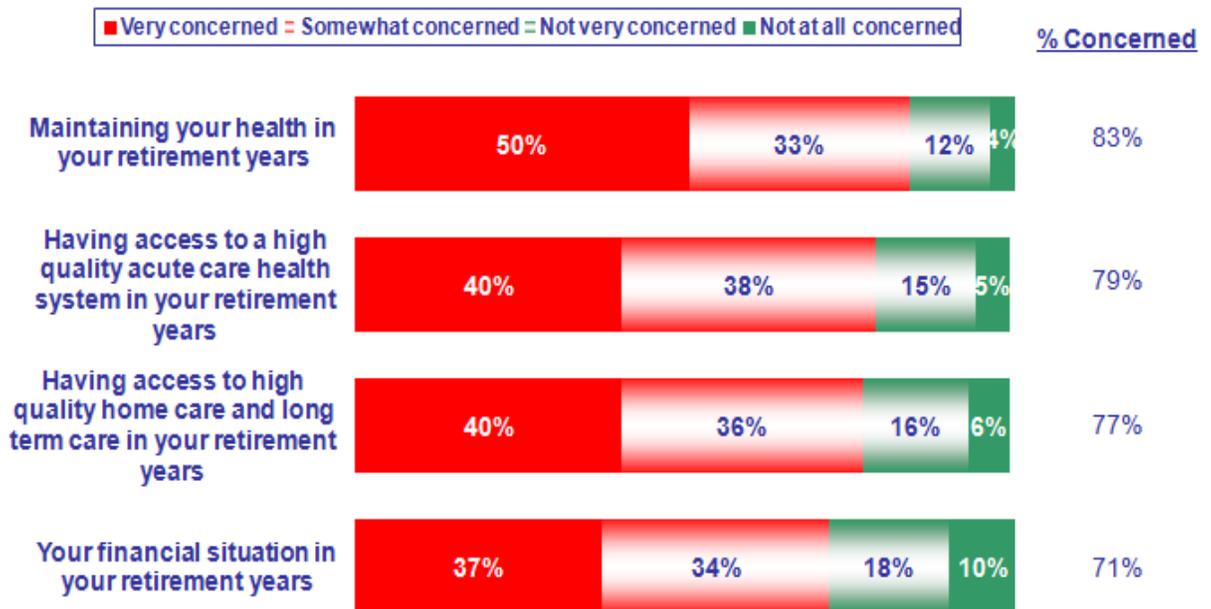
Those who are more likely to say they'll need to rely on a public system for home or health care in their retirement years include:

- Residents of Quebec (72%) compared to those in Alberta (50%) and Ontario (55%);
- Younger Canadians (62% of those aged 18-34, 63% of those aged 35-54) compared to those aged 65 and older (53%);
- Those with less income (peaking at 77% among those with an income of \$30K or less); and,
- Those who *do not* have a family doctor (70%) compared to those who do (59%).

Half of Canadians are “very” concerned about maintaining their health in retirement, while over three in four are concerned about access to acute and home care

Overall, there is a high level of concern among Canadians about their personal preparations for their retirement years – being most concerned with maintaining their health (83% agree). While relatively fewer are concerned about their financial situation in their retirement years, it is still significant – with seven in ten (71%) concerned.

Thinking about your personal preparations for retirement, please indicate whether you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned about each of the following:



Base: All respondents n=1,000

Levels of concern vary with age:

- Younger Canadians are least concerned with having access to high quality home care (67% concerned) compared to older Canadians (aged 35-54 – 81%, aged 55-65 – 81%, and aged 65 and older – 79%);
- Older Canadians are least concerned with their financial situation in their retirement years (55% concerned) compared to younger Canadians, or those approaching retirement (aged 18-34 – 71%, aged 35-54 – 77%, and aged 55-65 – 71%).

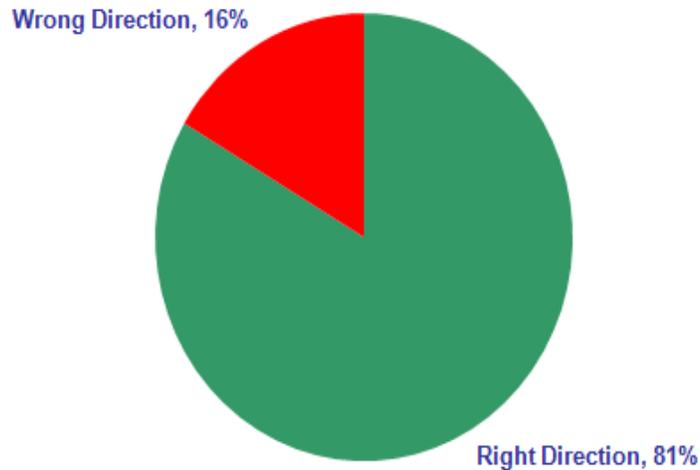
Those who are supporting and caring for other adults outside their home are also more concerned with:

- Having access to high quality acute health care in their retirement years (85% concerned); and,
- Having access to high quality home care in their retirement years (82%).

Most Canadians (81%) think that a focus on home care is a step in the right direction

Few (16%) disagree with provincial governments promoting home care as an alternative to health care in institutions such as hospitals and long-term care facilities. Residents of Ontario (84%) and British Columbia (85%) are more likely to feel it is a step in the right direction, compared to residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (71%).

Some provincial governments are now promoting home care as an alternative to receiving health care in an institution such as a hospital or a long term care facility for elderly patients suffering from poor health. Do you personally think this is a step in the right direction or a step in the wrong direction?



