

Ekos Research Associates Inc.
Les Associés de recherche Ekos inc.

Health Care Study

Final Report of Findings

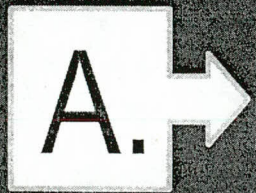
IC-01-21

July 6, 2000

24.2.2003
C2
283151
30006761
62
V086 2079
(part of)

OUTLINE

- A. Objectives and Methodology
- B. General Perceptions: Quality and Satisfaction
- C. Confidence
- D. Priorities
- E. Performance Measures
- F. The Federal-Provincial Dynamic: Roles and Expectations
- G. Preliminary Conclusions
- H. Annex



Objectives and Methodology

Objectives of the Research

- This research conducted in context of Federal-provincial discussions on health care system renewal

- Areas of inquiry include:

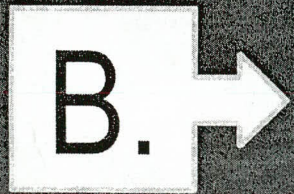
- #1 ✓ Public perceptions of current system
- #2 ✓ Measures of confidence in the current and prospective system
- #3 ✓ Testing public perceptions on the problems with the health care system
- #4 ✓ Identifying public expectations for respective federal-provincial roles in overall process of health care renewal

- Findings to be applied to Health Canada's ongoing development of strategic policy and communications



- **Telephone survey of the general public**
 - ✓ 1,210 completed interviews with a national random sample of Canadians 18 years of age and over
- **Interview period from June 8 to June 14, 2000**
- **Results valid within ± 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20**
 - ✓ The margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided
- **Data weighted along age, gender and regional lines**
- **Linked qualitative research phase conducted in May 2000**
 - ✓ 10 focus groups – Vancouver, Calgary, Mississauga, Quebec City, and Charlottetown

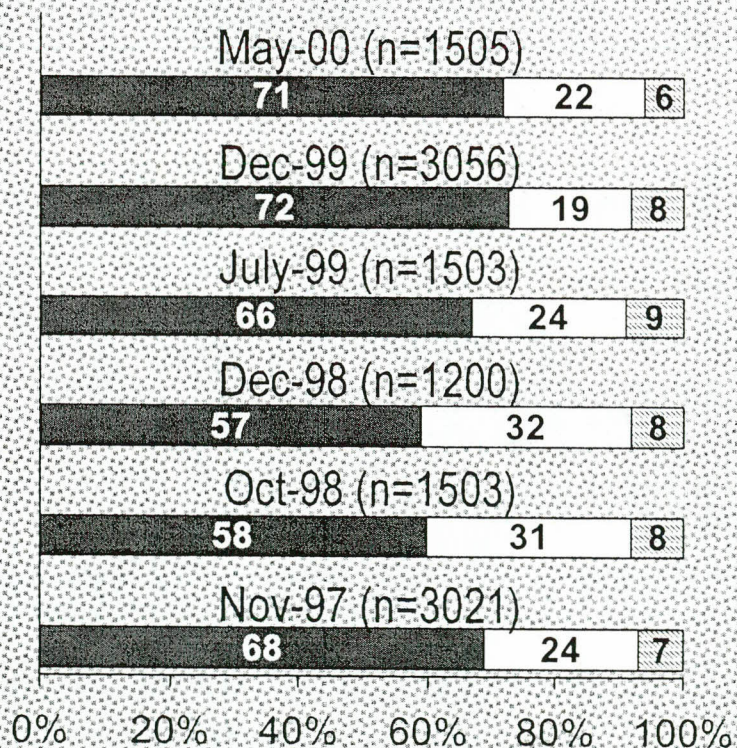




General Perceptions: Quality and Satisfaction

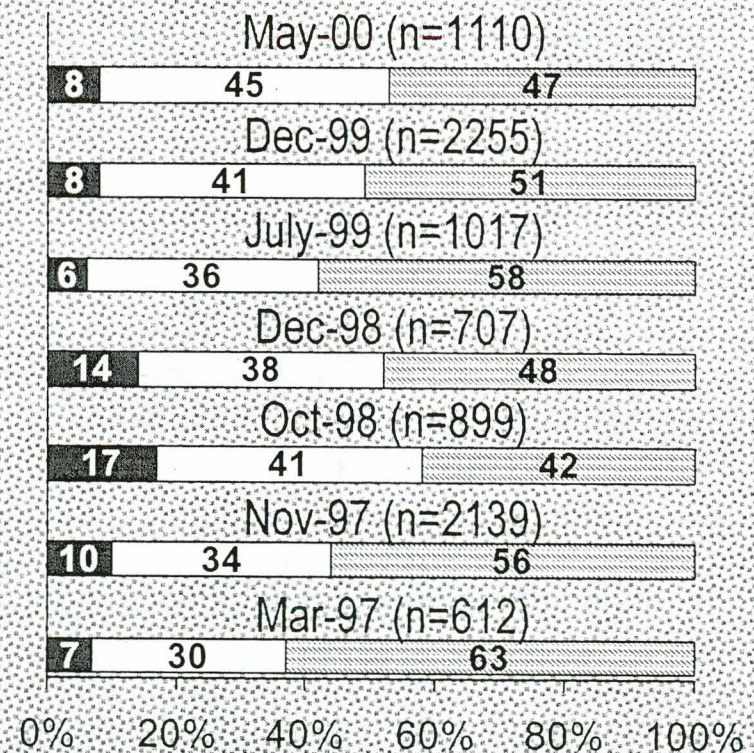
Tracking Perceptions of Health Care System

“Has the quality of health care over the past two years improved, deteriorated, or stayed the same?”



■ Deteriorated (1-3) □ Same (4) ▨ Improved (5-7)

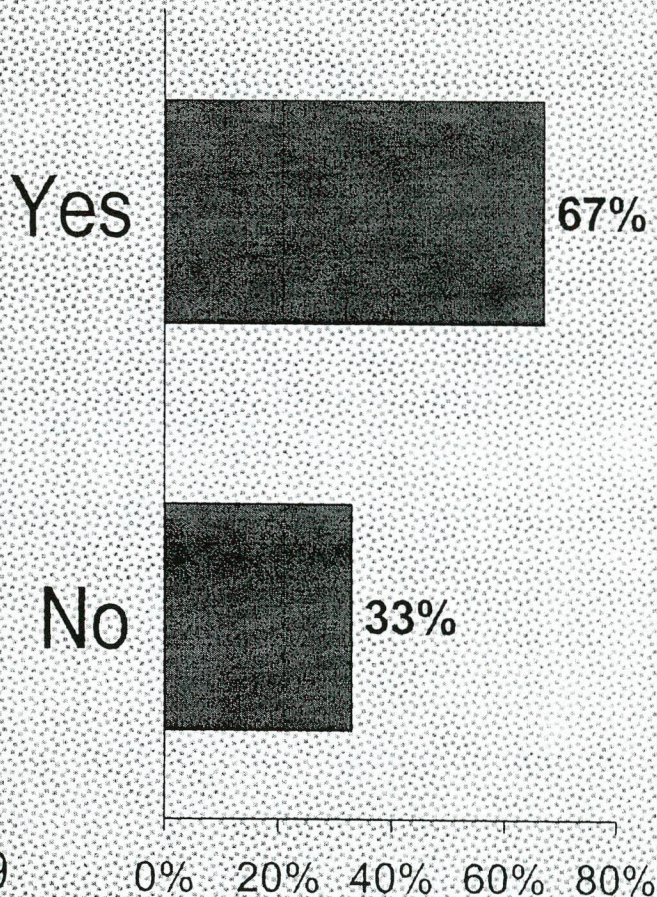
“Which level of government is most responsible for the deterioration?”



