
Public Attitudes toward Radiology Services

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Introduction



Environics Research Group is pleased to present the findings of a survey conducted by phone among a representative sample of 1,000 adult residents of Ontario (aged 18 or older) between April 10 and April 25, 2003. The margin of error for a sample of this size is (plus or minus) 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The Report contains the following:

Expectations – A Gap Analysis shows the gap between Ontarians' perceptions of the importance of radiology services – and, by implication, their expectations for the delivery of these services – and their assessment of Ontario government efforts to shorten the waiting lists for radiology services.

Public Concern over Delivery of Radiology Services reports on Ontarians' perceptions regarding the shortages of radiologist physicians across the province and the seriousness of the problem of the use of outdated radiology equipment.

Confidence in Delivery of Radiology Services looks at Ontarians' confidence regarding whether they would have timely access to radiology services in their own communities, whether patients have timely access to test results, and whether access to radiology services is consistent across all areas of the province.

Government Spending on Radiology Services examines the public's top-of-mind assessment of whether the Ontario government is appropriately funding radiology services and equipment, preferences as to where increased funding should be directed, and the perceived importance of expert input into spending decisions.

Private Sector vs. Public Sector Delivery of Radiology Services explores Ontarians' attitudes to private sector delivery of radiology services and to two-tier delivery of these services.

Impact of Information on Attitudes toward Funding of Radiology Services illustrates the impact of disseminating specific kinds of information on Ontarians' attitudes toward the funding of radiology services.

❖ Executive Summary

EXPECTATIONS – A GAP ANALYSIS

The survey results indicate there is a significant gap between the high importance that Ontarians attach to having timely access to radiology services and the relatively low marks given to the Ontario government for its efforts to shorten waiting lists for these services.

- Almost all Ontarians say it is very (82%) or somewhat (14%) important that Ontarians have timely access to the services of a radiologist. When Ontarians are told that radiologists diagnose virtually all diseases, including cancer, heart disease, stroke, infectious diseases, neurological conditions and osteoporosis, 88 percent say it is very important that Ontarians have timely access to a radiologist physician.
- A plurality of 47 percent say that, over the past year, the Ontario government has made little or no progress in shortening the waiting lists for radiology services; 33 percent say the government has made some progress and just four percent think there has been a great deal of progress.

PUBLIC CONCERN OVER DELIVERY OF RADIOLOGY SERVICES

There is widespread concern over shortages of radiologist physicians and use of outdated radiology equipment.

- A large majority of 80 percent of Ontarians believe there is a shortage of radiologist physicians in the province.
- A similar majority of 81 percent say that the use of outdated radiology equipment is a very (40%) or somewhat (41%) serious problem across the province.

CONFIDENCE IN DELIVERY OF RADIOLOGY SERVICES

Just under seven in ten Ontarians have at least some confidence that they would have timely access to radiology services in their own communities and that patients have timely access to test results, but only about two in ten (each) have a great deal of confidence. Four in ten have at least some confidence that access to radiology services is consistent across all areas of the province.

- A majority of 65 percent have a great deal of (21%) or some (44%) confidence that they would have timely access in their community to radiology services, including x-rays, ultrasound, CT scans and MRIs.
- A majority of 66 percent have a great deal of (17%) or some (49%) confidence that patients can have access to the results of their radiology tests within a medically appropriate time.
- A majority of 54 percent are not very (33%) or not at all (21%) confident that patients in all areas of the province have equal access to diagnostic imaging examinations.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON RADIOLOGY SERVICES

Seven in ten Ontarians think the Ontario government should be spending more on radiology services and equipment. Among these, there is slightly more support for spending on services that are currently not available in the province and to replace outdated equipment than for increased spending on currently available services. However, in each case, large majorities consider these to be very important areas for increased funding.

- A majority of 72 percent of Ontarians say the Ontario government should be spending more on radiology services and equipment.
- Among those who favour increased spending, more than seven in ten (each) say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding to replace existing outdated radiology equipment (73%) and to provide for expanded radiology services that are currently not available in Ontario (71%). Six in ten say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for the radiology services that are currently available in the province (62%). Virtually no one considers these to be unimportant areas for increased funding.

There is a very strong – almost unanimous – consensus that the Ontario government should work with radiology experts to determine how federal funding for new diagnostic equipment will be distributed.



- Top-of-mind, 77 percent of Ontarians say it is very important that the Ontario government work with radiology experts to determine how federal government funding for new diagnostic equipment will be distributed; another 18 percent say this is somewhat important.
- When Ontarians are reminded that, the last time the federal government gave the provinces funding to replace outdated diagnostic equipment, some provinces used that money buy other equipment – everything from lawnmowers and ice-makers to beds and mattresses – 85 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government work with radiology experts to determine how this money will be distributed and another ten percent say it is somewhat important.

PRIVATE SECTOR VS. PUBLIC SECTOR DELIVERY OF RADIOLOGY SERVICES

Three-quarters of Ontarians prefer community clinics be run by radiologists who are physicians.

- A majority of 74 percent of Ontarians say, as patients whose services are being paid for by OHIP, they prefer a community radiology clinic be owned a radiologist who is a physician; just nine percent prefer that it be owned by a for-profit company that is owned by a private business.

Three-quarters of Ontarians say hospitals should get the highest priority if the government is to pay for more publicly-funded CT and MRI services.

