Canadian Council of the Blind
Summary Report
June 2011
Methodology

From May 27th to May 28th 2011 an online survey was conducted among 1,007 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

Polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a high-quality, multi-streamed approach and an in-depth screening procedure. The panel is a highly engaged community with industry leading response rates and is researched with state-of-the-art sampling techniques, combined with deep profiling on demographic, behavioral and attitudinal characteristics. The Sparq premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.
Key Findings

• Loss of vision (82%) is the disability Canadians fear the most.
• Over a quarter (25%) of Canadians of have/had a friend or family member who is/was significantly visually impaired.
• The clear majority of Canadians (70%) feel that regular eye exams and vision care should be covered as part of Canada's public Medicare plan.
• Three quarters of Canadians (75%) strongly agree with equal access to vision health treatments and services.
• Almost half (49%) of Canadians agree that policy regarding vision health treatments should be decided at the provincial level.
• Only one in ten (12%) Canadians feel that if people need vision health treatments and services they should pay for them themselves.
• More than half of Canadians (52%) agree they can afford to pay for eye care services.
• For 71 percent of Canadians cost is a factor when deciding to get vision and eye care services.
Key Findings

- Over half (55%) of all Canadians agree that large companies should be required to have a certain number of appropriate jobs reserved for those who are blind or visually impaired and adapt the workplace to accommodate them.
- Almost two thirds (60%) of Canadians agree or strongly agree that people who are visually impaired should be given special consideration when applying for a job.
- Eight in ten (80%) Canadians disagree with the statement helping persons who are blind and visually impaired should be left to charities.
- If they suffered a loss of sight, 90 percent of Canadians would expect the public health system to pay for at least part of their treatment.
- Almost half of Canadians (46%) feel if given the choice should be given treatment approved by Health Canada.
Detailed Findings
Most feared disability

Loss of vision (82%) is by far the disability Canadians fear the most. This result was consistent across all ages, regions, gender, incomes and educational levels.

Loss of a leg (4%) was the next most feared disability. This disability was significantly more feared by those aged 18-34 years (8%) than adults aged 35-54 years (3%) and those over 55 years (3%).

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.1 Which of the following disabilities would you fear the most?
Familiarity: Significant Visual Impairment

Over a quarter (25%) of Canadians have/had a friend or family member who is/was significantly visually impaired, while one percent of the population are themselves significantly visually impaired.

Adults over 55 years (33%) are much more likely to have direct experience with significant visual impairment than adults under 35 years (20%).

- **YES (Net)**: 26%
  - Yes – I have a friend/family member with this disability: 26%
  - Yes - I have this disability: 1%
- **No**: 73%
- **Don’t know/Prefer not to say**: 1%

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.2 Do you now have, or have you ever had, a close friend or family member who was either totally blind or had a significant visual impairment, enough to effect his or her daily activities, or do you have such a disability yourself?
Estimated percentage of Canadians who live to old age that will be affected by visual impairment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Estimated Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1% - 10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11% - 20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21% - 30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31% - 40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41% - 50%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51% - 60%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61% - 70%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71% - 80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81% - 90%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91% - 100%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.3 What percentage of Canadians who live to old age would you estimate will be affected by serious vision impairment?
Responsibility for eye care

The clear majority of Canadians (70%) feel that regular eye exams and vision care should be covered as part of Canada's public Medicare plan.

British Columbians (78%) and Ontarians (72%) are significantly more likely than Quebecers (59%) to feel this way. Women (74%) are also much more likely to feel that regular eye exams and vision care should be covered as part of Canada's public Medicare plan than men (65%).

- Regular eye exams and vision care should be covered as part of Canada's public Medicare plan: 70%
- The current system requiring Canadians to pay privately for eye exams and vision care works well and doesn't need to be changed: 6%
- Canadians should continue to pay privately for eye exams and vision care but the current system needs to be improved: 6%
- A combination of the above: 17%
- Not sure: 2%

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.4 Which of the following statements most closely reflects your opinion about vision and eye care?
Top two summary box: Statements relating to access to vision health treatments and services in Canada?

