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Public health care scores big in poll as MDs study privatization

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STUART LAIDLAW
FAITH AND ETHICS REPORTER

Days before a Canadian Medical Association meeting expected to be dominated by talk of privatized health care, a poll indicates overwhelming support in this country for keeping medicare public.

The poll by Nanos Research, to be released today, found 86.2 per cent of the 1,001 people surveyed supported or strongly supported "public solutions to make our public health care stronger."

"There is compelling evidence that Canadians across all demographics would prefer a public over a for-profit health-care system," Nik Nanos of Nanos Research said of the poll, commissioned by the Canadian Healthcare Coalition.

Support was strongest in Quebec, at 87.6 per cent and lowest in Ontario at 84.1 per cent.

The poll, conducted between April 25 and May 3, is considered accurate within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The CMA meets for four days beginning Sunday, when outgoing president Robert Ouellet will present the results of a five-country study of health care in Europe.

The study is expected to call for private clinics, such as the chain of radiology centres owned by Ouellet, to play a bigger role in Canada's health-care system.

The incoming CMA head is Saskatoon doctor Anne Doig.

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