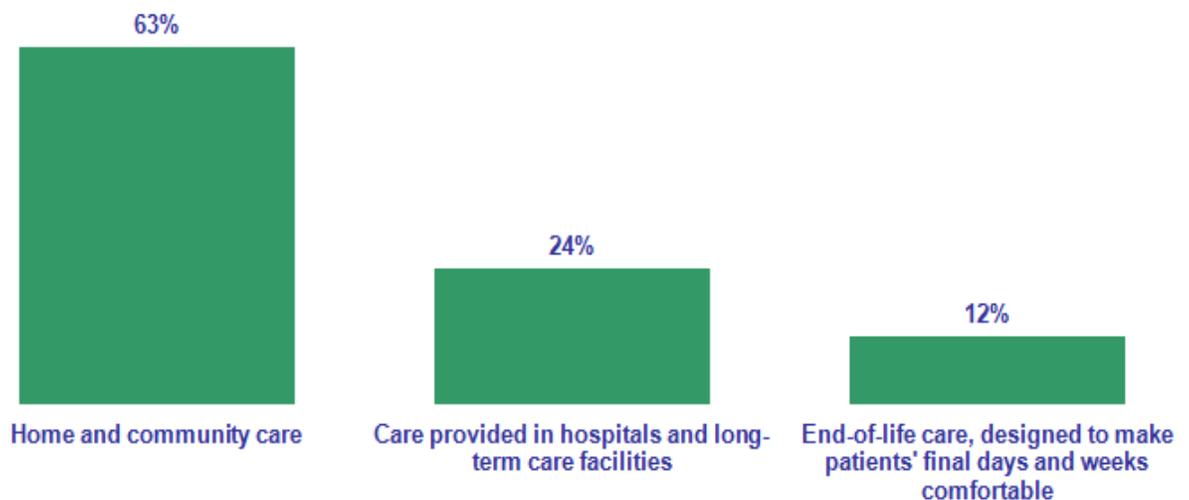
Base: All respondents n=1,000

There were few significant differences found across demographic, behavioural and attitudinal subgroups.

When it comes to care for seniors, most Canadians prioritize home and community care above care in facilities or end-of-life care

When presented with three priorities in seniors' health care, a majority selected home and community care (63%) above care provided in hospitals and long-term care facilities (24%) and end-of-life care (12%). These priorities are fairly consistent across age groups, with respondents aged 55-65 a little more likely than others to select home and community care (68%).

Among these three types of care, I would like to know which one you think it is most important for governments in Canada to focus on as more and more Canadians become senior citizens.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

Those who are most likely to prioritize home and community care include:

- Residents of Quebec (66%) and Atlantic provinces (71%) compared to residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (50%);
- Those who do not have a physical/mental disability (64%) compared to those who do (54%); and,
- Those who are responsible for supporting and caring for children in their home (66%) compared to those responsible for supporting and caring for other adults outside their home (58%).

Those who are most likely to prioritize care provided in hospitals and long-term care facilities include:

- Residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (35%) compared to those in Quebec (18%) or Atlantic provinces (17%);
- Those who have been hospitalized recently (28%) compared to those who have recently seen a medical specialist (22%); and,
- Those who are responsible for supporting and caring for other adults outside their home (28%) compared to those responsible for supporting/caring for children (21%) and those responsible for supporting/caring for adults in their home (21%).

In developing a national seniors' health care strategy, majorities emphasize the importance of home- and community-based care

There is a focus on training and community services to facilitate home care – with two thirds assigning a very high priority to increased training for home and community care givers (68%), long-term home care for ageing Canadians (66%) and community services designed to help seniors live at home longer (66%). This is also true for end-of-life care, with fifty-seven percent assigning a very high priority to care provided at home versus care provided in hospitals, hospices, etc. (51%).

If you were in charge of developing a national strategy on seniors' health how much of a priority would you make each of the following? Would you make it a very high priority, a moderate priority or a low priority?



Base: All respondents n=1,000

Priorities tend to vary by province and age:

- Residents of Atlantic provinces are more likely to assign a very high priority to increased training and support programs for family members providing care (67%) compared to residents of Alberta (50%);
- Residents of Ontario (61%) and Quebec (59%) are more likely to assign a very high priority to short-term, rehabilitative home care for patients who've just had surgery, compared to those in British Columbia (45%) and Alberta (45%);
- Residents of Saskatchewan or Manitoba (63%) are more likely to assign a very high priority to end-of-life care provided in an institution (hospital, hospice, etc), compared to those in British Columbia (42%);
- Residents of Ontario (55%) are more likely to assign a very high priority to home-based mental health care, compared to those in Quebec (40%).
- Younger Canadians are least likely to prioritize long-term home care for ageing Canadians (55% of those aged 18-34), to prioritize access to long-term care

facilities (54%), or to prioritize short-term, rehabilitative home care for surgery patients (50%) compared to older Canadians.

Those who care for adults outside their home are more likely to support seniors care in institutions such as hospitals and long term care facilities:

- 67% assign a very high priority to increasing access to long term care facilities, compared to 58% of those who care for children; and
- 54% assign a very high priority to end-of-life care provided in hospitals, hospices, etc., compared to 46% of those who care for children.

Those with less income and those with less education are most likely to support increased training for home and community care givers, and increased training and support programs for family members providing care.



2013 Report Card

2013 Report Card

Since 2001, the CMA has asked Canadians to assign letter grades to their health care system overall and to a number of key aspects of the system.

The following section provides these results for all questions asked from 2001 to 2013. The questions asked in years 2001-2009, and then in 2013, were asked via a telephone survey. The questions asked in 2010, 2011 and 2012 were asked via an online survey.

