

CANADIANS BACK AUTISM FUNDING FROM PROVINCES

Full Majority (84%) Believe Their Provincial Healthcare Program Should Cover The Costs Of The Intensive Behavioural Treatment For Children Suffering From Autism Despite Supreme Court Decision



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Toronto, ON – A new Ipsos-Reid survey conducted on behalf of *Families for Early Autism Treatment of British Columbia* finds nine in ten (89%) Canadians believe that their provincial healthcare program should cover the costs of the Intensive Behavioural Treatment, which has scientifically been proven, to effectively treat children who suffer from autism.

Once informed that there was a recent decision by The Supreme Court of Canada that provinces are not legally responsible for covering the Intensive Behavioural Treatment, which costs a family approximately \$60,000 a year and would save taxpayers 1-2 million dollars over the lifetime of an autistic child, and that while their province is not legally bound under the Canada Health Act to provide funding for this service they still can choose to do so out of their health budget, 84% of Canadians said that while not obligated to cover this healthcare cost, their province should do so anyways.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Families for Early Autism Treatment of British Columbia poll conducted from December 14th to December 16th, 2004. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1001 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted

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- 1 -



to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.

When asked whether or not they “believe that children who suffer from autism should be covered by their provincial healthcare program to receive an Intensive Behavioural Treatment, which has scientifically been proven, to effectively treat autism,” 89% of Canadians say “yes.” Just 6% say “no” and another 6% are unsure.

- Eastern Canadians are more likely than their neighbours to the west to believe that their provincial healthcare program should cover the costs of the Intensive Behavioural Treatment: 95% of Atlantic Canadians, 90% of Quebecers, and 91% of Ontarians say “yes” compared to 85% of residents of British Columbia, 82% of residents of Alberta, and 80% of residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba.

Canadians were then read the following statement, “now, as you may know, there was a recent decision by The Supreme Court which indicated that provinces are not legally responsible for covering the Intensive Behavioural Treatment for children with autism. This means that while your province is not legally bound under the Canada Health Act to provide funding for this service they still can choose to do so out of their health budget. It is estimated that The Intensive Behavioural Treatment, a scientifically proven effective treatment for children with autism, which costs a family approximately \$60,000 a year would save taxpayers 1-2 million dollars over the lifetime of an autistic child.” When asked whether or not they think that while not obligated to cover this healthcare cost, their province should do so anyways, 84% said “yes.” One in ten (9%) said “no” and the remaining 8% didn’t know whether or not they think that while not obligated to cover this healthcare cost, their province should do so anyways.

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- 2 -



- Canadians 18-54 years of age are more likely than their elders to think that while not obligated to cover the cost of the Intensive Behavioural Treatment for children with autism, their province should do so anyways (87% vs. 77%).

-30-

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- 3 -

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