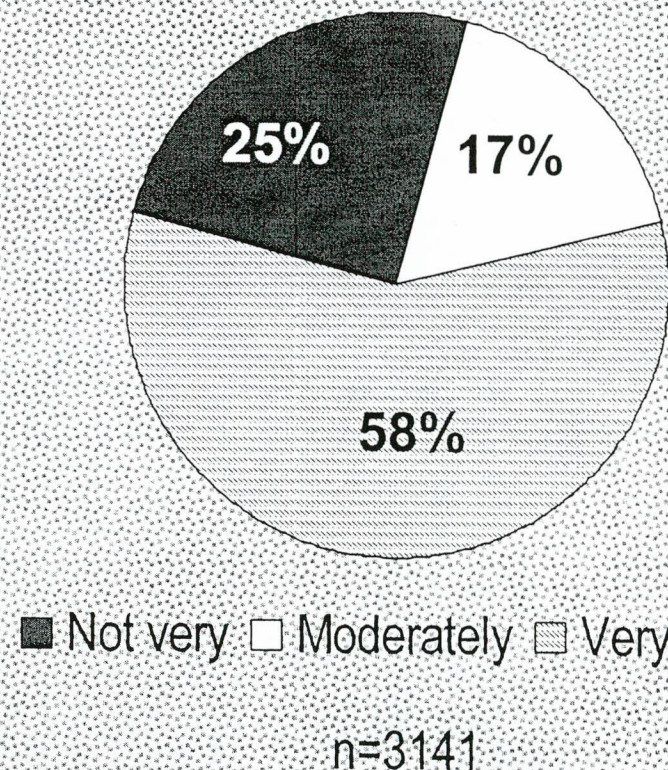
■ DK/NR □ Federal ▨ Provincial



“Have you had any personal contacts with the health care system in the past year or so?”

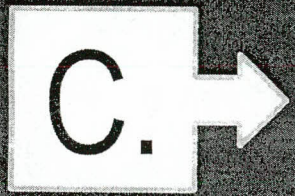


“How satisfied were you with the service you received during your most recent contact?”



Ekos Research
Associates Inc.

Government Communications Survey February 2000

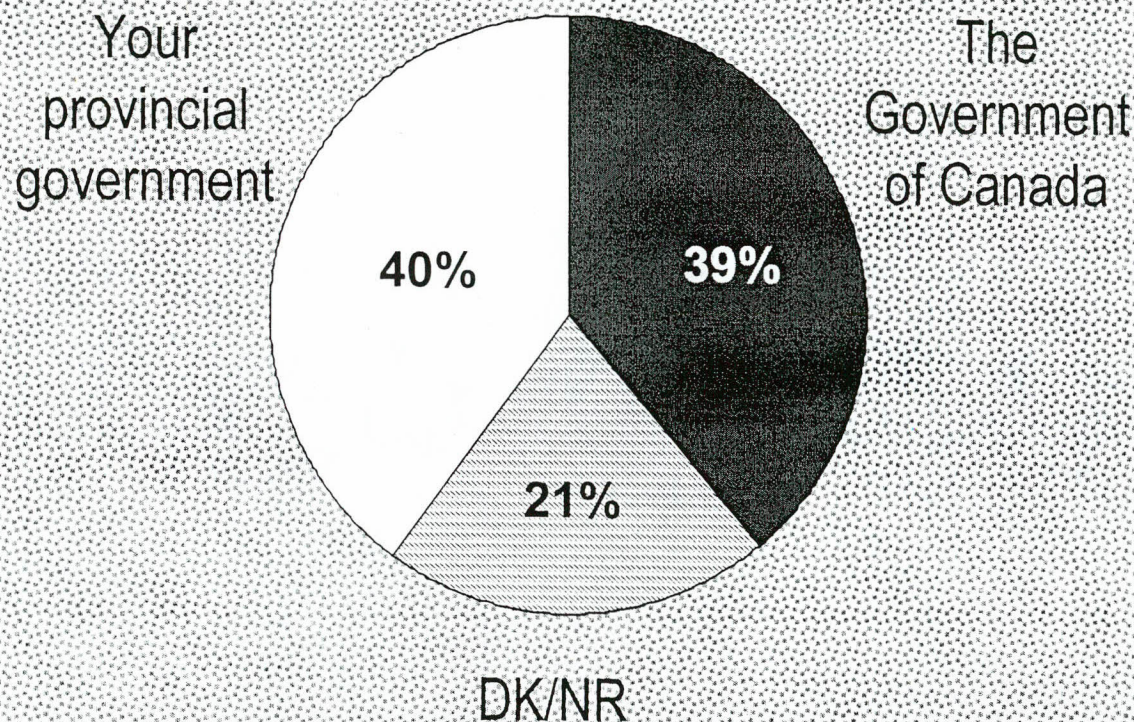


Confidence



Health Care System

“When it comes to protecting and strengthening the health care system, would you say you have more confidence in your provincial government or in the Government of Canada?”



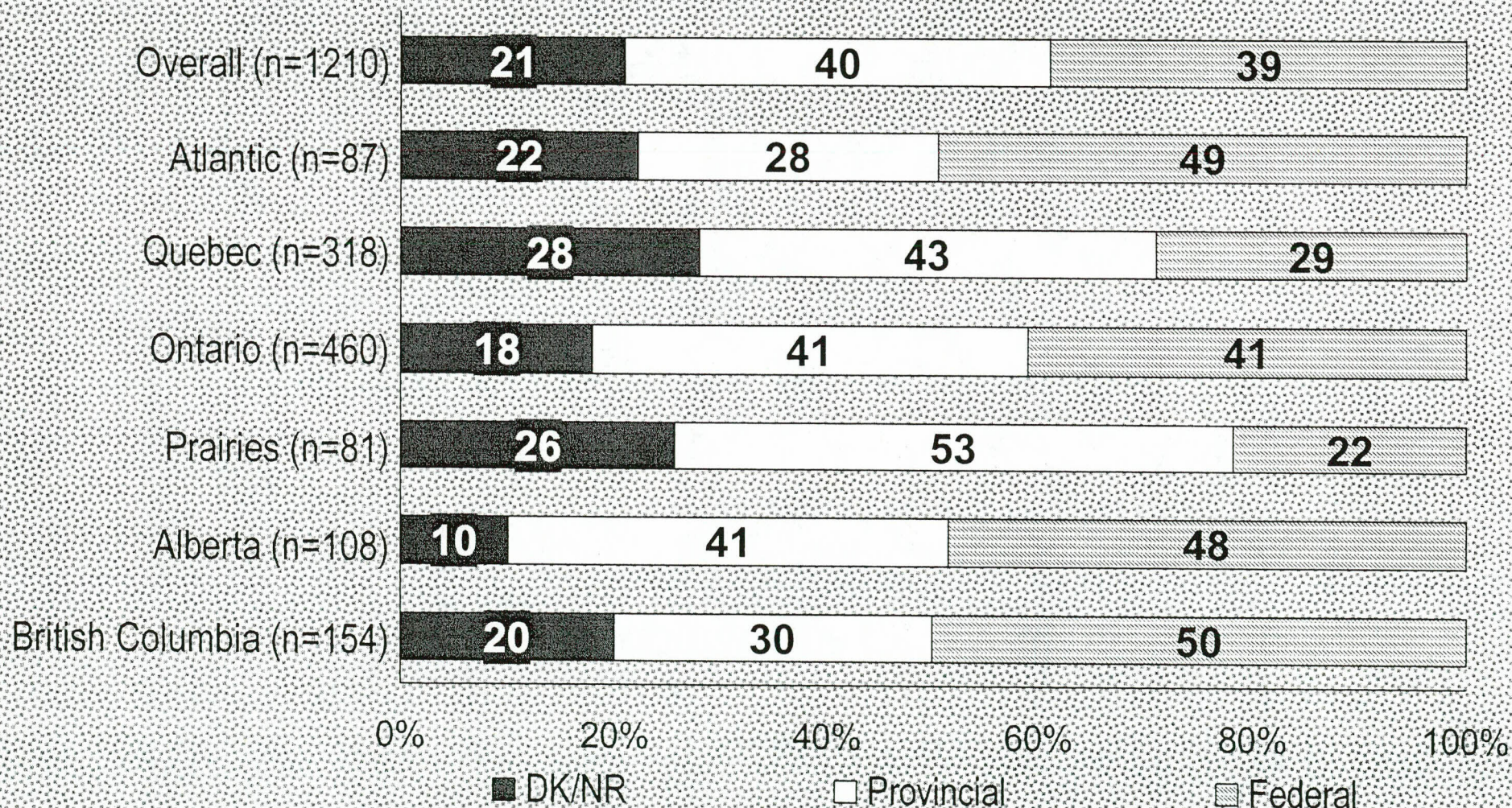
Ekos Research
Associates Inc.