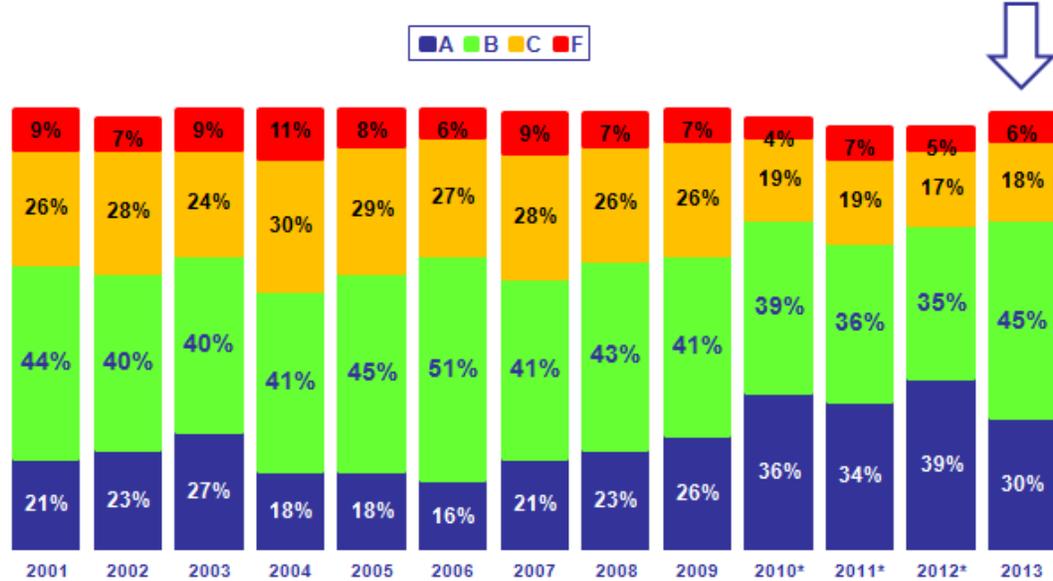
Online surveys typically yield a higher proportion of 'don't know' responses and this can be seen when respondents are evaluating the more specific aspects (where they are not as familiar) of the health system.

If one looks across the entirety of the data collected for the Annual Report there is quite a bit of variation year to year and when there were changes in the data collection method, however, overall the combined A and B marks for the overall system and for most of the key aspects have remained fairly flat, especially in recent years from 2009 to 2013.

Three quarters (75%) give overall quality of health services an A or B grade

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

The overall quality of the health care services available to you and your family.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

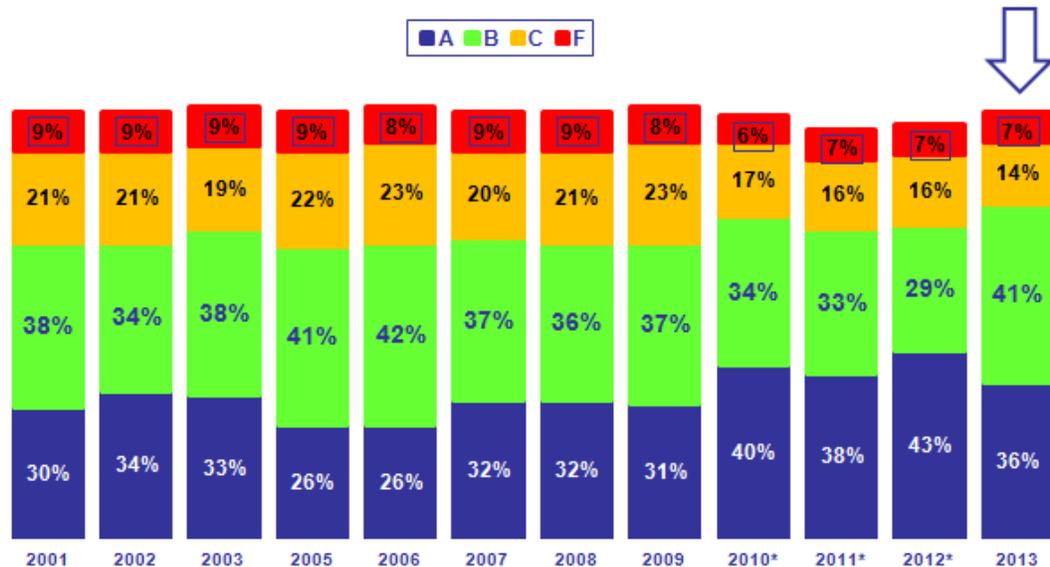
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Most recent experience with the health care system graded an A or B by majority (77%) of Canadians

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Your most recent experience dealing with the health care system in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

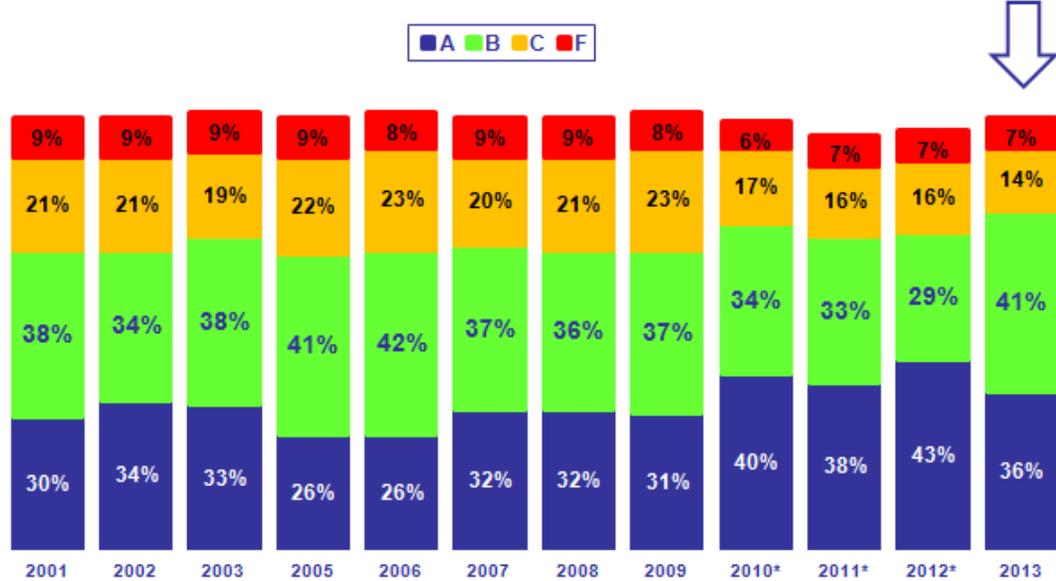
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Choices of health services given an A or B grade by about eight in ten (77%)

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

The choice of health services in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