1. **It is important that all Canadians have equal access to vision health treatments and services**  
   - 93% agreement

2. **I have easy access to vision and eye care services in my region**  
   - 91% agreement

3. **Cost is a factor for me when deciding to get vision and eye care services**  
   - 71% agreement

4. **I can afford to pay for vision and eye care services**  
   - 52% agreement

5. **It should be decided at the provincial level whether or not to provide certain vision health treatments and services**  
   - 49% agreement

6. **People who live in rural areas should travel into cities to access certain vision health treatments and services**  
   - 36% agreement

7. **If people need vision health treatments and services they should pay for them themselves**  
   - 12% agreement

*Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)*  
Q.5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to access to vision health treatments and services in Canada?
Importance of Canadians having equal access to vision health treatments and services

- **Strongly agree**: 75%
- **Moderately agree**: 18%
- **Moderately disagree**: 4%
- **Strongly disagree**: 2%
- **Not sure**: 1%

Women (80%) are much more likely to strongly agree with equal access to vision health treatments and services than men (69%). Canadians over 55 years (79%) and 35-54 years (79%) are also more likely to strongly agree with equal access to vision healthcare than those under 35 (64%).

Level of education also appears to affect the likelihood of strongly agreeing with equal access to vision health treatments and services as Canadians with a high school education or less (80%) are significantly more likely to strongly agree with equal access than those with a university education or more (64%).

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to access to vision health treatments and services in Canada.: It is important that all Canadians have equal access to vision health treatments and services?
Vision health treatments and services should be decided at the provincial level

Almost half (49%) of Canadians agree that policy regarding vision health treatments should be decided at the provincial level, while 42 percent of Canadian’s disagree. Men (53%) are significantly more likely than women (45%) to feel these decisions should be made at the provincial level.

Age also appears to be a factor as adults over 55 years (28%) are much more likely to strongly agree with this statement than those aged 35 – 54 years (16%) and those under 35 years (15%).

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to access to vision health treatments and services in Canada: It should be decided at the provincial level whether or not to provide certain vision health treatments and services?
Vision health treatment: Canadians in need of vision health treatment should pay themselves

Over one in ten (12%) Canadians feel that if people need vision health treatments and services they should pay for it themselves, while eight in ten (83%) disagree. Canadians aged 55 years and older (87%) and 35-54 years (86%) are more likely to disagree with the statement than those under 35 years of age (75%).

- Strongly agree: 4%
- Moderately agree: 8%
- Moderately disagree: 30%
- Strongly disagree: 53%
- Not sure: 4%

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to access to vision health treatments and services in Canada: If people need vision health treatments and services they should pay for them themselves?
People who live in rural areas should travel into cities to access vision health treatments

Over one third (36%) of Canadians agree with that people who live in rural areas should travel into cities to access treatment, though only nine percent strongly agree.

Men (40%) are much more likely to agree with the statement than women (33%). Canadians on incomes of over $100k (48%) are also much more likely to agree with the statement than those earning less than $50k (33%).

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to access to vision health treatments and services in Canada: People who live in rural areas should travel into cities to access certain vision health treatments and services?
Can afford to pay for vision and eye care services

More than half of Canadians (52%) agree they can afford to pay for eye care services.

As you would expect Canadians earning over $100k per annum are more likely to moderately agree (43%) and strongly agree (30%) that they can afford to pay for eye care, than those earning less than $50k (25% and 11% respectively).

British Columbians (60%) are significantly more likely than Albertans (38%) and Quebecers (42%) to disagree with the statement.

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to access to vision health treatments and services in Canada: I can afford to pay for vision and eye care services?

Strongly agree: 17%
Moderately agree: 35%
Moderately disagree: 23%
Strongly disagree: 22%
Not sure: 3%
The clear majority (91%) of Canadians agree that they have easy access to vision and eye care services in their region. Canadians aged 35 – 54 years (68%) are much more likely to strongly agree with this statement than adults under 35 years (54%).

Albertans are more likely to moderately agree (40%) than Quebecers (24%).

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to access to vision health treatments and services in Canada: I have easy access to vision and eye care services in my region?
Cost is a factor when deciding to get vision and eye care services

For 71 percent of Canadians cost is a factor when deciding to get vision and eye care services.

As you would expect cost is more likely to be a factor for those on lower incomes, with 54 percent of Canadians earning less than $50k per annum strongly agreeing with the statement, while only 21 percent of those earning over $100k per annum feeling the same.