n=1210

National Health Care Survey, June 2000

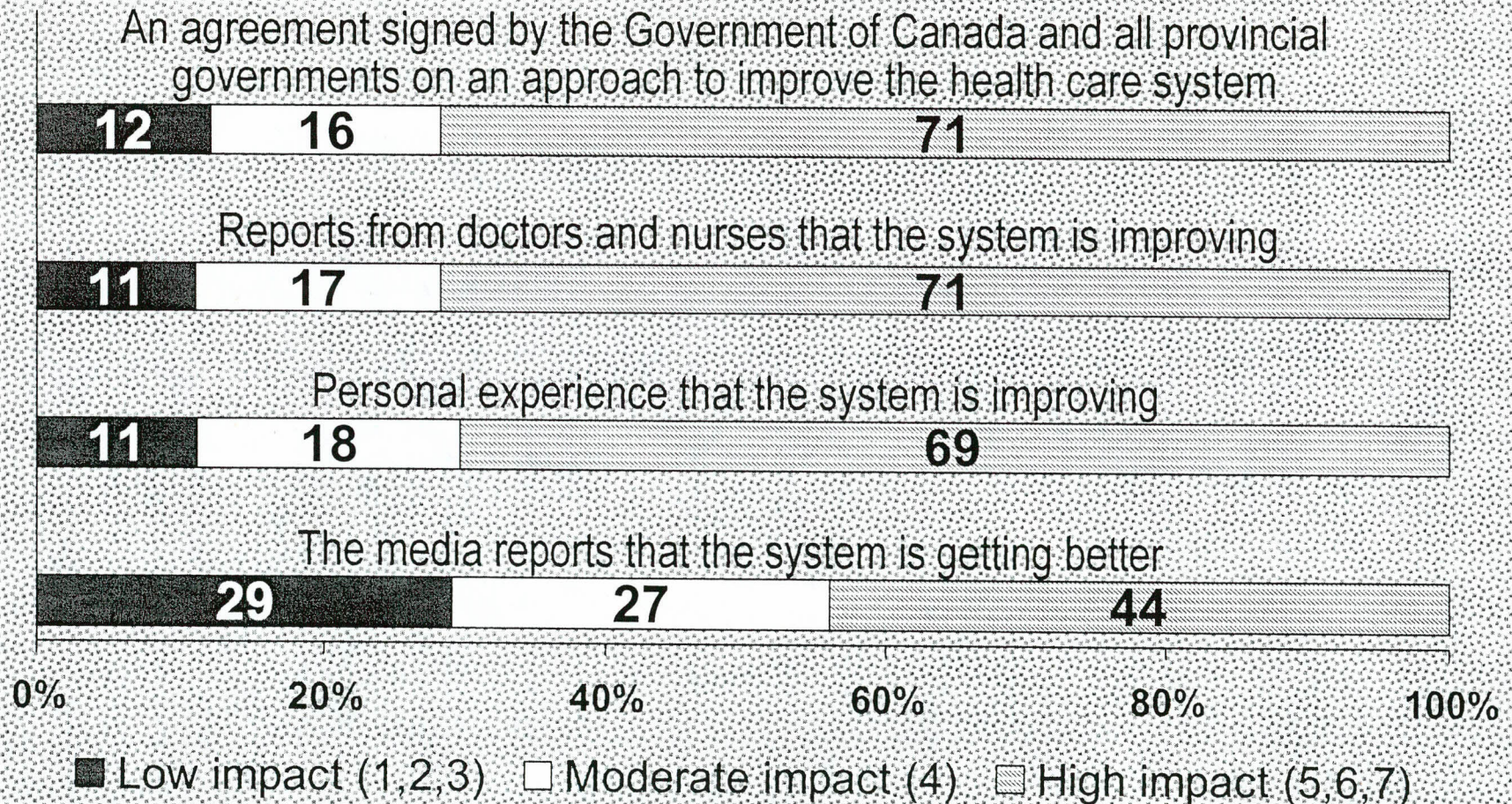
Confidence in Protecting and Strengthening Health Care System — by region

“When it comes to protecting and strengthening the health care system, would you say you have more confidence in your provincial government or in the Government of Canada?”



System

“Thinking about your own personal level of confidence in the health care system and what it would take for your confidence to be increased, what impact would each of the following have on your level of confidence?”