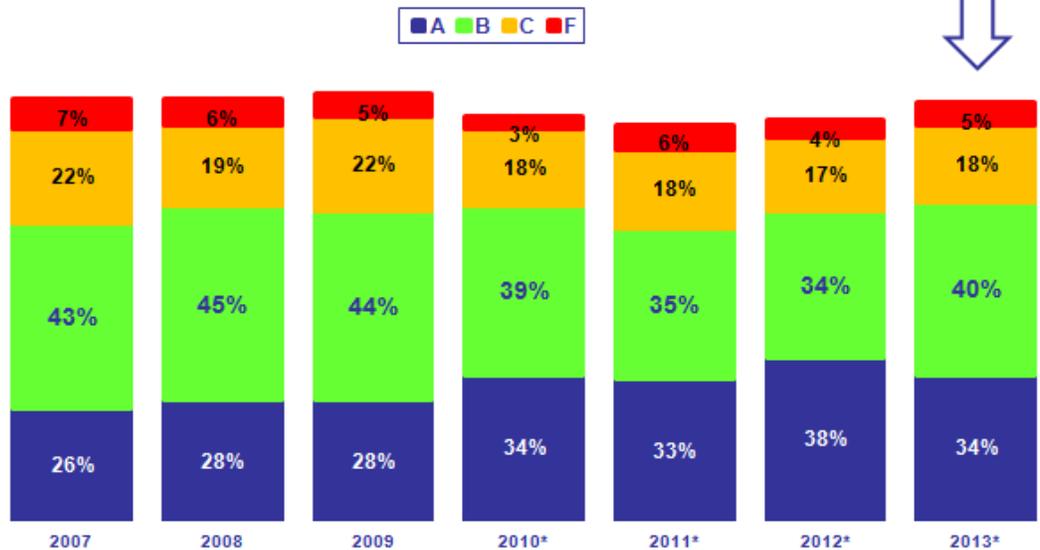
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Level of cooperation given A and B grades by three out of four (74%)

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

The level of cooperation between various health professionals like doctors, pharmacists and nurses in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

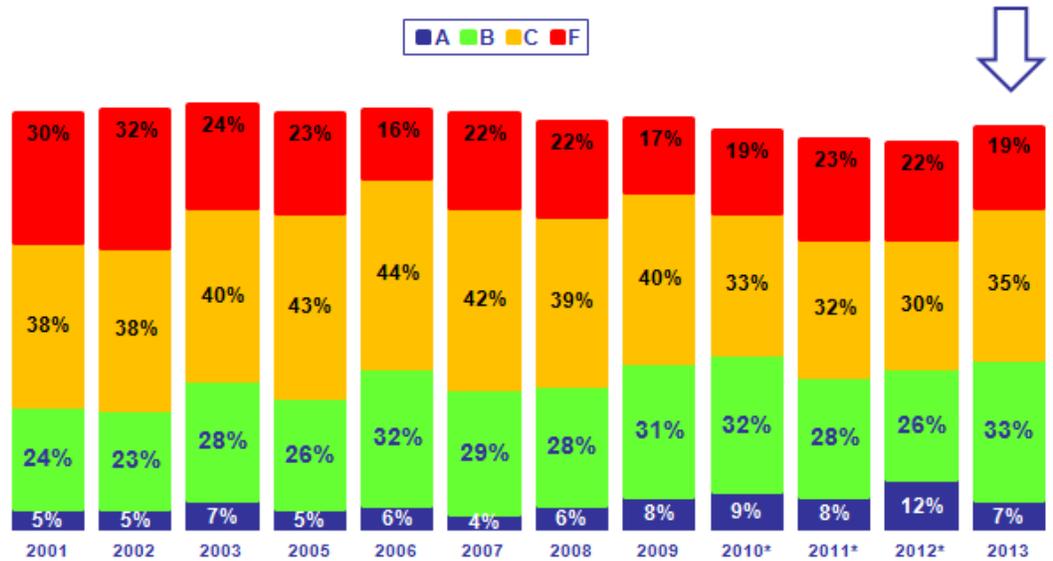
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Few (29%) give the Federal government an A or B grade in dealing with health care in Canada

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

The federal government's performance in dealing with health care in Canada.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

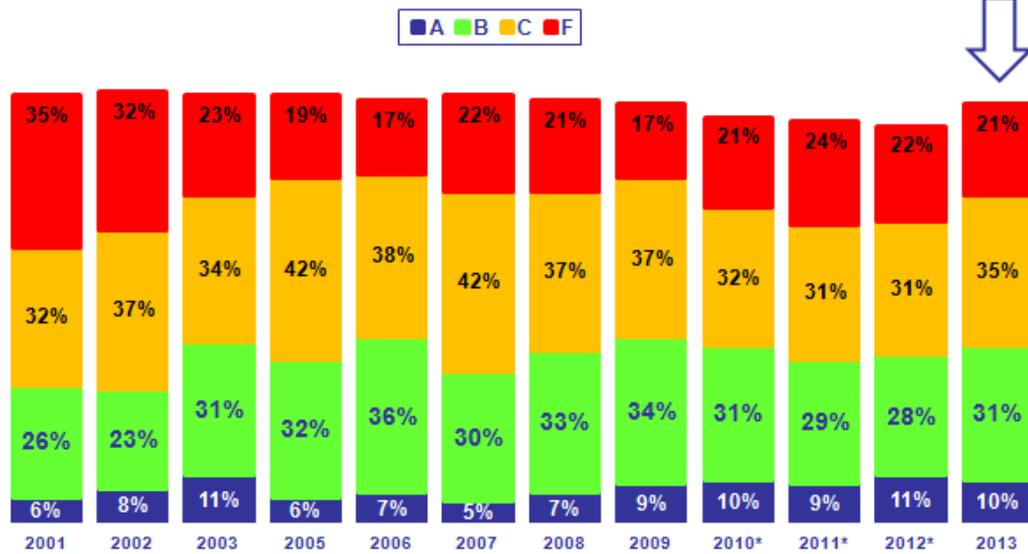
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Provincial government given more A and B grades (41%) than Federal government for performance in dealing with health care

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Your provincial government's performance in dealing with health care in your province.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