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to access to vision health treatments and services in Canada: Cost is a factor for me when deciding to get vision and eye care services?
Employment opportunities for those who are blind or visually impaired: Top two box summary

• The majority (89%) of Canadians moderately or strongly agree that more training programs should be made available to provide people who are blind or visually impaired with the skills that could make them more employable by more companies.

• Almost two thirds (60%) of Canadians moderately or strongly agree people who are blind or visually impaired should be given special consideration when applying for a job

• Just over half (55%) of Canadians moderately or strongly agree large companies should be required to have a certain number of appropriate jobs reserved for those who are blind or visually impaired and adapt the workplace to accommodate them

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.6 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to your opinion about employment opportunities for those who are blind or visually impaired?
More training programs should be made available to provide people who are blind or visually impaired with the skills that could make them more employable by more companies.

Women (57%) are much more likely to strongly agree with this statement than men (45%).

Canadians over 55 years (91%) and aged 35-54 years (92%) are significantly more likely than Canadians under 35 years (84%) to agree or strongly agree with this statement.
People who are blind or visually impaired should be given special consideration when applying for a job

Quebecers (76%) are significantly more likely to agree with this statement, than Ontarians (55%), Albertans (48%) and British Columbians (47%).

Canadians over 55 years (70%) are also much more likely to agree with the statement than those aged 18-34 years (54%) and those aged 35-54 years (55%).
Large companies should be required to have a certain number of appropriate jobs reserved for those who are blind or visually impaired and adapt the workplace to accommodate them.

Quebecers (35%) are significantly more likely to strongly agree than Ontarians (19%), Albertans (15%) and British Columbians (15%).

Women (26%) are also more likely to strongly agree than men (20%).
Statements relating to people who are blind or have serious vision impairments: Top two box summary

- Almost all (92%) of Canadians agree that as a society we should ensure persons who are blind and visually impaired are given every treatment, aid and service that could help them overcome their vision loss so they can live as complete lives as possible.

- Seventy eight percent agree that we should provide persons who are blind and visually impaired with some help but we can’t do everything for them so they will need to also help themselves.

- Only one fifth (18%) agree that helping persons who are blind and visually impaired should be left to charities.
As a society we should ensure persons who are blind and visually impaired are given every treatment, aid and service that could help them overcome their vision loss so they can live as complete lives as possible.

- **Strongly agree**: 59%
- **Moderately agree**: 33%
- **Moderately disagree**: 4%
- **Strongly disagree**: 1%
- **Not sure**: 3%

Quebecers (67%) are significantly more likely than British Columbians (51%) to strongly agree with this statement. Women (62%) are also much more likely to strongly agree with the statement than men (55%).

Canadians over 55 years (67%) and Canadians aged 35-54 years (61%) are more likely than the younger population (18-34 yrs)(46%) to strongly agree with the statement.
We should provide persons who are blind and visually impaired with some help but we can’t do everything for them so they will need to also help themselves.

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.7 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements relating to people who are blind or have serious vision impairments?

- **Strongly agree**: 32%
- **Moderately agree**: 47%
- **Moderately disagree**: 14%
- **Strongly disagree**: 5%
- **Not sure**: 2%

Canadians over 55 years (36%) are significantly more likely to strongly agree with this statement than those aged 35-54 years (27%).
Helping persons who are blind and visually impaired should be left to charities

Quebecers (42%) are significantly more likely to agree with the statement than British Columbians (8%), Albertans (9%) and Ontarians (9%).

Canadians aged 18-34 years (26%) are also significantly more likely to agree with the statement than those aged 35-54 years (15%) and those over 55 years (15%).
Position regarding provision of service

If they suffered a loss of sight, 90 percent of Canadians would expect the public health system to pay for some of their treatment, albeit to varying degrees.

Canadians under 35 years (6%) are significantly more likely than those aged 35-54 years (2%) to rely on charity organisations if such an event took place.

- I would expect our public health system to pay for whatever treatments, rehabilitation, assistive devices or services that could help me improve my sight or improve my life: 65%
- I would expect our public health system to pay for medical treatments only, but not assistive devices or rehabilitation services, such as electronic readers or readaptive training: 25%
- I would count on the patient organizations and charities to help me: 3%
- I wouldn't need any special help - I'd take care of myself with my family's help: 2%
- None of these: 4%

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.8 If you had an accident or got a disease that caused you to lose your sight, what statement would best describe your position regarding the provision of services to you?
Primarily responsible for paying for equipment

Once again the clear majority (92%) believe that the government should be involved, to some extent in paying for equipment for the visually impaired. Only two percent of Canadians feel it should be left solely to charity agencies. However Canadians under 35 years (5%) are significantly more likely to feel that the purchasing of equipment should be left solely to charity agencies than those aged 35-54 years (1%).