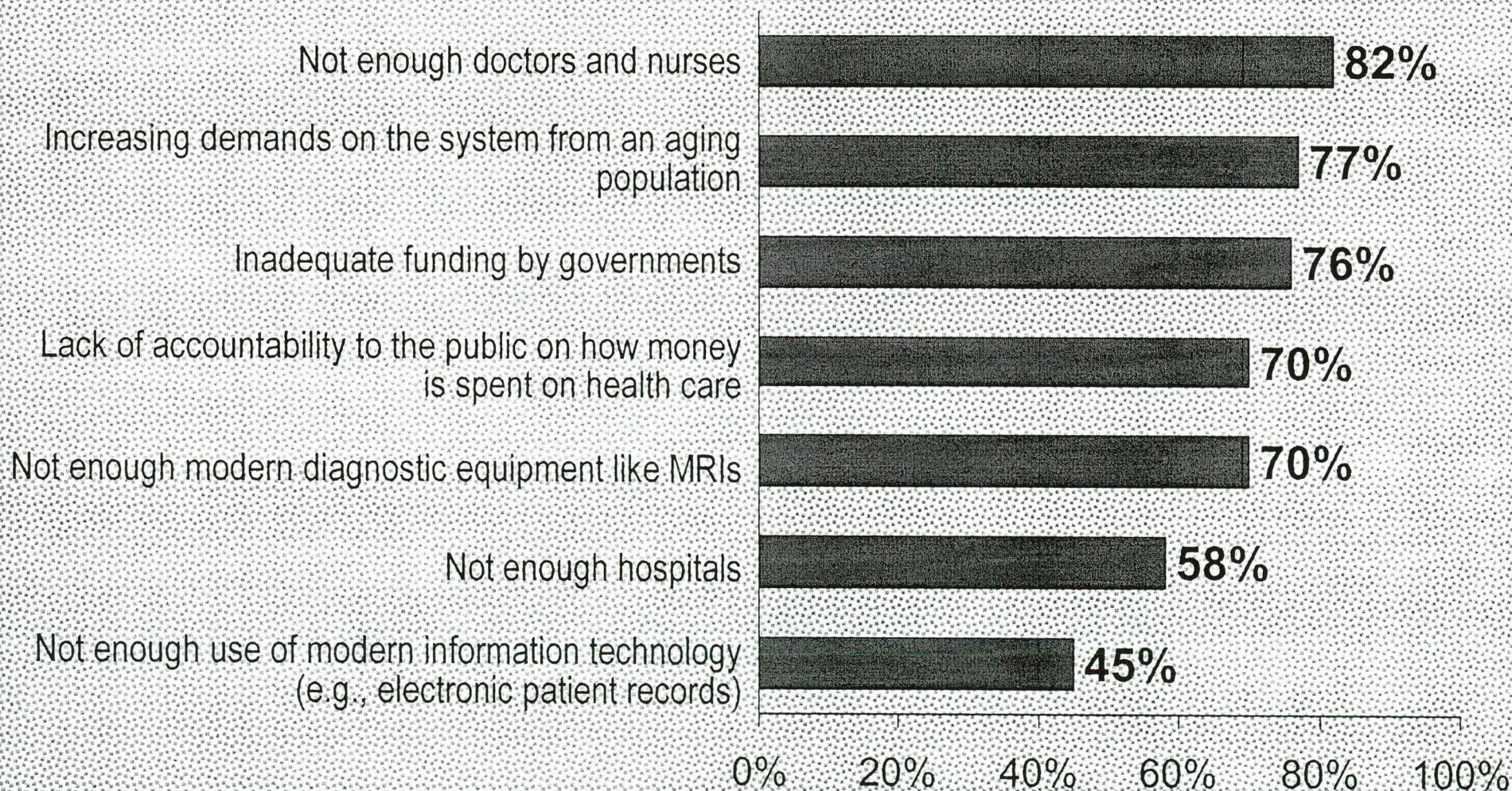


Priorities



Problems Facing the Health Care System

“How serious are the following problems?”



% indicating *high seriousness* (5,6,7)
on 7-point scale



Ekos Research
Associates Inc.

n=1210

National Health Care Survey, June 2000

“Which of the following aspects of health care is of greatest importance to you?”

Equal access to health care
for all Canadians

43%

Quality of health care
services

42%

Health of the Canadian