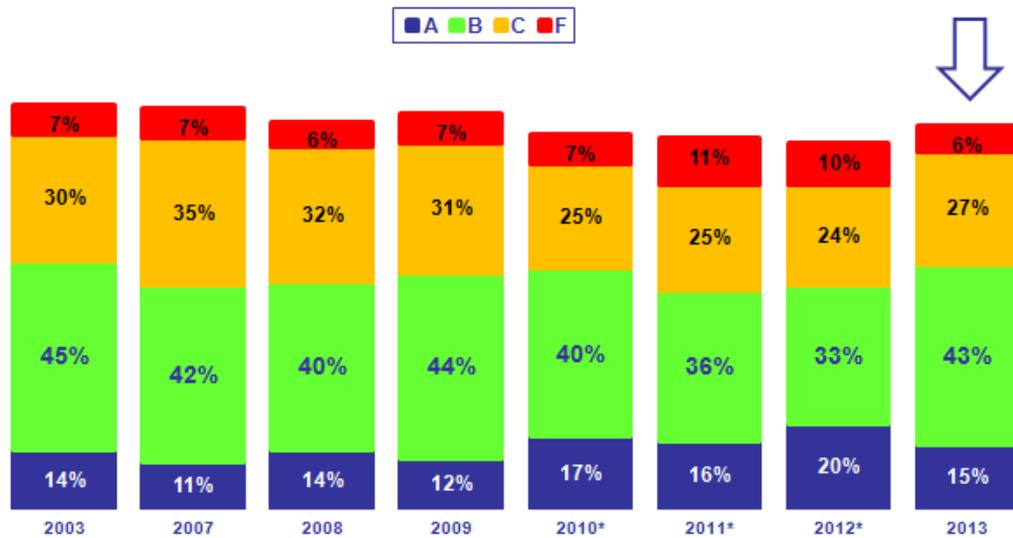
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Six in ten (58%) give health providers and associations A or B grade

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

The performance of health care providers and their associations in dealing with health care in Canada.



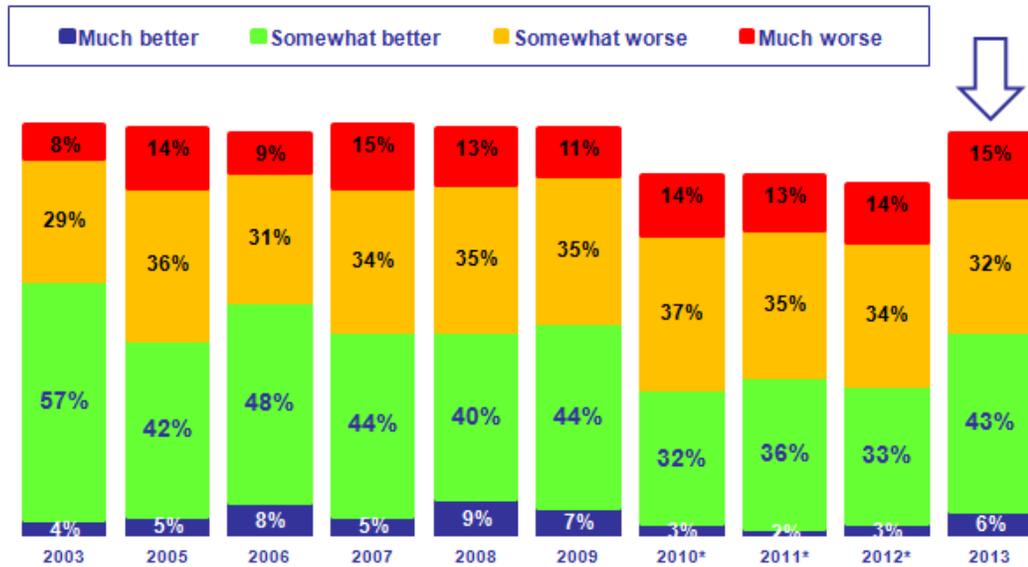
Base: All respondents n=1,000

Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Views on the future of health care services split – about half (49%) think they will get better, the other half (47%) do not

Overall, do you think health care services in your community will get much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse or much worse over the next two or three years?



Base: All respondents n=1,000

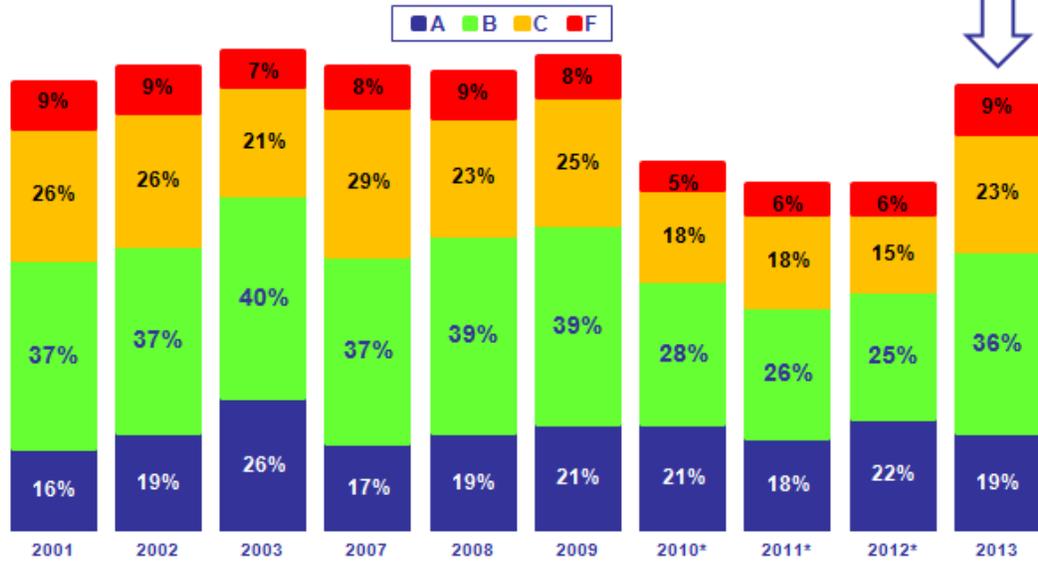
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Access to seniors health care services receives A or B grade from majority (55%)