Canadians over 55 years (57%) are much more likely to feel that it should be a combination of all three approaches, than those aged 35-54 years (47%) and adults under 35 years (39%).

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.9 In your opinion, who should be primarily responsible for paying for that equipment?
Even though they can cost money, regulations and procedures in our healthcare system should be followed very closely to ensure patient safety  67%

Most regulations and procedures cause unnecessary nuisances and expense in our healthcare system  12%

We should save money in our healthcare system by being more relaxed about regulations and procedures  11%

None of these  10%

Canadian men (13%) are much more likely to favour a relaxation in regulations and procedures to save money than women (9%).

Younger Canadians (18-34 years)(16%) are also more likely to favour the relaxation of procedures than those aged 35 – 54 years (9%) and Canadians over 55 years (9%).
How concerned: That it treats the problem

When asked how concerned about medicine they give to a loved one treating the problem, 73 percent are very concerned. British Columbians (84%), Ontarians (78%) and Albertans (77%) are more likely to be very concerned than Quebecers (59%). Women (77%) are also more likely to be very concerned than men (70%).

Only three percent of Canadians are not at all concerned that the medicine they give to a loved one treats the problem. Quebecers (6%) are much more likely to be not at all concerned than Ontarians (2%).
How concerned: That it is safe

Almost three quarters (71%) of Canadians are very concerned about the safety of the medicines that they give to their loved ones. Albertans (80%), British Columbians (79%) and Ontarians (75%) are significantly more likely than Quebecers (59%) to be very concerned. Women (75%) are again much more likely than men (68%) to be very concerned about the safety of medicines they give to loved ones.

Canadians over 55 years (75%) and 35-54 years (74%) are much more likely to be very concerned about the safety of medicine than adults under 35 years (64%).
Eight in ten (80%) of Canadians are moderately or very concerned about the cost of medicine, 15 percent are not too concerned, and five percent are not at all concerned.

Women (45%) are much more likely to be very concerned about the cost of medicine than men (35%). Not surprisingly Canadians that earn less than $50k per annum (49%) are much more likely to be very concerned about the cost of purchasing medicine than those that earn $50k -99k (34%), and those that earn more than $100k per annum (29%).
Almost half of Canadians (46%) feel if given the choice should be given treatment approved by Health Canada. Quebecers (54%) are much more likely than British Columbians (37%) to react this way.

Men (14%) are much likely than women (8%) to be willing to leave the decision to the doctor. British Columbians (14%) and Quebecers (14%) are also much more likely to leave the decision to the doctor than residents of Alberta (3%).

- **I should be given the treatment that has been approved by Health Canada**: 46%
- **The decision should be made by the patient based on the benefits and risks of both**: 41%
- **I don't mind - the decision is entirely up to the doctor**: 11%
- **I should be given the treatment that has not been approved by Health Canada**: 2%

Base: All Respondents (n=1,007)
Q.12 If your doctor has a choice of treating you with one of two treatments that he or she thinks would both work for you, but one has been approved by Health Canada to treat your condition and the other has not, what statement best describes your reaction to this situation?
Respondent Profile
Demographic Profile

**Gender:**
- Male: 49%
- Female: 51%

**Age:**
- 18-34: 29%
- 35-54: 40%
- 55+: 31%

**Gender/Age:**
- Male 18-34: 14%
- Male 35-54: 20%
- Male 55+: 15%
- Female 18-34: 14%
- Female 35-54: 21%
- Female 55+: 17%

**Region:**
- BC: 13%
- AB: 10%
- MB/SK: 7%
- ON: 37%
- PQ: 25%
- ATL: 8%

**Education:**
- HS or less: 46%
- College/Tech school/Some University: 36%
- Univ+: 18%

**Income:**
- <$50K: 39%
- $50-99K: 34%
- $100K+: 14%
- Don't know/Refused: 13%

Language:
- English: 79%
- French: 21%
VISION CRITICAL