- A majority of 77 percent say hospitals should get the highest priority if the government is to pay for more publicly-funded CT and MRI services; 18 percent say clinics owned by radiologist physicians should have the top priority and just three percent choose clinics owned by private, for-profit businesses.
- A majority of 69 percent disagree that patients who can pay privately, out-of-pocket, should have access to faster radiology exams. Moreover, although a significant minority of 29 percent agree with the proposal, the proportion who express strong disagreement (56%) is four times that who offer strong support (14%).

IMPACT OF INFORMATION ON ATTITUDES TOWARD FUNDING OF RADIOLOGY SERVICES

The survey results show that Ontarians respond to information about the implications of government under-funding of radiology services by offering even stronger support for increased funding than the already high levels of support found when they are asked for their top-of-mind attitudes.

- When Ontarians are told that a recent study found about 90 percent of patients on a waiting list for a common radiology examination, such as an X-ray, mammogram or ultrasound, are waiting longer than is deemed medically appropriate, 78 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for radiology services.
- When Ontarians are told that the average age of common radiology equipment, such as x-ray machines, is more than ten years old, and therefore, outdated, 73 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for replacement equipment.
- When Ontarians are told that the wait for radiology services in Ontario can vary from five weeks in one area of the province to five months in other areas for the same diagnostic imaging examination, 80 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding to ensure equal access to radiology services.
- When Ontarians are told that, since 1995, the Ontario government has cut more than \$200 million from the funding used to cover the costs of labour, supplies and equipment for radiology services, 78 percent say that the government is spending too little on radiology services; 13 percent favour current levels of funding and just two percent favour further cuts.

There is almost unanimous support for restoration of funding for radiology services, and the strength of this support is reflected in the finding that almost seven in ten Ontarians express strong support.



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- When Ontarians are told that this \$200 million could have been used to buy 600 new x-ray machines, 500 ultrasound machines and 75 mammography machines, 93 percent strongly (68%) or somewhat (25%) support the government restoring this funding to radiology services. Just four percent are opposed.
 - When Ontarians are told that, since 1989, the Ontario government has frozen funding for radiology exams and that this has made it difficult for radiologists to cover the costs of providing modern high-quality services that would shorten waiting lists, 91 percent strongly (64%) or somewhat (27%) support the government significantly increasing funding for radiology services. Just five percent are opposed.



Perceived Importance of Radiology Services

Eight in ten Ontarians say it is very important to have timely access to the services of a radiologist; this proportion increases to almost nine in ten when respondents are told that radiologists diagnose virtually all diseases.

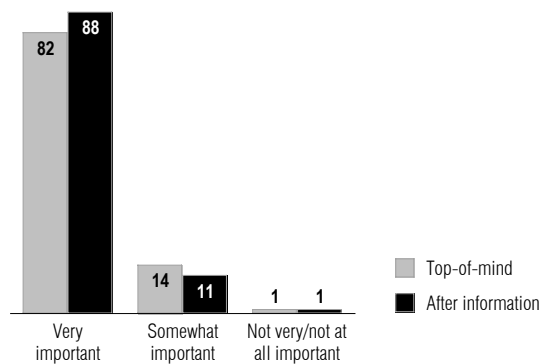
The survey results confirm the high levels of importance that Ontarians place on radiology services. Top-of-mind, almost all say it is very (82%) or somewhat (14%) important that Ontarians have timely access to the services of a radiologist.

When respondents are told that radiologists diagnose virtually all diseases, including cancer, heart disease, stroke, infectious diseases, neurological conditions and osteoporosis, 88 percent say it is very important that Ontarians have timely access to a radiologist physician.

Top-of-mind importance is quite consistent across all regions of the province and among most demographic groups, although it is higher among women than among men. The perceived importance of access to radiologist physicians is also greater among those who say the government should be spending more on radiology services than among those who are satisfied with current spending levels.

Among those who say, top-of-mind, that access to radiologist physicians is only somewhat important, 61 percent change their response and say this access if very important when they are told that radiologists diagnose virtually all diseases.

Radiology Services April 2003



Q.2R

How important is it that Ontarians have timely access to the services of a radiologist, that is, a physician specialist who interprets the results of diagnostic imaging tests? Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

Q.8R

If I tell you that radiologists diagnose virtually all diseases, including cancer, heart disease, stroke, infectious diseases, neurological conditions and osteoporosis, then how important would you say it is that Ontarians have timely access to a radiologist physician? Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?



Assessment of Government Performance

Just under five in ten Ontarians say that, over the past year, the Ontario government has made little or no progress in shortening the waiting lists for radiology services; just over three in ten think there has been some progress, but virtually no one believes there has been a great deal of progress.

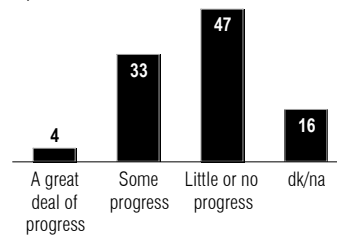
There is a significant gap between the high importance that Ontarians attach to having timely access to radiology services and the relatively low marks given to the Ontario government for its efforts to shorten waiting lists for these services.

As is reported previously, top-of-mind, 82 percent say it is very important that Ontarians have timely access to the services of a radiologist. However, a plurality of 47 percent say that, over the past year, the Ontario government has made little or no progress in shortening the waiting lists for radiology services; 33 percent say the government has made some progress and just four percent think there has been a great deal of progress. Sixteen percent offer no opinion on the question.