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to health care services for seniors in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

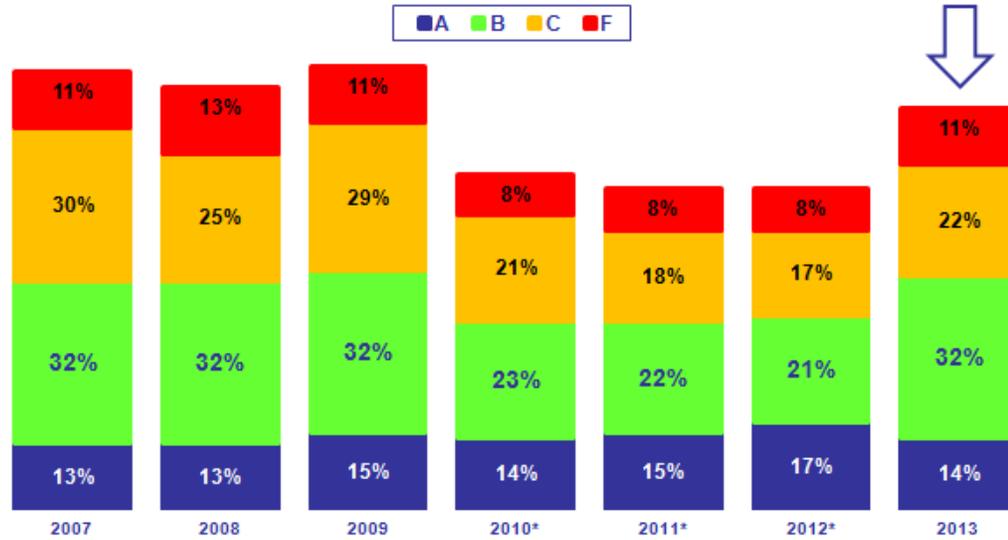
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Access to home health services receives A or B grade from almost half (46%)

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to home health care services.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

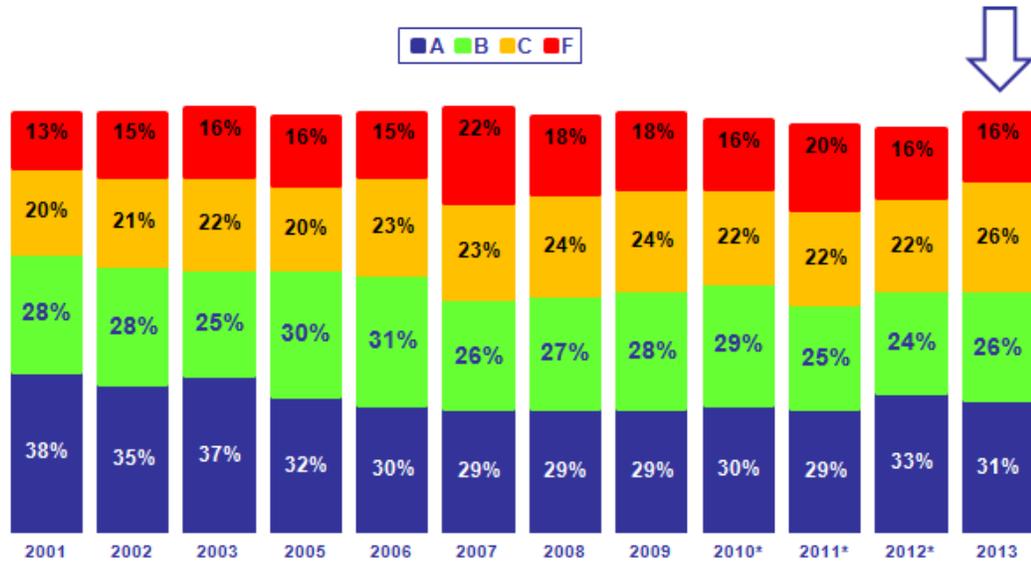
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

About six in ten give A or B grade to access to a family doctor

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to a family doctor in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

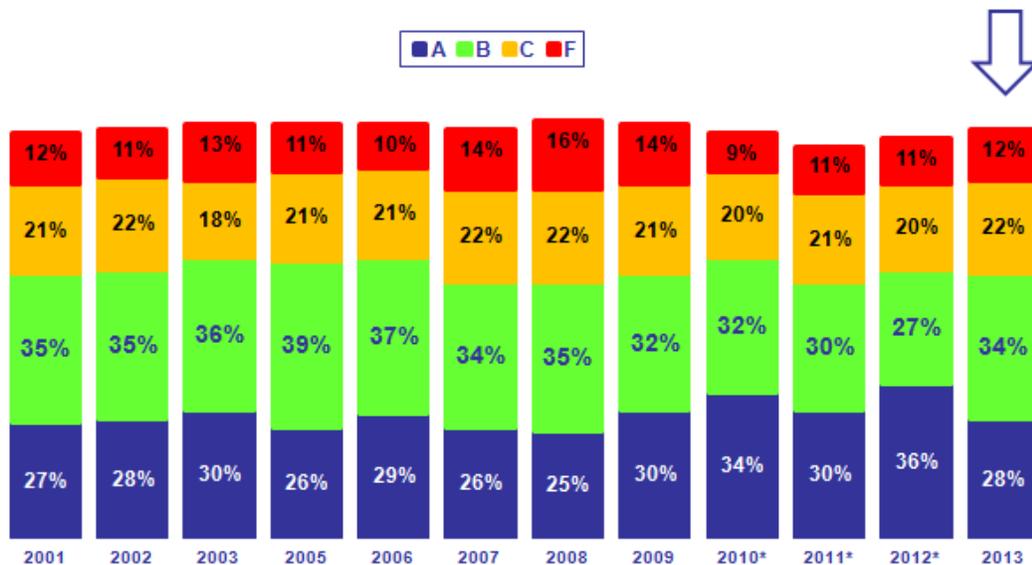
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Access to walk-in clinics mostly given A or B grades (62%)

