

NEWS RELEASE

Annual health-care costs for typical Canadian family eclipse \$13,000 this year

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—A typical Canadian family of four (two parents, two children) will pay \$13,311 for public health-care insurance in 2019, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Despite misleading claims of Canada’s ‘free’ health-care system, Canadians actually pay a substantial amount of money for health care through a variety of taxes—even if they don’t pay directly for medical services,” said Bacchus Barua, associate director of health policy studies at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *The Price of Public Health Care Insurance, 2019*.

Most Canadians are unaware of the true cost of health care because they never see a bill for medical services, may only pay a small health insurance “premium” tax (in provinces that impose them), and because general government revenue—not a dedicated tax—funds Canada’s public health-care system.

But using data from Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the study estimates that a typical Canadian family consisting of two parents and two children with an average household income of \$140,049 will pay \$13,311 for public health care this year. After adjusting for inflation, that’s an increase of 65.8 per cent since 1997, the first year of calculable estimates.

For single Canadians, health-care costs more than doubled over that same period—from \$2,150 to (in 2019 dollars) to \$4,544 this year.

Across the income spectrum, the amount Canadian families pay for health care varies widely. For example, the 10 per cent of families with the lowest incomes (earning \$15,070 per household, on average) will pay \$464 for health care in 2019, while families among the top 10 per cent of income earners (earning a household income of \$298,872, on average) will pay \$39,486.

“Only when Canadians understand how much we pay for our public health-care system can we better decide whether or not we get good value for our money,” Barua said.

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