Ontarians' assessment of their provincial government's performance is fairly consistent across the regions. Not surprisingly, Conservatives are more likely than average to think there has been progress, but even among this group, fewer than one in ten think there has been a great deal of progress.

The belief that there has been little or no progress is slightly more pronounced among those who say timely access to a radiologist physician is very important than it is among those who say this is only somewhat important. It is twice as prevalent among those who say the government should be spending more on these services than it is among those who approve of current spending levels. In other words, negative assessments tend to be greater among those who attach a higher degree of importance to radiology services.

Government Performance April 2003



Q.1R

Over the past year, do you think the Ontario government has made a great deal of progress, some progress, or little or no progress in shortening the waiting lists for radiology services, that is, for diagnostic imaging tests such as X-rays, ultrasounds, mammograms, MRIs or CT scans?



Perceived Shortage of Radiologist Physicians

Eight in ten Ontarians say there is a shortage of radiologist physicians in the province; one in ten disagree.

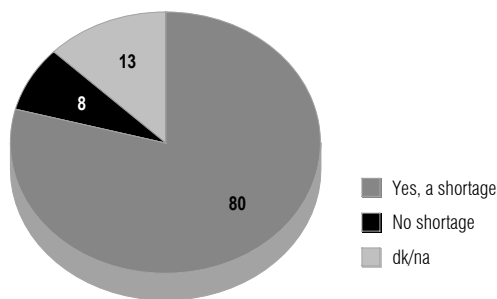
The survey finds widespread concern over shortages of radiologist physicians. Most Ontarians, 80 percent, believe there is a shortage of radiologist physicians in the province; eight percent say there's no shortage and 13 percent offer no opinion.

The perception that there is a shortage is somewhat more prevalent than average in Northern and Central Ontario. It is slightly less prevalent among Conservative party supporters.

Perceptions of a shortage is more pronounced among those who say timely access to a radiologist physician is very important than it is among those who say this is only somewhat important. The perception is also more widespread among those who say the government should be spending more on these services than it is among those who approve of current spending levels. However, in all cases, majorities believe there is a shortage of these health care professionals.

Perceived Shortage of Radiologist Physicians

April 2003



Q.3R

From what you have seen and heard, do you think there is or is not a shortage of radiologist physicians in Ontario?

Use of Outdated Radiology Equipment

Eight in ten Ontarians believe the use of outdated radiology equipment is a serious problem across the province.

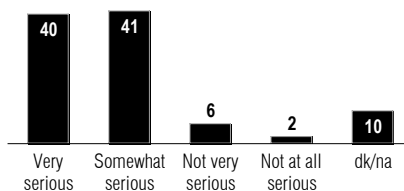
The survey results indicate that most Ontarians are concerned about the quality of radiology equipment in use in their province today. A majority of 81 percent say that the use of outdated radiology equipment is a very (40%) or somewhat (41%) serious problem across the province. Just eight percent say this is not a serious problem and ten percent offer no opinion on the question.

Women are more likely than men to describe the use of outdated equipment as a very serious problem. Conservative supporters are less likely than average to perceive this as a very serious problem, although, among all groups, large majorities believe the use of outdated radiology equipment is a serious problem for Ontario.

The perceived seriousness of the problem is also greater among those who say timely access to a radiologist physician is very important, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who say the government should be spending more on radiology services, compared to those who approve of current spending levels.

Use of Outdated Radiology Equipment

April 2003



Q.4R

Do you think that the use of outdated radiology equipment is a very, somewhat, not very or not at all serious problem in Ontario?

❖ Confidence in Delivery of Radiology Services

Just under seven in ten Ontarians (each) have at least some confidence that they would have timely access to radiology services in their own communities and that patients have timely access to test results, but only about four in ten have at least some confidence that access to radiology services is consistent across all areas of the province.

Ontarians express greater confidence in local access to radiology services and to a timely delivery of survey results than they do in the consistency of access to these services across all areas of the province.

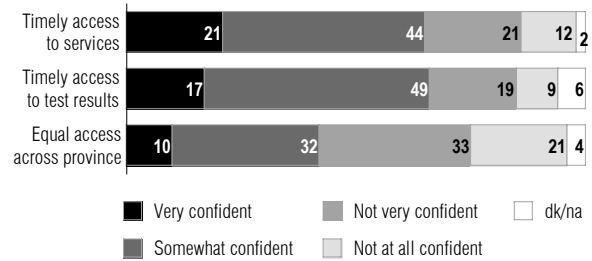
A majority of 65 percent of Ontarians have a great deal of (21%) or some (44%) confidence that they would have timely access in their community to radiology services, including x-rays, ultrasound, CT scans and MRIs; 33 percent are not very (21%) or not at all (12%) confident. Strongly expressed confidence is lower than average in Central and Northern Ontario, and greater than average among Conservatives. It is also lower among those who say the government should be spending more on radiology services than it is among those who approve of current spending levels. It is slightly higher than average among those who have personally used radiology services within the past year.

A majority of 66 percent of Ontarians have a great deal of (17%) or some (49%) confidence that patients can have access to the results of their radiology tests within a medically appropriate time; 28 percent are not very (19%) or not at all (9%) confident, and six percent offer no opinion. Confidence is greater among Conservatives. Strongly expressed confidence is lower among those who say the government should be spending more on radiology services than it is among those who approve of current spending levels. It is slightly higher than average among those who have personally used radiology services within the past year.