population

10%

Costs of the health care
system to the country

4%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Dec 98 (n=1200)	Nov 97 (n=2998)	Aug 95 (n=3021)
--------------------	--------------------	--------------------

41%

45%

53%

40%

33%

31%

11%

15%

9%

6%

5%

8%



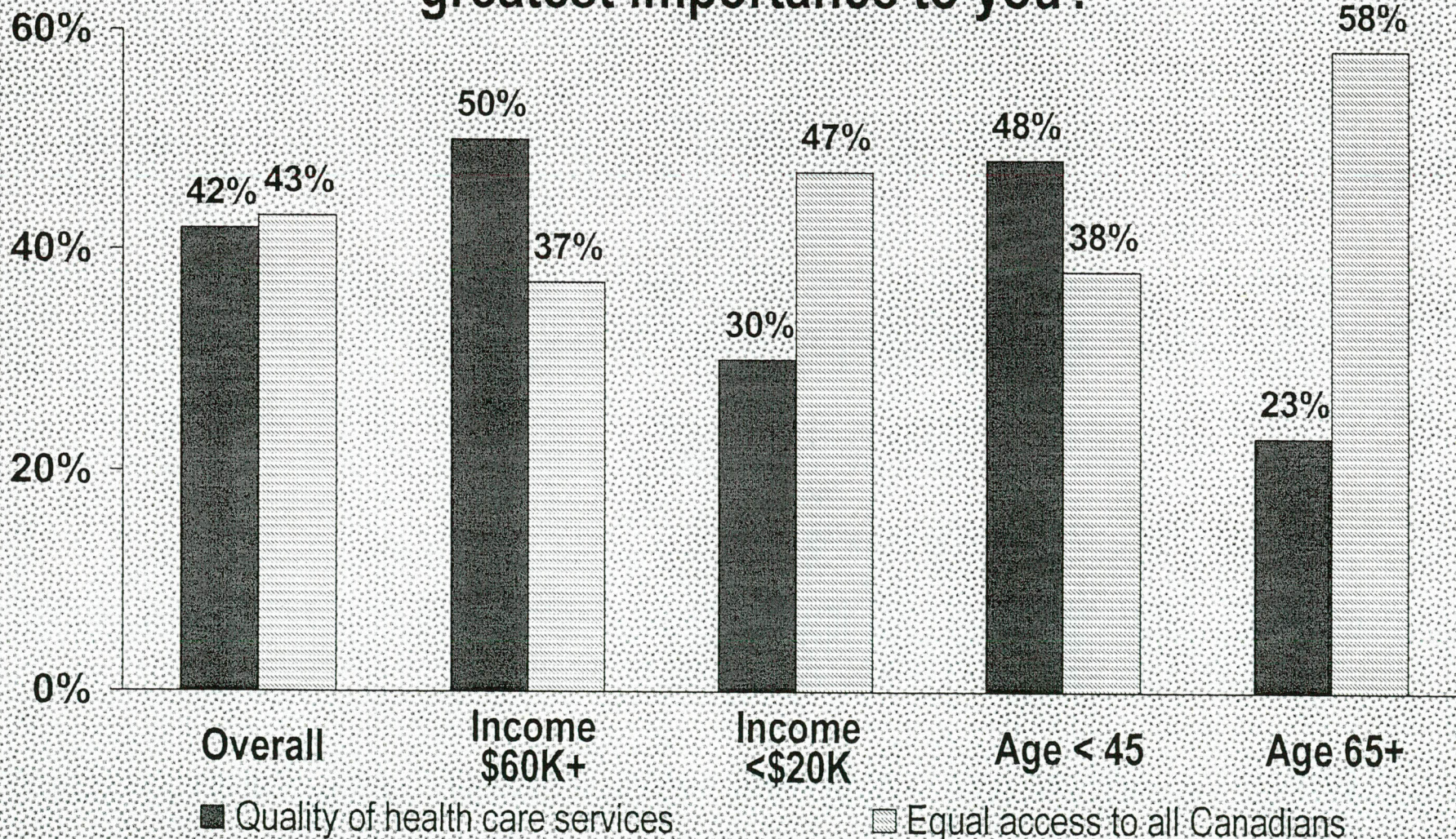
Ekos Research
Associates Inc.

n=1210

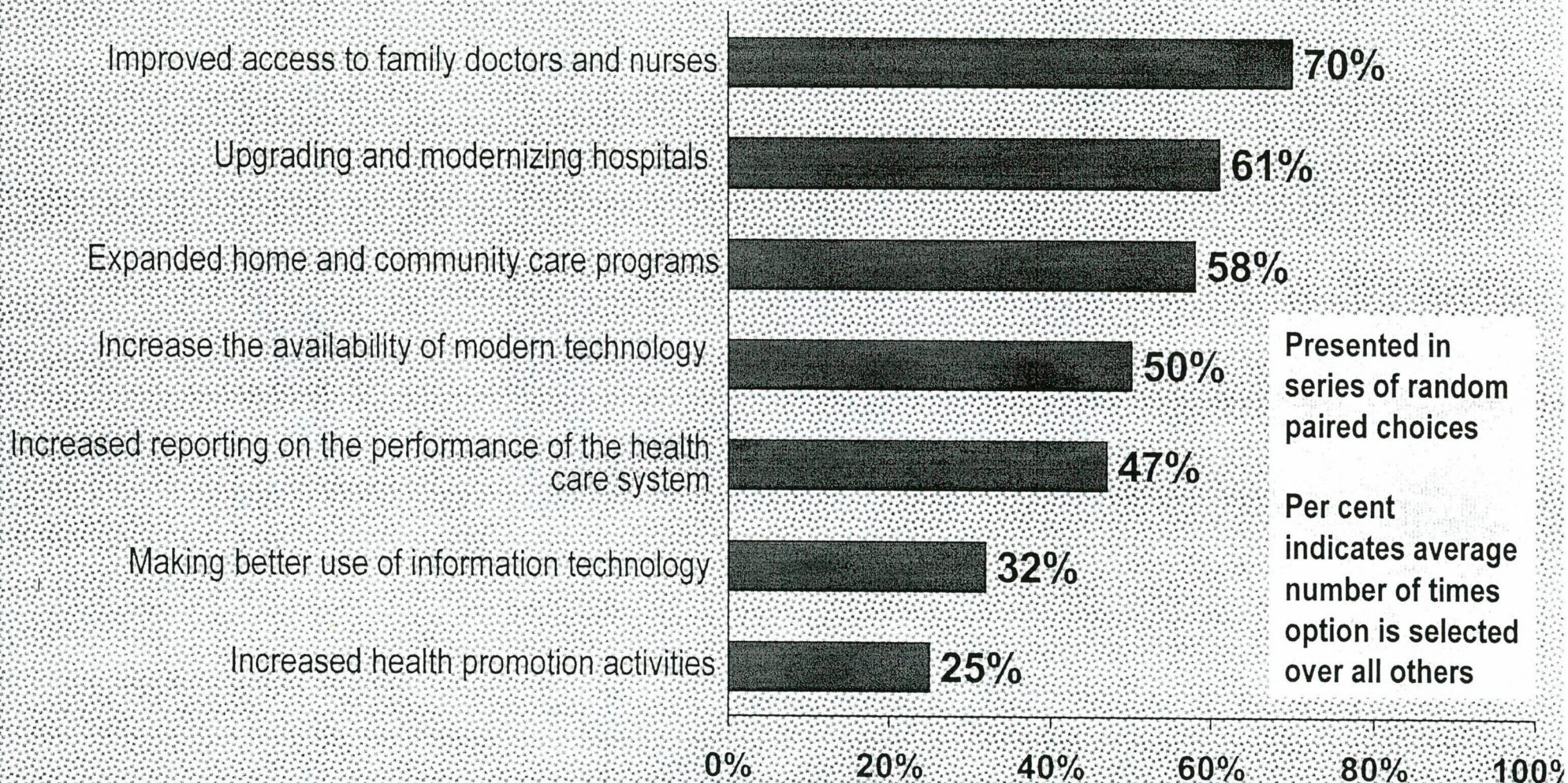
Health Issues Tracking Surveys
National Health Care Survey, June 2000