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to walk-in clinics in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

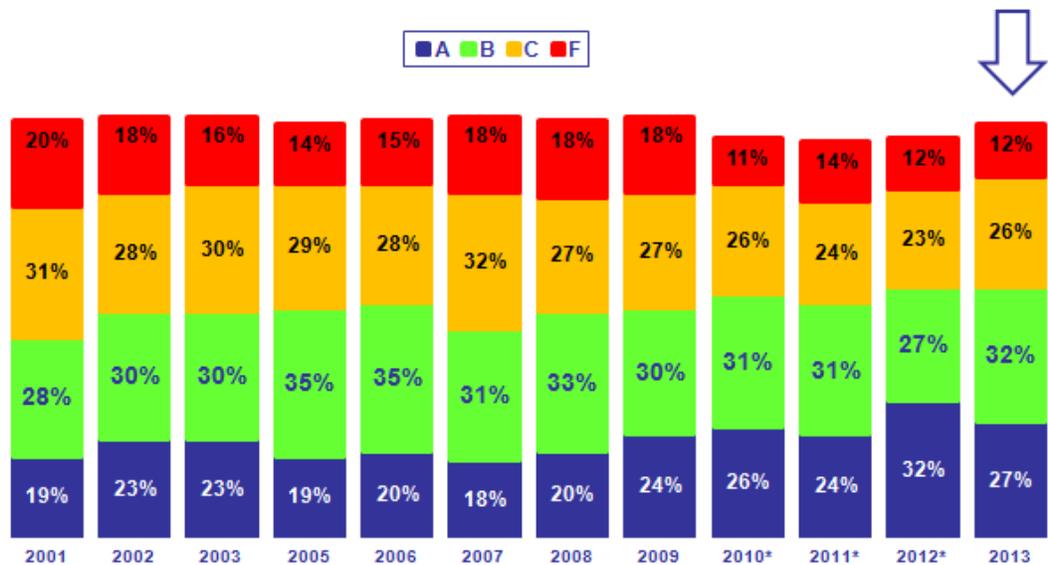
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Access to ER receives A or B grades from six in ten (59%)

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to emergency room services.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

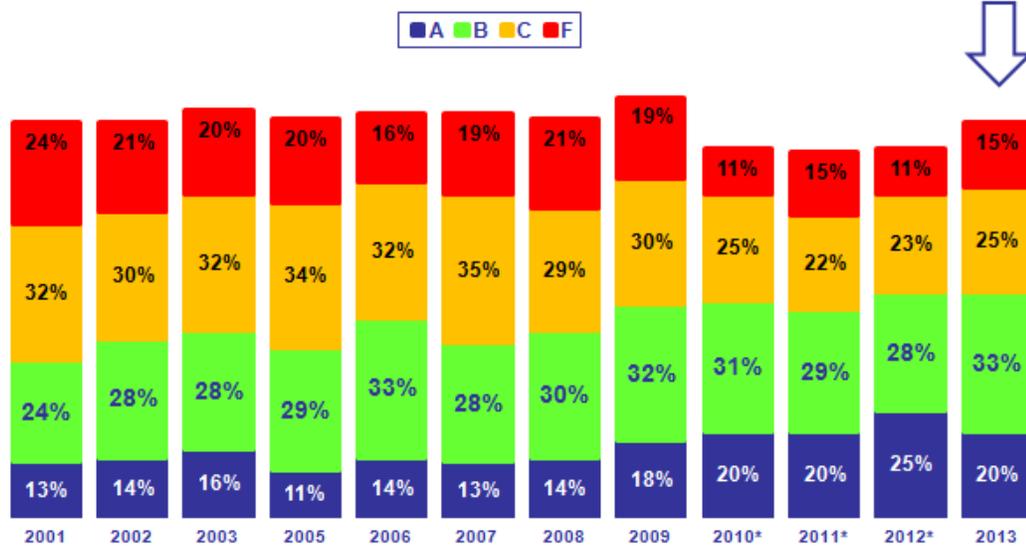
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

About one half (53%) give A or B grade to access to modern diagnostic equipment

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to modern diagnostic equipment such as MRIs and CT scans.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

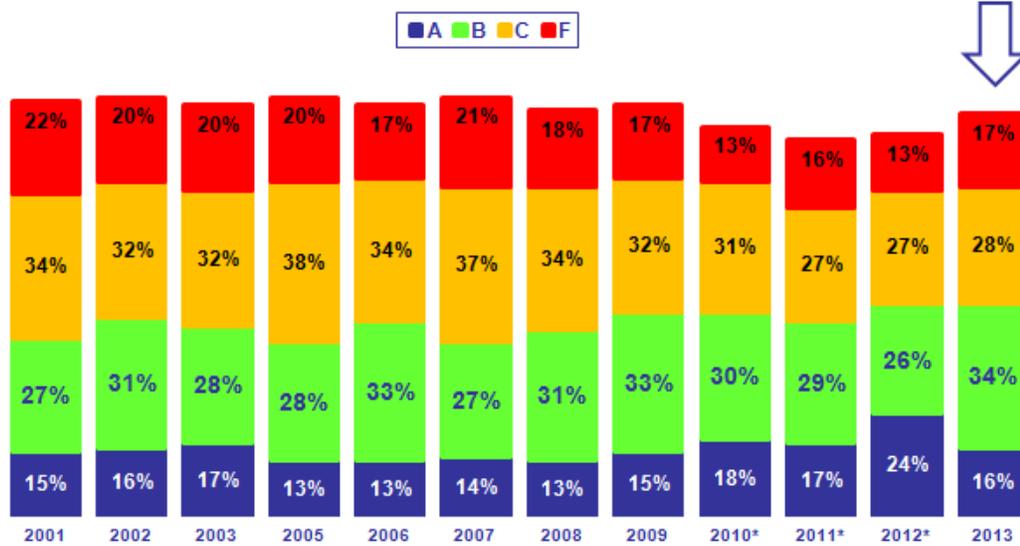
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Half (50%) give A or B grade for access to medical specialists

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to medical specialists.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

