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Health care top concern of Canadians: poll

By CHRISTINA SPENCER, PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

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OTTAWA — Health care has once again surpassed jobs and the economy as the main concern of Canadians, a Nanos Research poll shows.

The survey of 1,003 people, done between April 30 and May 3, found 22.8% of those questioned now rate health care their top national issue, with 18.6% identifying jobs and the economy as the most important topic.

The environment came in a more distant third, at 10.8%, and education was the top priority for just 5.4% of those surveyed.

Health care has traditionally been one of the top three priorities when Canadians are polled, but starting in November 2008, as the world toppled into recession, the economy took over as the central concern. By early 2009, it was cited by more than 50% of Canadians polled by Nanos. By late 2009, however, Canadians appeared more confident about their jobs, and their focus began returning to health care.

"Canadians are feeling the economy starting to stabilize," said Nik Nanos, president and CEO of Nanos Research. "As a result, they're turning back to traditional issues that they're usually concerned about."

Women were much more likely to cite health care as the top issue than men – 28% to 18% - and men were more likely to cite the economy – 22% as compared to 14% of women.

In Quebec only, the economy slipped to third place behind health care and the economy. In British Columbia, the economy still ranked first, with health care the second top concern.

The telephone survey of 1,003 people nationwide had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1%, 19 times out of 20.

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