A minority of 42 percent of Ontarians have a great deal of (10%) or some (32%) confidence that patients in all areas of the province have equal access to diagnostic imaging examinations; a majority of 54 percent are not very (33%) or not at all (21%) confident. These findings are fairly consistent across the province, although confidence

Delivery of Radiology Services

April 2003



Q.5Ra-c

How confident are you about each of the following? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident or not at all confident ... That you would have timely access in your community to radiology services, including x-rays, ultrasound, CT scans and MRIs ... That patients can have access to the results of their radiology tests within a medically appropriate time ... That patients in all areas of the province have equal access to diagnostic imaging examinations?

is slightly greater than average among Conservatives. Strongly expressed confidence is lower among those who say the government should be spending more on radiology services than it is among those who approve of current spending levels.

Government Spending on Radiology Services



Top-of-Mind Assessment of Spending Levels

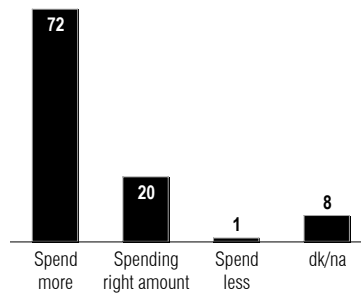
Seven in ten Ontarians think the Ontario government should be spending more on radiology services and equipment.

There is clear majority support for increased funding of radiology services. A majority of 72 percent of Ontarians say Queen's Park should be spending more on radiology services and equipment; 20 percent are satisfied with current spending and just one percent favour spending cuts. Eight percent offer no opinion.

Support for increased spending is highest in Northern Ontario, and lower than average in the Hamilton-Niagara region and Western Ontario. However, in every region of the province, clear majorities say the government should spend more on radiology services and equipment. Support for increased funding is also greater among women than among men.

As might be expected, support for greater funding is higher among those who say it is very important to have timely access to radiologist physicians, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who say the use of outdated equipment is a very serious problem, compared to those who think this is only a somewhat serious problem.

Top-of-Mind Assessment of Spending Levels April 2003



Q.6Ra

Do you think that the Ontario government should be spending more or spending less on radiology services and equipment, or are you satisfied with current levels of funding?



Preferences re Increased Spending

Ontarians who favour increased government spending are slightly more likely to favour spending on services that are currently not available in the province and to replace outdated equipment than they are to favour increased spending on currently available services. However, in each case, large majorities consider these to be very important areas for increased funding.

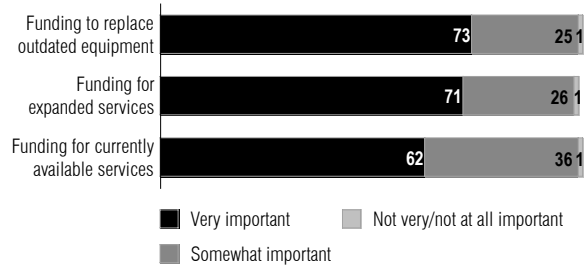
Among those who favour increased spending on radiology services, 73 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding to replace existing outdated radiology equipment; another 25 percent say this is somewhat important and just one percent say it is not important. Perceived importance is greater than average in Northern Ontario and Hamilton-Niagara. It is also greater among women than among men.

Similarly, among those who favour increased spending on radiology services, 71 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding to provide for expanded radiology services that are currently unavailable in Ontario; another 26 percent say this is somewhat important and just one percent say it is not important. Perceived importance is greater among women than among men.

Among those who favour increased spending on radiology services, 62 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for the radiology services that are currently available in the province; another 36 percent say this is somewhat important and just one percent say it is not important. Perceived importance is greater than average in Northern Ontario.

Not surprisingly, in all three cases, perceived importance is also greater among those who say it is very important to have timely access to radiologist physicians, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who say the use of outdated equipment is a very serious problem, compared to those who think this is only a somewhat serious problem.

Preferences regarding Increased Spending April 2003



Q.6Rb

How important is it that the Ontario government increase funding for the radiology services that are currently available in the province? Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

Subsample: Respondents who feel that the Ontario government should spend more on radiology services and equipment

Q.6Rc

How important is it that the Ontario government increase funding to provide for expanded radiology services that are currently not available in Ontario? Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

Subsample: Respondents who feel that the Ontario government should spend more on radiology services and equipment

Q.6Rd

How important is it that the Ontario government increase funding to replace existing outdated radiology equipment? Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

Subsample: Respondents who feel that the Ontario government should spend more on radiology services and equipment



Perceived Importance of Expert Input into Spending Decisions

Top-of-mind, three-quarters of Ontarians say it is very important that the Ontario government work with radiology experts to determine how federal government funding for new diagnostic equipment will be distributed.

The survey finds an almost unanimous consensus that the Ontario government should work with radiology experts to determine how federal funding for new diagnostic equipment will be distributed.

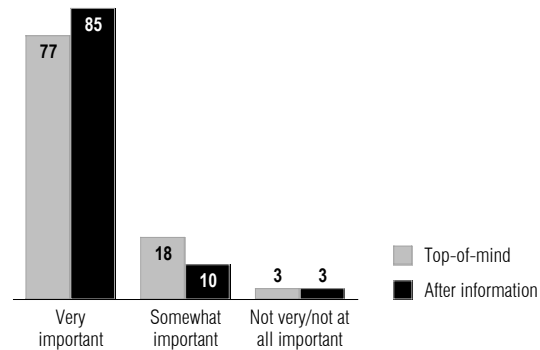
Top-of-mind, 77 percent of Ontarians say it is very important that the Ontario government work with radiology experts to determine how federal government funding for new diagnostic equipment will be distributed; another 18 percent say this is somewhat important.

