

NEWS RELEASE

Support for national dental care, pharmacare and \$10-a-day daycare drops to 4-in-10 Canadians (or less) when tax increases are included, poll finds

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For Immediate Release

VANCOUVER— Support plummets to well below half of Canadians for new federal government programs, including dental care, pharmacare and \$10-a-day daycare when the taxes needed to pay for them are included, finds a new Leger poll commissioned by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

All three programs were included or committed to in the recent federal budget.

“Despite the federal government’s borrow-now, pay-for-it-later approach to public programs, Canadians need to be aware that these new programs have significant costs that will have to be paid for by taxpayers eventually,” said Jake Fuss, associate director of fiscal policy research at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Polling Canadians’ Support for New Federal Government Programs*.

(Government estimates show a national daycare program will cost \$7.9 billion annually by 2025/26. Dental care is estimated to cost \$1.7 billion a year, and the costs for pharmacare could be as high as \$15.3 billion a year, once fully implemented.)

The poll, which interviewed 1,509 Canadians between April 15 and April 17, 2022 following the budget, finds that support for \$10-a-day daycare, pharmacare, and dental care was overwhelming—69 per cent or higher--when no changes in taxes were attached to the new programs.

Support for these same programs plummets well below 50 per cent when an increase in the GST is attached to them, which would roughly pay for the program.

For example, 69 per cent of Canadians support \$10-a-day daycare when there is no tax change linked to the new program. But support drops to just 36 per cent when the program is paid for by an increase in the GST.

Likewise, 79 per cent of Canadians support universal pharmacare when no tax increase is attached, but support drops to 40 per cent when the new program is paid for by a GST increase.

And 72 per cent of Canadians support a national dental care program without any tax changes but falls to 42 per cent when linked with a GST increase.

“The reality of any new or expanded government program is that at some point Canadians have to pay for them, either in the form of higher taxes or less spending on other programs,” Fuss said.

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