



NEWS RELEASE

Canada ranks 22nd out of 28 countries with universally accessible health care on psychiatric care beds

Oct. 10, 2023

For immediate release

VANCOUVER—Canadians endure relatively poor access to mental health services when compared to what is available in other developed nations with universal access health care systems, particularly for psychiatric care beds, psychiatrists and psychologists, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Making better use of limited resources, with a focus on improving the availability of services over time, will be essential to properly address Canada’s mental health care gap,” said Nadeem Esmail, senior fellow at the Fraser Institute and author of *Mental Health Care: How is Canada Doing?*

The study compares Canada’s mental health services to other countries that, like Canada, have universally accessible health care.

It finds that Canada has relatively fewer psychiatric care beds (ranking 22nd out of 28 nations), psychiatrists (ranking 16th out of 28 nations), and psychologists (ranking 15th out of 26 nations).

And wait times to access mental health services have grown in Canada from 18.3 weeks in 2003-05 to 24.7 weeks in 2020-22.

The study notes a lack of access to appropriate treatments, low rates of post-hospitalization follow up, relatively poor access to care in rural areas, and general practitioner physician preparedness for dealing with mental health conditions and mental illness as shortcomings of the Canadian approach.

“Canada’s relatively poor record on mental health services—and growing wait times—have occurred in spite of Canadian governments spending a larger share of health dollars on mental health services than governments in comparable countries,” Esmail said.

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