When Ontarians are reminded that, the last time the federal government gave the provinces funding to replace outdated diagnostic equipment, some provinces used that money buy other equipment – everything from lawnmowers and ice-makers to beds and mattresses – 85 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government work with radiology experts to determine how this money will be distributed and another ten percent say it is somewhat important.

Northern Ontarians are more likely than average to believe that the government should have expert input into the decisions determining the distribution of federal money for replacement radiology equipment.

This belief is also more pronounced among those who say it is very important to have timely access to radiologist physicians, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who say the use of outdated equipment is a very serious problem, compared to those who think this is only a somewhat serious problem. It is also greater among those who favour increased funding of radiology services, compared to those who are satisfied with current spending levels.

Expert Input into Spending Decisions April 2003



Q. 7Ra

Earlier this year, the federal government provided funding for the provinces to buy new diagnostic equipment. Would you say it is very, somewhat, not very or not at all important that the Ontario government work with radiology experts to determine how this money will be distributed?

Q. 7Rb

If I tell you that the last time the federal government gave the provinces funding to replace outdated diagnostic equipment, some provinces used that money buy other equipment – everything from lawnmowers and ice-makers to beds and mattresses – now would you say it is very, somewhat, not very or not at all important that the Ontario government work with radiology experts to determine how this money will be distributed?

When those who say it is only somewhat important to have expert input into spending decisions are told about past misuse of these monies (to buy equipment other than the radiology equipment for which it was intended), 59 percent change their top-of-mind response and say that it is very important that the Ontario government work with radiology experts to determine how federal funds will be distributed.

❖ Private Sector vs. Public Sector Delivery of Radiology Services

Preferred Ownership of Community Radiology Clinics

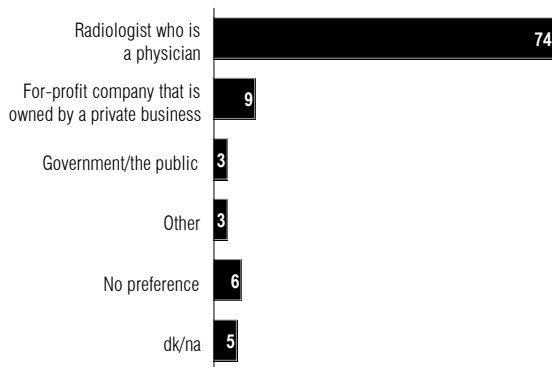
Three-quarters of Ontarians prefer community clinics be run by radiologists who are physicians.

Ontarians express a very clear preference for clinics that are owned by radiologist physicians over those that might be owned by a private company. A majority of 74 percent say, as patients whose services are being paid for by OHIP, they prefer a community radiology clinic be owned by a radiologist who is a physician; just nine percent prefer that it be owned by a for-profit company that is owned by a private business. Three percent volunteer that they prefer the clinic be government-owned and one percent volunteer that clinics should be owned by hospitals. Six percent have no preference.

In every region of the province, large majorities prefer clinics be owned by a radiologist physician. Men are more likely than women to prefer private company ownership, but a large majority of men still opt for clinics that are owned by a radiologist physician. Similarly, Conservatives are more likely than average to favour private company ownership, but the majority consensus here, as well, is for physician-owned clinics.

Preferred Ownership of Community Radiology Clinics

April 2003



Q.13R

As a patient whose services are being paid for by OHIP, do you prefer that a community radiology clinic be owned by ... [rotate] ... a radiologist who is a physician ... a for-profit company that is owned by a private business?

Priorities for CT and MRI Services

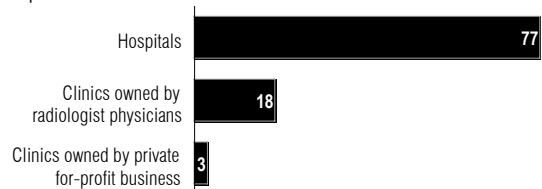
Three-quarters of Ontarians say hospitals should get the highest priority if the government is to pay for more publicly-funded CT and MRI services.

There is a consensus that hospitals should get top priority for any new publicly-funded radiology equipment. A majority of 77 percent of Ontarians say hospitals should get the highest priority if the government is to pay for more publicly-funded CT and MRI services; 18 percent say clinics owned by radiologist physicians should have the top priority, and just three percent choose clinics owned by private, for-profit businesses.

These findings are quite consistent across all regional and demographic groups.

Priorities for CT and MRI Services

April 2003



Q.14R

If the government is to pay for more publicly-funded CT and MRI services, which one of the following should get the highest priority for this funding ... [rotate] ... hospitals ... clinics owned by radiologist physicians ... clinics owned by private for-profit businesses?



Support for Two-tier Access to Services

Two-thirds of Ontarians are opposed to patients being allowed to pay privately, out-of-pocket, for faster access to radiology exams.

Ontarians are open to private sector delivery of services, but they are strongly opposed to any change to the health care system that suggests the emergence of a two-tier system of service delivery.