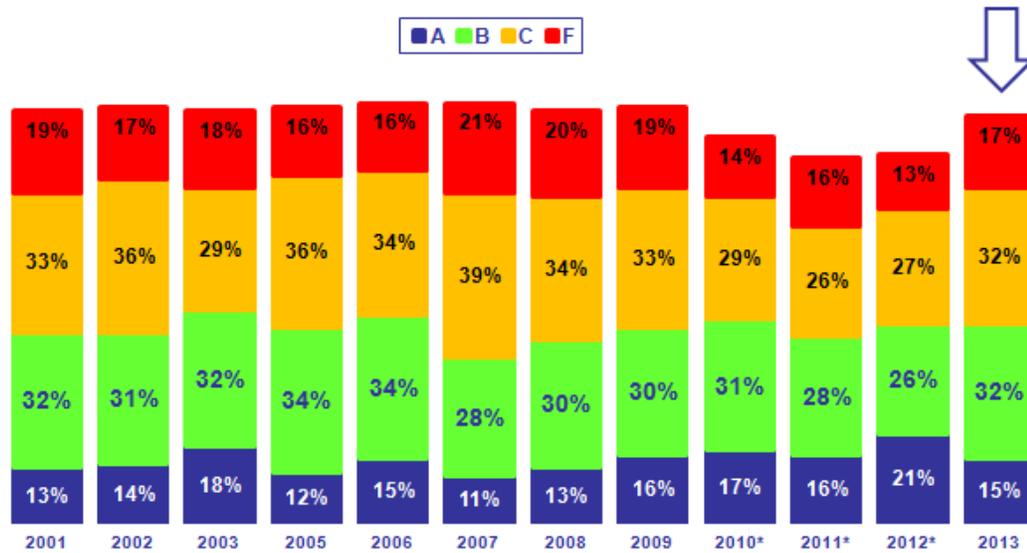
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Access to health care services on evenings/weekends receives just A or B grade from about one half (47%)

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to health care services on evenings and weekends.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

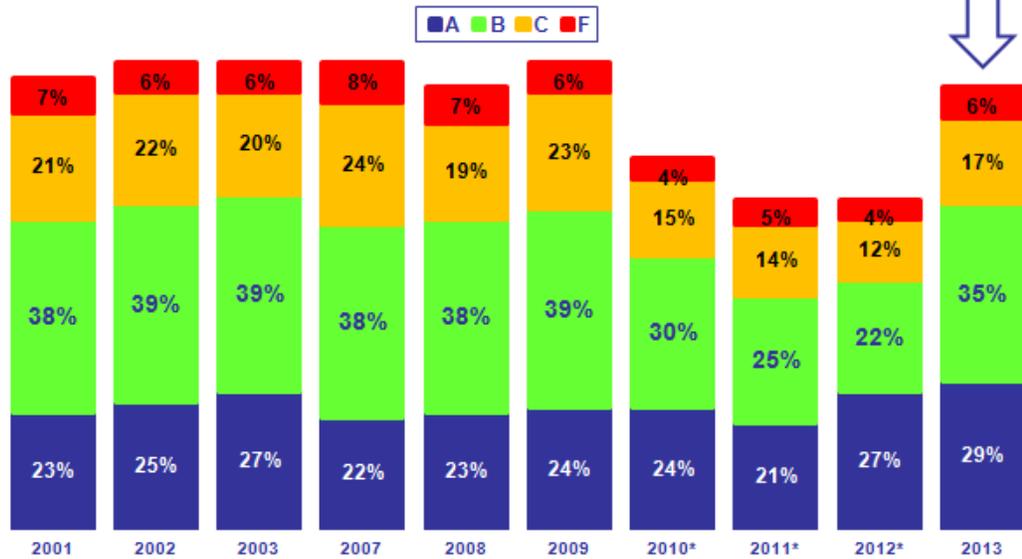
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Six in ten (64%) give access to health care services for children an A or B grade

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to health care services for children in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

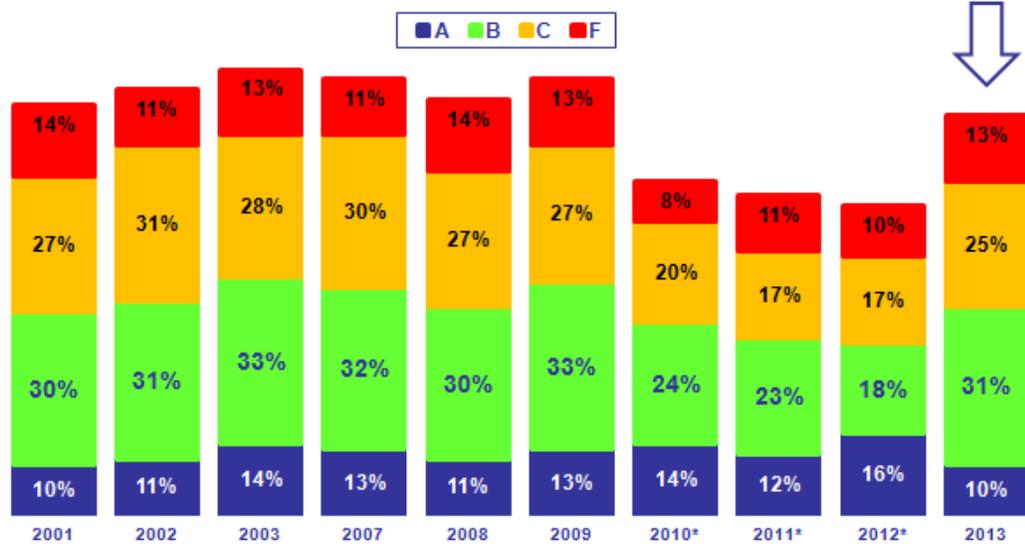
Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone

Only two in five (41%) give A or B grade for access to mental health care services

What mark/letter grade would you give to:

Access to mental health care services in your community.



Base: All respondents n=1,000

Note: As not all questions were asked each year, data is included for years in which the question was asked.

* Questions fielded online – all others fielded by telephone