



NEWS RELEASE

Canada has fewer doctors, hospital beds, MRIs and longer wait times than other countries with universal health care

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—Among a group of 30 high-income countries that have universally accessible health care, Canada has some of the lowest availability of doctors, hospital beds, and medical technologies—and the longest wait times, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“In terms of availability of resources and timely access to care, Canadians are not receiving the value they deserve from the country’s health-care system, this much is clear,” said Bacchus Barua, director of Health Policy Studies at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Comparing Performance of Universal Health Care Countries, 2023*.

The study compares 30 universal health-care systems in developed countries.

In 2021, using the latest year of comparable data, and after adjusting for age, Canada ranked 28th (out of 30) for the number of doctors (2.8 per 1,000 people), 23rd (out of 29) for the number of somatic care beds (beds dedicated to physical care; 2.3 per 1,000 people), and 23rd (out of 29) for the number of psychiatric beds available (0.38 per 1,000 people).

In 2019, Canada ranked 25th (out of 29) for the number of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machines with 10.3 MRIs units per million people, and 26th (out of 30) for CT scanners with 14.9 scanners per million people.

Crucially, among the 10 comparable universal health-care countries that measure wait times, Canada ranks last with the lowest percentage (38 per cent) of patients who waited four weeks or less to see a specialist, and the lowest percentage of patients (62 per cent) who waited four months or less for elective surgery.

And despite Canada’s poor performance, it is among the highest spenders on health care ranking in the top-third of the 30 countries included in the analysis.

“Canadians are increasingly aware of the shortcomings of health care in Canada,” said Mackenzie Moir, policy analyst and co-author of the report.

“To improve Canada’s health-care system, policymakers should learn from other countries around the world that do universal health care better.”

(30)

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