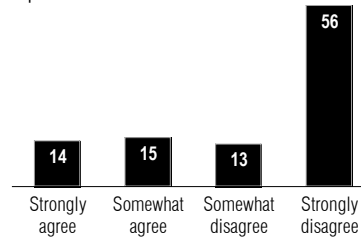
A majority of 69 percent disagree that patients who can pay privately, out-of-pocket, should have access to faster radiology exams; 29 percent agree with the proposal, but the proportion who express strong disagreement (56%) is four times that who express strong agreement (14%).

Strong disagreement with the proposal is greater among women than among men. However, in all regions of the province, and among most of the demographic groups profiled, majorities express strong disagreement. The one exception is that of Conservative party supporters; in their case, just a slight majority express overall disagreement and the proportion expressing strong disagreement is noticeably smaller than average.

Strongly expressed disagreement is more pronounced among those who say it is very important to have timely access to radiologist physicians, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who say the use of outdated equipment is a very serious problem, compared to those who think this is only a somewhat serious problem. It is also greater among those who favour increased government funding of radiology services, compared to those who are satisfied with current spending levels.

Private Payment for Faster Access to Services

April 2003



Q.16R

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that patients who can pay privately, out-of-pocket, should have access to faster radiology exams?

❖ Information on Attitudes toward Funding of Radiology Services

Information on Waiting Times for Examinations

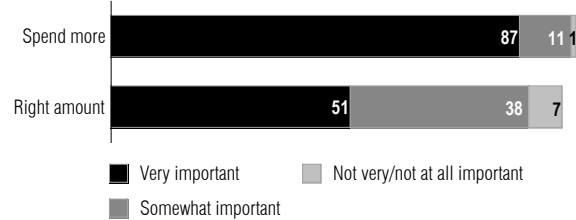
When Ontarians are told that a recent study found about 90 percent of patients on a waiting list for common radiology examinations are waiting longer than is deemed medically appropriate, eight in ten say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for radiology services.

When Ontarians are told that a recent study found about 90 percent of patients on a waiting list for a common radiology examination, such as an X-ray, mammogram or ultrasound, are waiting longer than is deemed medically appropriate, 78 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for radiology services; 18 percent say increased funding is somewhat important.

When Ontarians who indicate they are satisfied with current spending levels are given this statistic about waiting lists, 51 percent then say that say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for radiology services and another 38 percent say increased funding is somewhat important. When those who, top-of-mind, favour increased government funding of radiology services are given the statistic about waiting lists, 87 percent then say that say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for radiology services and another 11 percent say increased funding is somewhat important.

The importance attached to increased funding is more pronounced among those who also say it is very important to have timely access to radiologist physicians, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who also say the use of outdated equipment is a very serious problem, compared to those who think this is only a somewhat serious problem.

Information on Waiting Times for Examinations April 2003



Q.9R

A recent study found that about 90 percent of patients on a waiting list for a common radiology examination, such as an X-ray, mammogram or ultrasound, are waiting longer than is deemed medically appropriate. Now, how important would you say it is that the Ontario government increase funding for radiology services?

Q.6Ra

Do you think that the Ontario government should be spending more or spending less on radiology services and equipment, or are you satisfied with current levels of funding?



Information about Average Age of Radiology Equipment

When Ontarians are told that the average age of common radiology equipment, such as x-ray machines, is more than ten years, and the equipment is therefore outdated, almost three-quarters say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for replacement equipment.

When Ontarians are told that the average age of common radiology equipment, such as x-ray machines, is more than ten years, and the equipment is therefore, outdated, 73 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for replacement equipment; another 22 percent say funding for replacement equipment is somewhat important.

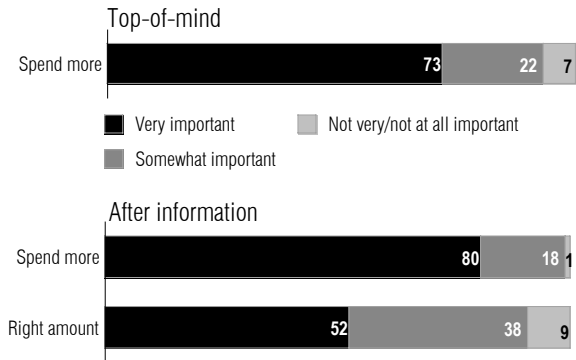
These findings are virtually the same as those found when Ontarians are asked, top-of-mind, about the importance of funding for outdated equipment. The seeming failure of the information to move people’s opinions on the question can perhaps be attributed to the fact that there is already a very strong consensus, without the information being given, that funding for replacement radiology equipment is very important.

When Ontarians who indicate they are satisfied with current spending levels are given the information about outdated equipment, 52 percent then say that say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for replacement radiology equipment and another 38 percent say increased funding is somewhat important. When those who, top-of-mind, favour increased government funding of radiology services are given the information, 80 percent then say that say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding for replacement radiology equipment and another 18 percent say increased funding is somewhat important.

The importance attached to increased funding is more pronounced among those who also say it is very important to have timely access to radiologist physicians, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who also say the use of outdated equipment is a very serious problem, compared to those who think this is only a somewhat serious problem.

Increased Funding to Replace Outdated Equipment

April 2003



Q.10R

If I tell you that the average age of common radiology equipment, such as x-ray machines, is more than ten years old, and therefore, outdated, how important would you say it is that the Ontario government increase funding for replacement equipment? Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

Q.6Rd

How important is it that the Ontario government increase funding to replace existing outdated radiology equipment? Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

Subsample: Respondents who feel that the Ontario government should spend more on radiology services and equipment

Q.6Ra

Do you think that the Ontario government should be spending more or spending less on radiology services and equipment, or are you satisfied with current levels of funding?