Priority Aspects of Health Care System — Demographic Variations

“Which of the following aspects of health care is of greatest importance to you?”



“If you were Prime Minister for a day and had an additional \$1 billion to invest in health care, which would be in the best interest of the public?”



Ekos Research
Associates Inc.

n=1210

National Health Care Survey, June 2000

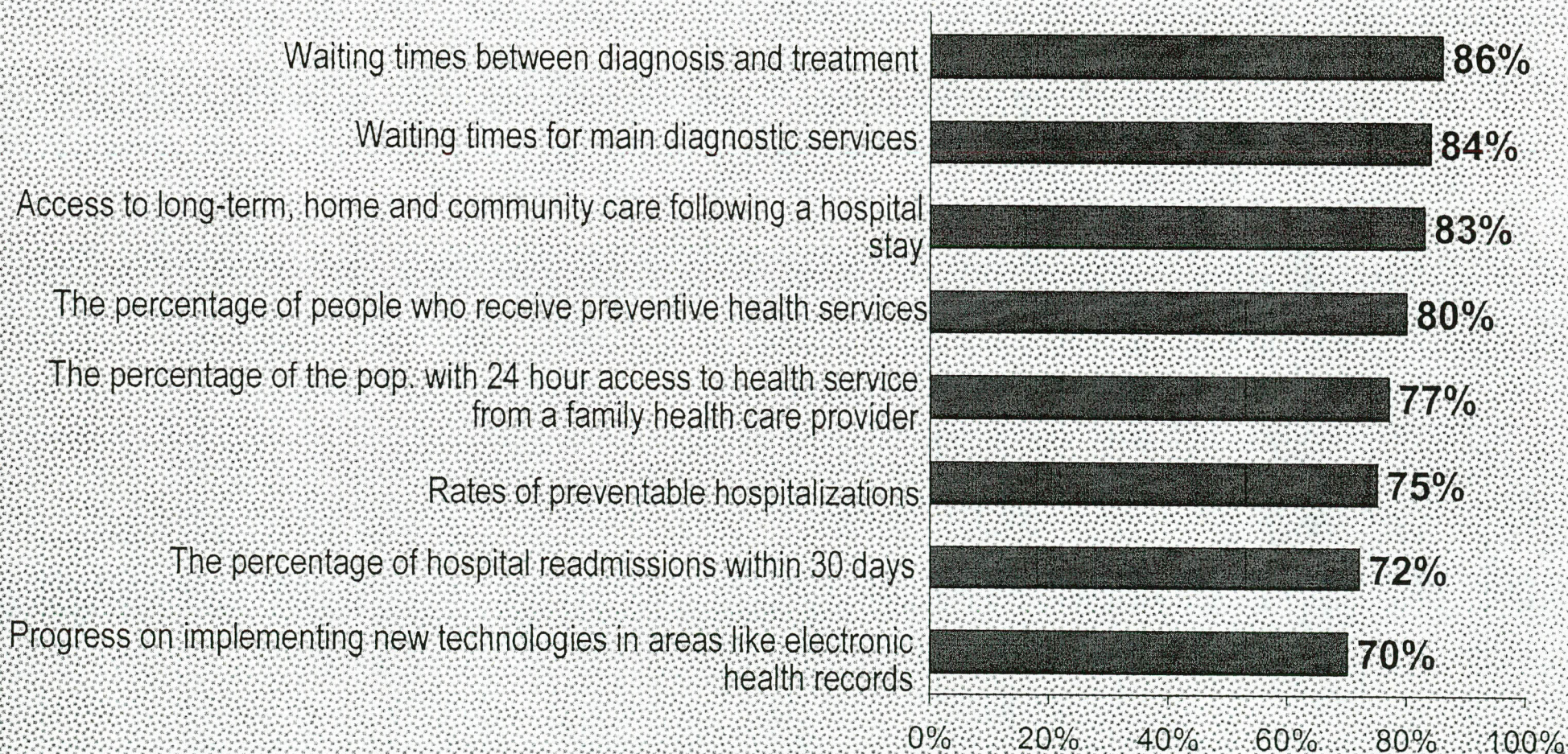


Performance Measures



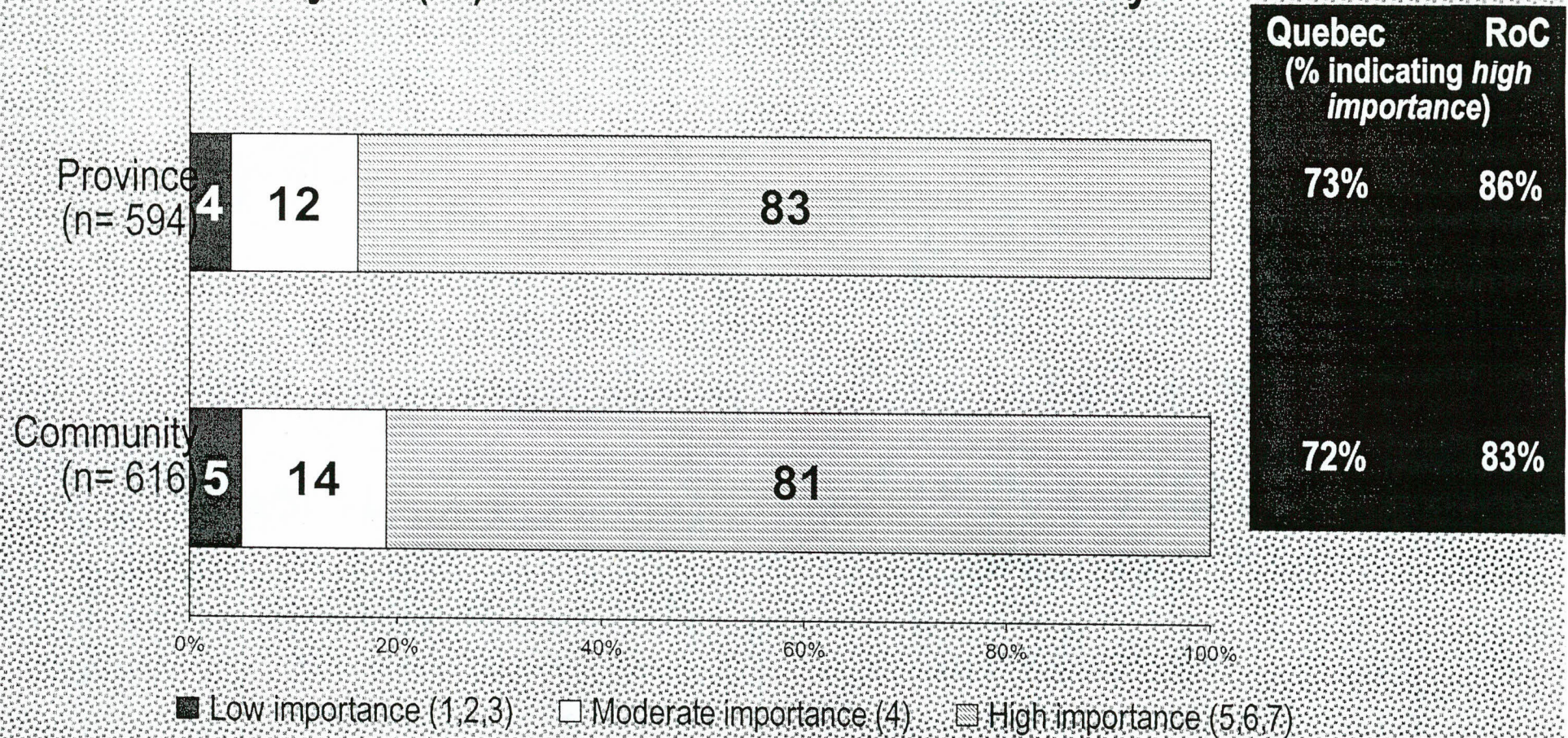
Performance Measures in the Health Care System

“How useful would comparing each of the following from one year to the next be in measuring the progress of the health care system?”



% indicating *high usefulness*
(5,6,7) on 7-point scale

“How important is it for you to have performance measures for your (...) as well as for the whole country?” *

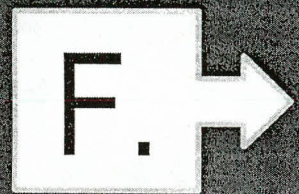


*Note: question asked in a half sample rotation



Ekos Research
Associates Inc.

