

Canadians worried about long wait times for medical specialists: poll



Patients line up on hospital beds outside the crowded emergency room at Montreal's Sacre Coeur Hospital in this Thursday, Nov. 28, 2002, file photo. (The Canadian Press/Paul Chiasson)

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A majority of Canadians are concerned over long wait times to see medical specialists, according to a new survey commissioned by the Wait Times Alliance.

The poll, conducted by Nanos Research, surveyed 1,000 Canadians. When respondents were asked to list their level of concern for six different wait-time scenarios, 64 per cent reported they were most concerned about the length of time it takes to see a specialist.

Other scenarios included waits for a "medically necessary" procedure and for placement in a long-term care facility while in hospital. The area of least concern is the wait to see a family physician.

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The survey also found that only 10 per cent of those surveyed believe that there has been an improvement in medical wait times in Canada over the last 10 years, while 30 per cent agree that it has "somewhat improved."

Approximately 21 per cent said they are dissatisfied with their wait times, but nearly as many (20 per cent) expressed satisfaction.

PHOTOS

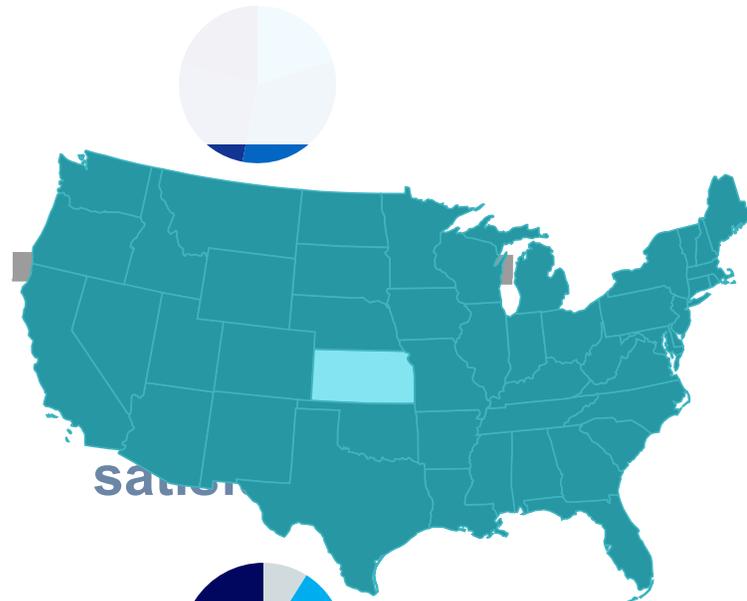
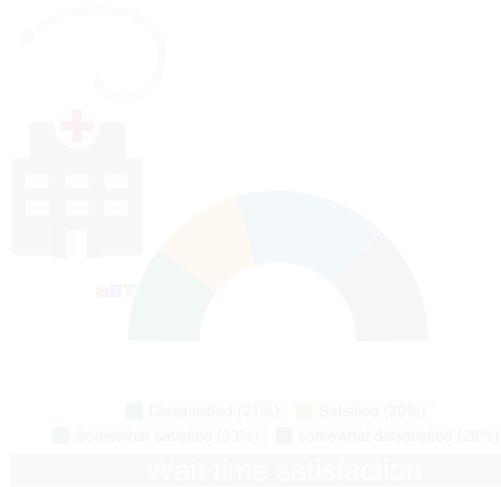


A patient waits along the wall of a hallway in a hospital emergency room in this 2011 photo. (AP / David Goldman)

And when asked to rate the importance of five health-care issues, 68 per cent indicated that they believe Canadians should be able to access the same level health care, regardless of where they reside in the country.

[A Wait Time Alliance report released in June](#) found that Canada has made few strides in reducing waits for various types of medical care in Canada. However, the report also found that some provinces are beginning to take bigger steps to reduce wait times, particularly in Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Saskatchewan.

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