Information about Comparative Waiting Times across Ontario

When Ontarians are told that the wait for radiology services in Ontario can vary from five weeks in one area of the province to five months in other areas for the same diagnostic imaging examination, eight in ten say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding to ensure equal access to radiology services.

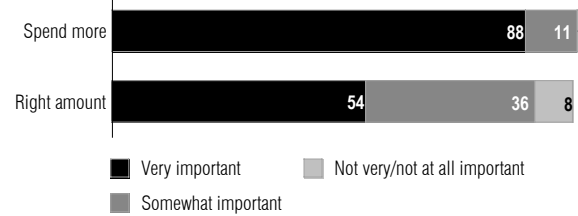
When Ontarians are told that the wait for radiology services in Ontario can vary from five weeks in one area of the province to five months in other areas for the same diagnostic imaging examination, 80 percent say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding to ensure equal access to radiology services; another 17 percent say funding to ensure equal access is somewhat important.

When Ontarians who indicate they are satisfied with current spending levels are given the information about disparate waiting times across the province, 54 percent then say that say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding to ensure equal access to radiology services and another 36 percent say increased funding is somewhat important. When those who, top-of-mind, favour increased government funding of radiology services are given the information, 88 percent then say that say it is very important that the Ontario government increase funding and another 11 percent say increased funding is somewhat important.

The importance attached to increased funding is more pronounced among those who also say it is very important to have timely access to radiologist physicians, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who also say the use of outdated equipment is a very serious problem, compared to those who think this is only a somewhat serious problem.

Information about Comparative Waiting Times across Ontario

April 2003



* Less than one percent

Q.11R

The wait for radiology services in Ontario can vary from five weeks in one area of the province to five months in other areas for the same diagnostic imaging examination. Now, how important would you say it is that the Ontario government increase funding to ensure equal access to radiology services? Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

Q.6Ra

Do you think that the Ontario government should be spending more or spending less on radiology services and equipment, or are you satisfied with current levels of funding?



Information about Funding Cuts

When Ontarians are told that, since 1995, the Ontario government has cut more than \$200 million from the funding used to cover the costs of labour, supplies and equipment for radiology services, eight in ten say that the government is spending too little on radiology services.

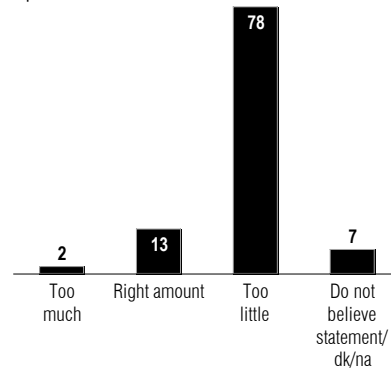
When Ontarians are told that, since 1995, the Ontario government has cut more than \$200 million from the funding used to cover the costs of labour, supplies and equipment for radiology services, 78 percent say that the government is spending too little on radiology services; this proportion is slightly higher than the 72 percent who say, top-of-mind, that the government should spend more on radiology services. Thirteen percent favour current levels of funding and just two percent favour further cuts.

When Ontarians who indicate they are satisfied with current spending levels are given the information about spending cuts, 49 percent then say that say that the government is spending too little on radiology services; 40 percent continue to be satisfied with current spending levels. When those who, top-of-mind, favour increased government funding of radiology services are given the information, 88 percent then say that say that the government is spending too little on radiology services.

The belief that funding is inadequate is more pronounced among those who also say it is very important to have timely access to radiologist physicians, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who also say the use of outdated equipment is a very serious problem, compared to those who think this is only a somewhat serious problem.

Information about Funding Cuts

April 2003



Q.12Ra

Since 1995, the Ontario government has cut more than \$200 million from the funding used to cover the costs of labour, supplies and equipment for radiology services. Now, would you say that the government is spending ... [rotate] ... too much ... too little ... about the right amount ... on radiology services?



Information about Equipment

When Ontarians are told that the \$200 million cut from radiology services could have been used to buy 600 new x-ray machines, 500 ultrasound machines and 75 mammography machines, more than nine in ten support the government restoring this funding, including seven in ten who express strong support.

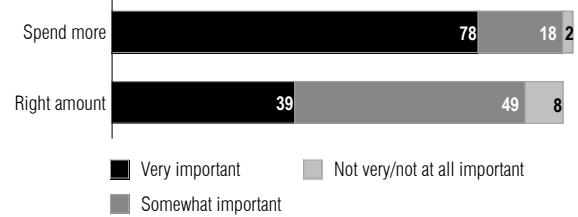
There is almost unanimous – and very strongly expressed – support for restoration of funding for radiology services. When Ontarians are told that the \$200 million that was cut could have been used to buy 600 new x-ray machines, 500 ultrasound machines and 75 mammography machines, 93 percent strongly (68%) or somewhat (25%) support the government restoring this funding to radiology services. Just four percent are opposed.

When Ontarians who indicate they are satisfied with current spending levels are given the information about the equipment that could have been purchased with the cut funds, 88 percent say they support restoration of the funding, including 39 percent who express strong support. When those who, top-of-mind, favour increased government funding of radiology services are given the information, 96 percent say they support restoration of the funding, including 78 percent who express strong support.