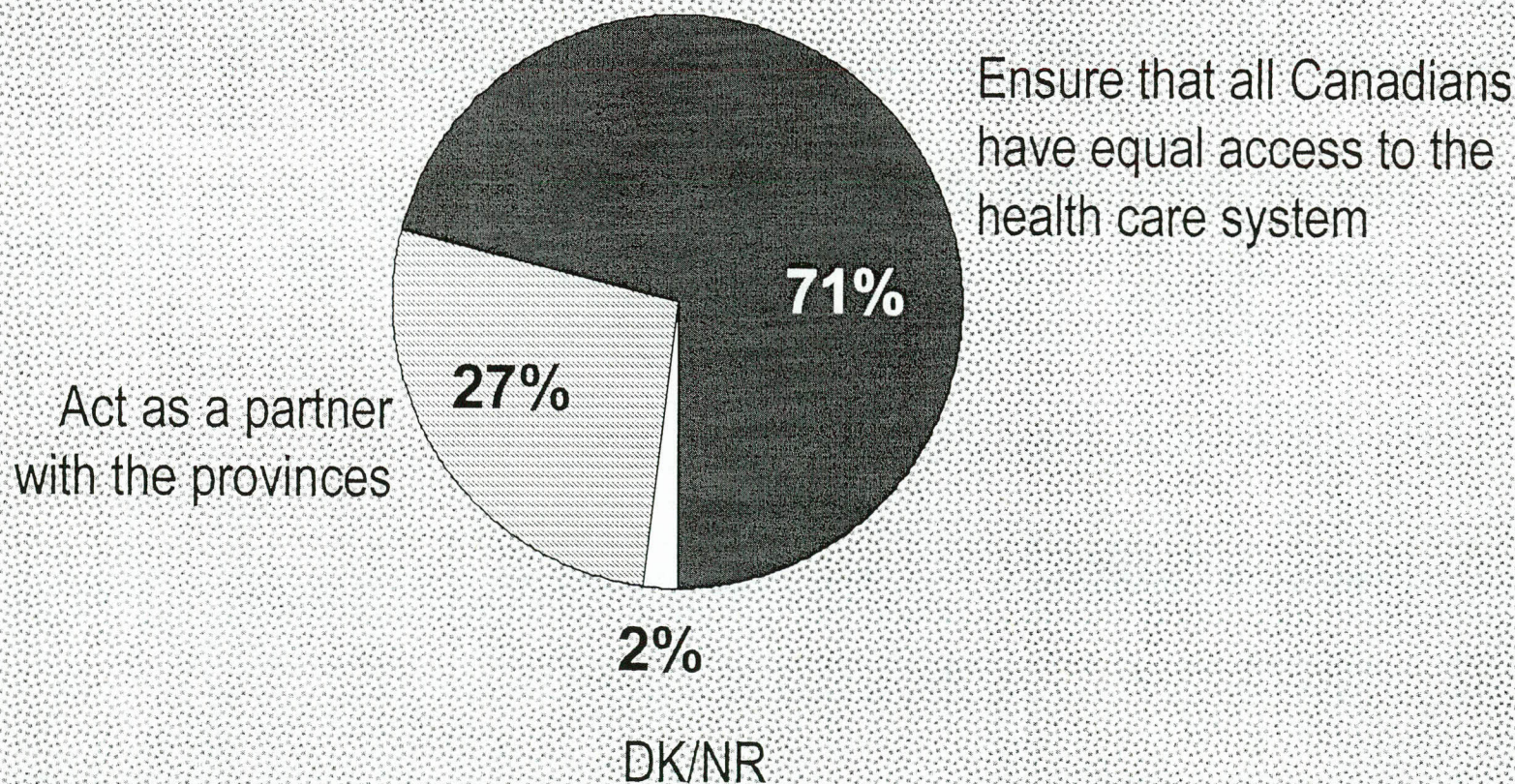
National Health Care Survey – June 2000



The Federal- Provincial Dynamic: Roles and Expectations

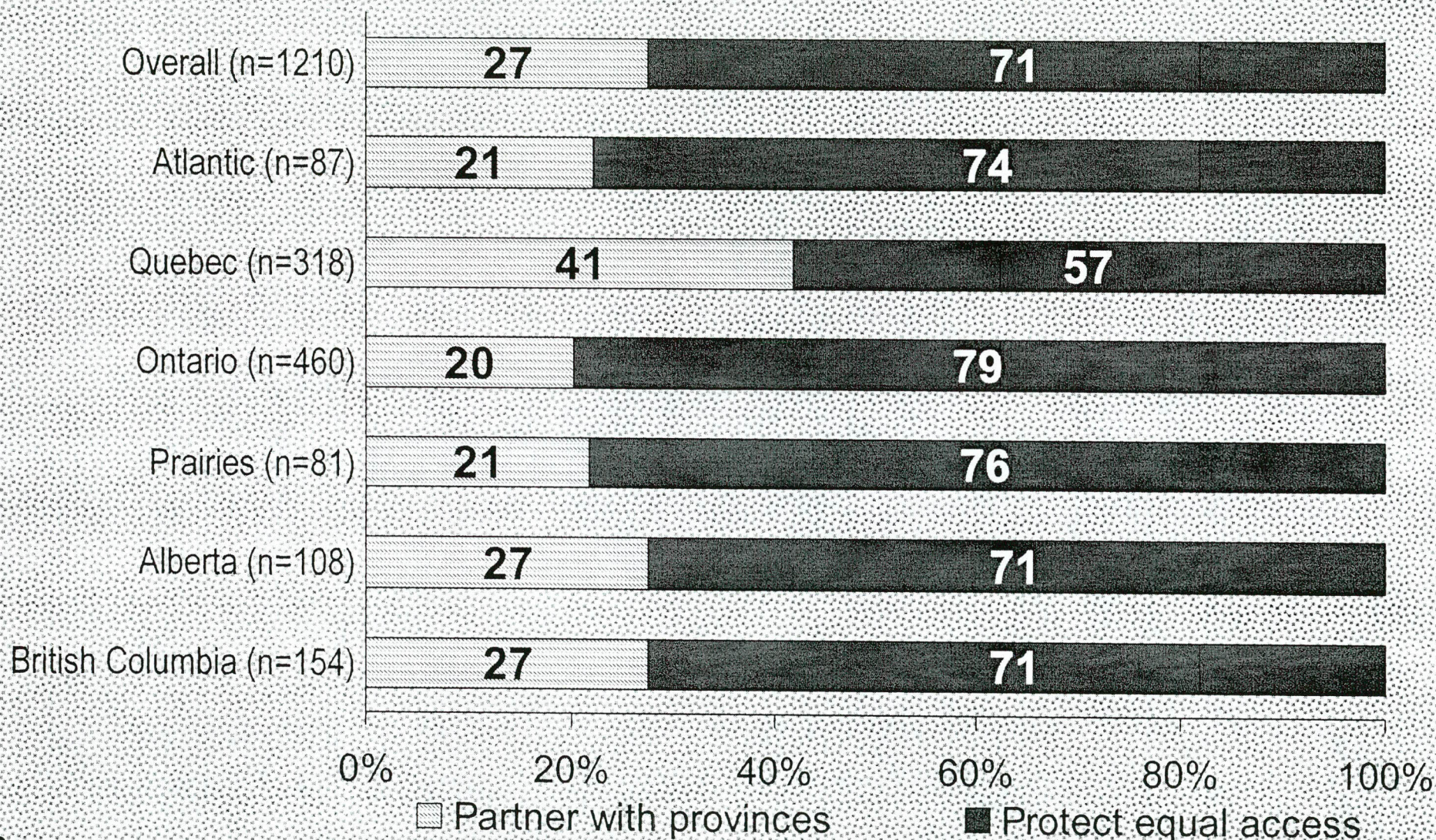
Role of Federal and Provincial Governments

“If there is a conflict between working as a partner and ensuring access to health care, which would you prefer the Government of Canada do?”



by Region

“If there is a conflict between working as a partner and ensuring access to health care, which would you prefer the Government of Canada do?”



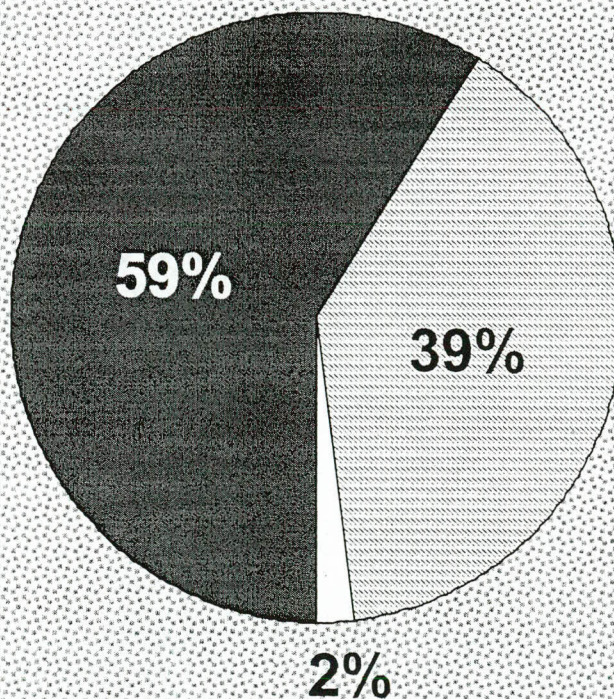
Ekos Research
Associates Inc.

National Health Care Survey – June 2000

Role of Federal Government

“Which view is closest to your own?”

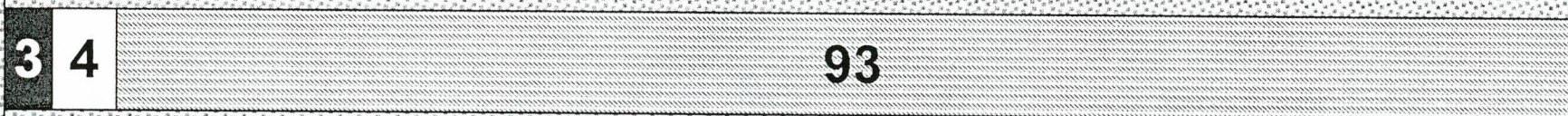
The Government of Canada's role in the health care system includes more than helping the provinces pay for the system. The Government of Canada should also ensure that all Canadians, no matter where they live, have access to similar levels of health care services



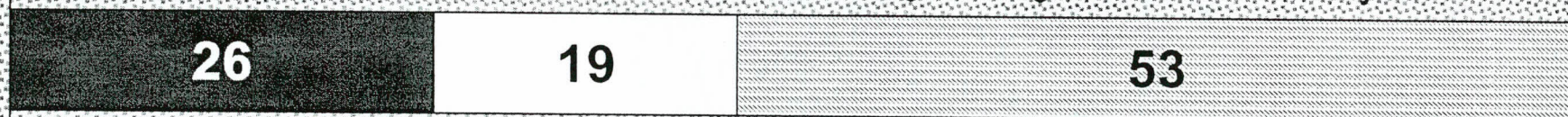
The Government of Canada's role in the health care system is to give money to provincial governments to help cover the costs of provincial health care systems



"I think the Government of Canada and the provincial governments SHOULD be able to put aside whatever differences they might have among themselves and reach an agreement on a common approach for strengthening the health care system."



"I think the Government of Canada and the provincial governments WILL be able to put aside whatever differences they might have among themselves and reach an agreement on a common approach for strengthening the health care system."



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Disagree (1,2,3)

□ Neither (4)

▨ Agree (5,6,7)



