



NEWS RELEASE

Canada has fewer doctors, hospital beds, MRIs and among longest wait times than other countries with universal health care

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—Among a group of 31 high-income countries that have universally accessible health care, Canada has among the lowest availability of doctors, hospital beds, and most medical technologies—and some of the longest wait times, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“There is a clear imbalance between the high cost of Canada’s health-care system and the value Canadians receive—particularly in terms of availability of medical resources and timely access to care,” said Bacchus Barua, director of health policy studies at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Comparing Performance of Universal Health Care Countries, 2024*.

The study compares 31 universal health-care systems in developed countries using over 40 indicators.

In 2022, using the latest year of comparable data and after adjusting for age, Canada ranked among the top third of health care spenders—4th highest for spending as a share of the economy (11.5 per cent) and 9th highest for spending per person.

Despite Canada’s high level of spending, availability and access to medical resources is generally worse than in comparable countries.

For example, Canada ranked 28th (out of 30) for the availability of doctors, 25th for hospital beds, and 25th for psychiatric beds.

That same year, Canada ranked 27th (out of 31) for the number of MRI machines available per million people, and 28th for CT scanners.

Crucially, among the nine comparable universal health-care countries that measure wait times, Canada ranks 8th (second-worst) for patients who waited more than a month to see a specialist (65.2 per cent), and the worst (9th out of 9) for patients who waited two months or more for non-emergency surgery (58.3 per cent).

“Canadians are increasingly aware of the shortcomings of their health-care system,” said Mackenzie Moir, policy analyst and co-author of the report.

“To improve health care for Canadians, policymakers should learn from other countries around the world that do universal health care better.”


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