Strongly expressed support for restoration of the funding is more pronounced among those who also say it is very important to have timely access to radiologist physicians, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who also say the use of outdated equipment is a very serious problem, compared to those who think this is only a somewhat serious problem.

Information about Equipment

April 2003



Q.12Rb

If I tell you that this \$200 million could have been used to buy 600 new x-ray machines, 500 ultrasound machines and 75 mammography machines, then would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the government restoring this funding to radiology services?

Q.6Ra

Do you think that the Ontario government should be spending more or spending less on radiology services and equipment, or are you satisfied with current levels of funding?



Information about Impact of Funding Freeze

When Ontarians are told that, since 1989, the Ontario government has frozen funding for radiology exams and that this has made it difficult for radiologists to cover the costs of providing modern high-quality services that would shorten waiting lists, nine in ten support the government significantly increasing funding for radiology services, including more than six in ten who express strong support.

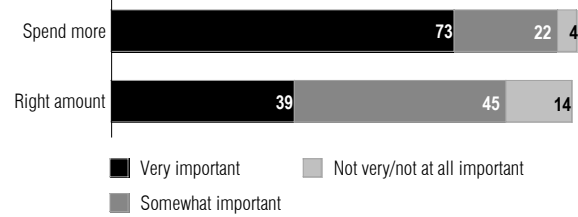
When Ontarians are told that, since 1989, the Ontario government has frozen funding for radiology exams and that this has made it difficult for radiologists to cover the costs of providing modern high-quality services that would shorten waiting lists, 91 percent strongly (64%) or somewhat (27%) support the government significantly increasing funding for radiology services. Just five percent are opposed.

When Ontarians who indicate they are satisfied with current spending levels are given the information about the funding freeze and its impact, 84 percent say they support increased funding for radiology services, including 39 percent who express strong support. When those who, top-of-mind, favour increased government funding of radiology services are given the information, 95 percent say they support restoration of the funding, including 73 percent who express strong support.

Strongly expressed support for increased radiology funding is more pronounced among those who also say it is very important to have timely access to radiologist physicians, compared to those who say this is only somewhat important, and among those who also say the use of outdated equipment is a very serious problem, compared to those who think this is only a somewhat serious problem.

Information about Impact of Funding Freeze

April 2003



Q.12Rc

Since 1989, the Ontario government has frozen funding for radiology exams. If I tell you that this has made it difficult for radiologists to cover the costs of providing modern high-quality services that would shorten waiting lists, would you support or oppose the government significantly increasing funding for radiology services?

Q.6Ra

Do you think that the Ontario government should be spending more or spending less on radiology services and equipment, or are you satisfied with current levels of funding?

Methodology



The results of the survey are based on a probability sample of 1,000 adults living in Ontario; this survey was conducted by telephone from April 10 to 22, 2003.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The sampling method was designed to complete approximately 1,000 interviews within households randomly selected across the province of Ontario. The sample was drawn in proportion to the populations of seven regions within the province. It was also stratified in proportion to the populations of five community size groups within each of these regions. During fieldwork, 23,515 numbers were drawn from the original sample. The final sample is distributed as follows.

	N UNWEIGHTED	N WEIGHTED	%*
Eastern Ontario	118	118	12
Central Ontario	98	98	10
Metro Toronto	218	218	22
Outer GTA	226	228	23
Hamilton/Niagara	81	79	8
Western Ontario	190	190	19
Northern Ontario	69	69	7

* Regional population as a percentage of the total population of Ontario (based on 2001 census figures).

Enviro-nics uses a modified Waksburg Mitofsky sample selection technique. Telephone numbers are selected from the most recently published telephone directories. These numbers act as “seeds” from which the sample is actually generated. The original “seed” telephone numbers are not used in the sample. The Waksburg Mitofsky sample selection technique ensures both unlisted numbers and numbers listed after the directory publication are included in the sample.

From within each multi-person household contacted, respondents 18 years of age and older were screened for random selection using the “most recent birthday” method. The use of this technique produces results that are as valid and effective as enumerating all persons within a household and selecting one randomly.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING

Fieldwork was conducted at Enviro-nics’ central facilities in Toronto. Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses. Ten percent of each interviewer’s work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Canadian Association of Marketing Research Organizations. A minimum of five calls were made to a household before classifying it as a “no answer.”

COMPLETION RESULTS

The Ontario sample consisted of a total of 1,000 interviews. A sample of 1,000 persons within the population produces a sampling error of plus or minus 3.1 percent in 95 out of 100 samples. The margins are wider for demographic subsamples.

The effective response rate for the survey is eight percent: the number of completed interviews (1,000) divided by the total sample (23,515) minus the non-valid/non-residential numbers, the numbers not in service and the numbers that presented a language barrier (10,422).

The actual completion rate is 15 percent: the number of completed interviews (1,000) divided by the number of qualified respondents contacted directly (6,577).

	N	%
Total dialled sample	23,515	100
Household not eligible	105	*
Non-residential/not in service	9,506	40
Language barrier	811	3
Subtotal	10,422	44
New Base (23,515-10,422)	13,093	100
No answer/line busy/ respondent not available	6,516	50
Refusals	5,472	42
Incompletes	105	1
Subtotal	12,093	92
Net Completions (13,093-12,093)	1,000	8%
Completion Rate (1,000/[13,093-6,516])		15%

* Fewer than one percent