



NEWS RELEASE

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HQCA survey finds 64% of Albertans are satisfied with healthcare services

Results reveal few significant changes compared to 2010 and identify the major factors influencing the overall satisfaction rating

(Calgary, AB) – Today the Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) released the results of its biennial survey of Albertans' satisfaction and experience with healthcare services. Overall, 64% of Albertans were satisfied with healthcare services, compared to 62% in 2010. Most results in the 2012 survey remain relatively unchanged compared to the 2010 survey.

The survey of 4,803 Albertans consists of more than 100 questions garnering respondents' general perceptions of healthcare and actual healthcare experiences, as well as satisfaction with specific health services province-wide.

The factors that most influence Albertans' overall satisfaction, in order of influence, are:

- ease of access to healthcare services (51% rated access as easy)
- quality of healthcare services (77% rated quality as good or excellent)
- how well all healthcare professionals coordinate their efforts to serve patient needs (49% rated coordination as very good or excellent)
- handling of serious complaints (20% are satisfied with complaints handling)
- satisfaction with emergency department services (59% are satisfied with emergency department services)
- satisfaction with family doctor services (84% are satisfied with family doctors)
- satisfaction with specialist services (80% are satisfied with specialist services)


"It is important to examine the factors that influence Albertans' satisfaction so that health policy makers and health service providers can take into consideration what Albertans are saying about their healthcare experiences," says Dr. John Cowell, Chief Executive Officer, HQCA.

"Coordination of care, for example, is one of the top three most influential factors driving overall satisfaction, and yet we have not seen improvements in this area in any of the six surveys we have conducted since 2003."

Less than 50% of respondents in 2012 rated how well healthcare professionals coordinated their efforts to serve their needs as very good or excellent. Information in a recent Health Council of Canada (HCC) report from a survey of primary care physicians complements the HQCA findings. For example, the report stated that only 13% of Alberta primary care physicians receive information for continued management of their patients within 48 hours of hospital discharge.

Information from the HCC report in relation to access to healthcare services also mirrored the HQCA's patient experience results. The report stated that only 41% of primary care physicians in Alberta say they have an arrangement for their patients to see a physician or nurse when the practice is closed, other than a hospital or emergency department.

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"In the almost 10-year history the HQCA has been conducting this biennial survey, we have seen a change from 52% to 64% in how Albertans rate their satisfaction with healthcare services," adds Dr. Cowell. "It is worthy to note that at the same time, while the population has grown 22%, adjusted public health expenditures per person in Alberta, reported by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, have increased from \$3,994 per capita in 2003 to a forecast of \$6,570 per capita in 2011 - a 64% increase."

Other key findings:

- Respondents in Alberta Health Services' North zone were significantly less likely to be satisfied with healthcare services (56%) as compared to the overall rating for Alberta (64%).
- When asked about experiences of unexpected harm, 11% of respondents reported that they or an immediate family member experienced harm while receiving healthcare sometime in the past year, which is significantly more than 2010 (9%), but less than 2003, 2004, and 2006.
- 28% of Albertans have never had a flu shot. The North zone has significantly more respondents who have never had a flu shot (38%) compared to Edmonton (27%), Central (31%), Calgary (26%) and South (26%) zones. The most common reason respondents reported they did not have the flu shot in the past year is because they did not think it was necessary (47%), followed by they had not gotten around to it (21%).
- Results were analyzed by Albertans' self-reported health status to compare the experience of those categorized as less healthy to those categorized as to be in good health. The respondents' state of health greatly influenced how they rated their experience. For example, Albertans in good health were most likely to be satisfied with healthcare services received (71%), and respondents considered the least healthy were less likely to be satisfied (56%) – both ratings differed significantly from the overall satisfaction rating of 64%.

Satisfaction and Experience with Healthcare Services: A Survey of Albertans 2012 measured responses from 4,803 Albertans who were 18 years of age and older, and had a land-line telephone. To ensure respondents were representative of Albertans, quotas were set for age and gender groups within each of the five Alberta Health Services' zones. Some questions were limited to only the respondents who had an experience with the healthcare system in the previous 12 months. Survey weights were used to make the results more representative of the population. Where possible, the HQCA's independent survey compares the 2012 results with those from 2010, 2008, 2006, 2004 and 2003.

The 2012 survey is of interest because it can be compared against benchmark results from 2010, which was the first year the HQCA measured satisfaction and experience since the formation of Alberta Health Services.

The technical report and a summary of the findings are available at www.hqca.ca.

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