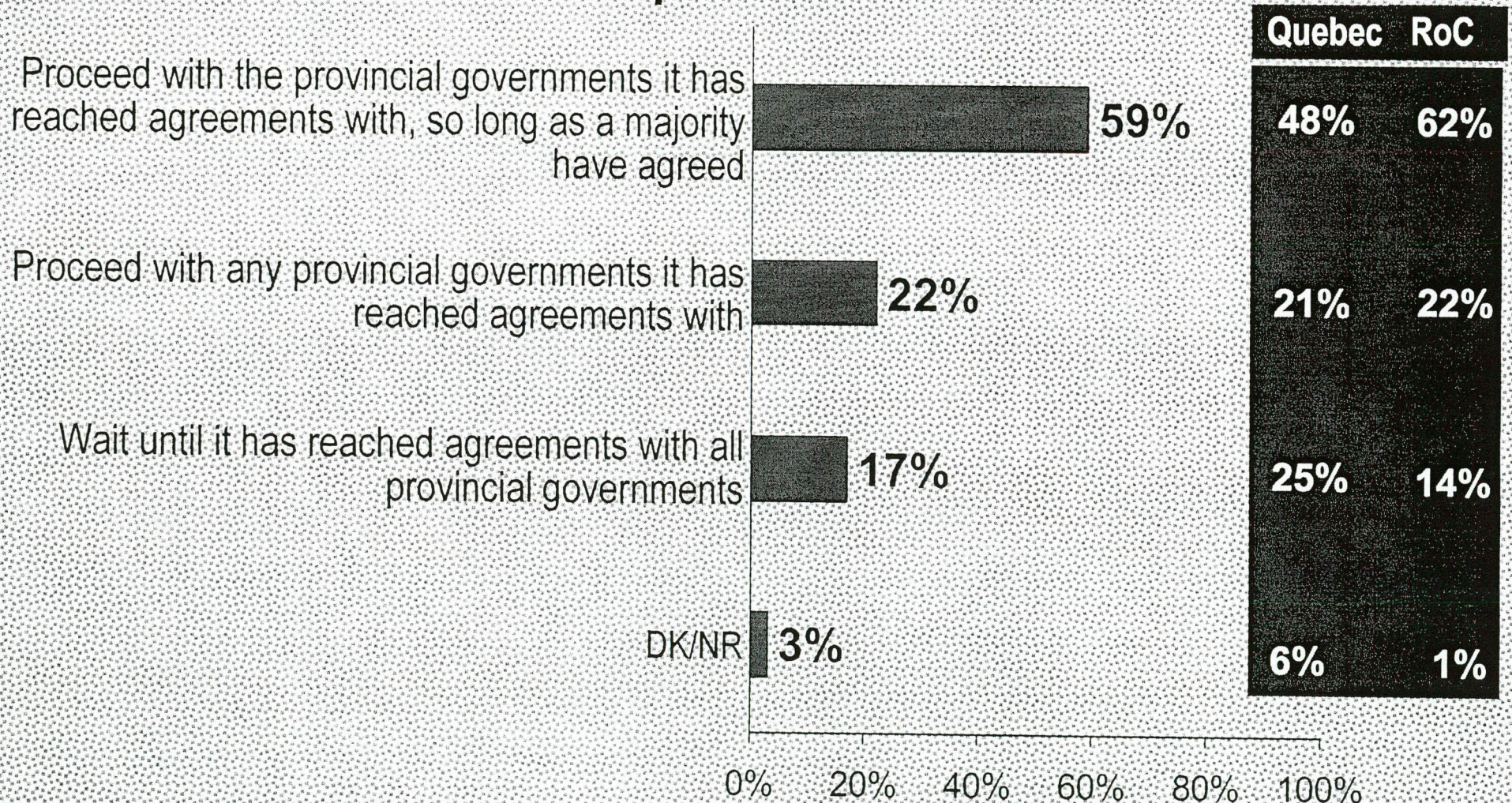
Ekos Research
Associates Inc.

n=1210

National Health Care Survey - June 2000

Preferred Approach for the Government of Canada

“Which would be the best way for the Government of Canada to proceed?”





Preliminary Conclusions

Conclusions (a)

- Little shift, high anxiety, high impatience with current status of health care system
- Anxieties do not equal collapse of structural confidence, but sense that this may come if plan, changes and money do not
- Continued erosion of the federal government's position, but no winners
 - ✓ Both senior levels of government suspect in the public's mind
- Public not ready to "just" accept dollars after this much wait/anxiety
 - ✓ Funding crucial but not sufficient
 - ✓ Declining concerns with fiscal prudence arguments
- Main threats to the health care system
 - ✓ Scarcity of human resources (nurses and doctors)
 - ✓ Increasing demands (aging population)
 - ✓ Inadequate funding



■ **Support for equal access, national system, public funding, and comparability all robust**

■ **Little growth in acceptance of two-tier despite:**

- ✓ Quality now matches equal access as most important aspect of health care system (the two outstrip all other principles)
- ✓ No happy consensus (except for need for more resources (especially human resources) and possibly a national system)

■ **Strong demographic divisions on quality (higher importance for higher income and younger Canadians) vs. equal access (higher importance for lower income and older Canadians) and enforcer vs. provincial freedom**

■ **Federal franchise is national, equal access, public system**

- ✓ No friction free path (but strong majority constituency)



Conclusions (c)

- **Investment priorities led by professionals and modernizing primary care**
 - ✓ Home and community care seen as best innovations
 - ✓ Other options (e.g. prevention and info technology) are O.K. but not as centrepiece of renewal
- **Performance measures good and important top down to local**
- **Most resonant measures focused on top areas of insecurity and change for the future**
- **Government action, validation by nurses and doctors and personal experience are clearly the acid test for confidence boost.**
- **Crucial rational for building a common approach to health care built around preservation for the future, comparability and mobility**
- **Canadians are seeking a practical, reasonable solution and not federal-provincial purity**
 - ✓ But one-off, bilateral deals are unacceptable to most



- Implicit and explicit residual impact of mismatch between government and public priority on 2000 Budget (i.e., taxes instead of health)

- There is unlikely to be a clear winning approach in the short-term

- ✓ problems are extremely complex
- ✓ difficult to reconcile temporal and policy dimensions of the debate

- Federal government seen to have responsibility as national steward of health care system

- ✓ designation carries advantages, primarily one of legitimacy, and challenges

- Chief challenges are:

- ✓ balancing role of protector and partner
- ✓ balance short-term (immediate) and longer-term needs
- ✓ needs /challenges vary from region to region
- ✓ Avoiding impression of casting about
- ✓ need expanded tool kit fitting clear framework (CHA) but allowing flexibility, improvisation and experimentation (e.g. home care)



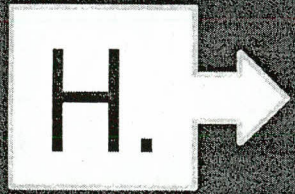
Synthesis of Qualitative Research (b)

- **Public acknowledges the need to build a system for the future, not just for today**
 - ✓ BUT, critical balance of action must be demonstrable in the here and now
- **New approach should stress more than the mechanical aspects of reform**
 - ✓ perceived de-personalization of system and loss of focus on broader patient needs are recurring themes underscoring the deterioration belief
 - ✓ community care and home care hit the mark and essential and demonstrable ingredients within discussion of how to build a system for the future
- **De-link operational/administrative aspects (e.g., e-records and reporting) from structural components (e.g., primary care and home care):**
 - ✓ best to present as parallel tracks
 - ✓ if not, they are likely to be seen as trade-offs and be rejected
- **At this point, any action may well be positive, but requires ambitious communications to ensure that Canadians are aware:**



- What are the unique expectations of the federal government beyond the general responsibilities it shares with other players?
- Where will the public be next year? Are we responding to mercurial surface anxieties (necessary)? And how will this link to the relieving the long-term structural anxieties underlying the improbably rapid collapse of confidence?
- Why the improbable/tenacious commitment to equal access in light of crisis level anxieties and recurring claims that privatization is a solution (even by trusted leaders such as Premier Klein in Alberta)?
- What are the notions of change that embody the desire for continuity of equal access with the expectation for modernization and innovation?





Annex



Profiling Supporters of Government of Canada

■ Respondents who indicate they have more confidence in the Government of Canada than in their provincial government are:

- ✓ More concerned by inadequate funding by governments
- ✓ More concerned by increasing demands on system from an ageing population
- ✓ More concerned by shortages of doctors, nurses and hospitals
- ✓ More fervently in support a strong national publicly-funded system
- ✓ More likely to want the federal government to **protect equal access** rather than partner with the provinces
- ✓ More likely to think the federal government's role is to protect equal access rather than provide funding to the provinces
- ✓ Less keen on providing funding to the provinces – with no strings attached
- ✓ More likely to be university-educated (especially graduate degree)



■ Respondents who indicate they would prefer the federal government protect equal access rather than partner with the provinces are:

- ✓ Represented by more women than men
- ✓ More confident in the **Government of Canada** than in their provincial government concerning health care
- ✓ More concerned by inadequate funding by governments
- ✓ More concerned by shortages of doctors, nurses and hospitals
- ✓ More fervently in support a strong national publicly-funded system
- ✓ Less likely to think their provincial government is better placed than the Government of Canada to make decisions to improve the health care system
- ✓ Less keen on providing funding to the provinces – with no strings attached
- ✓ More likely to have greater exposure to primary health care system

