



NEWS RELEASE

1-in-6 government-funded surgeries in Quebec now take place in private clinics

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For Immediate Release

MONTREAL—Private surgical clinics play an increasingly large role in Quebec’s universal health care system, and now perform 1-in-6 government-funded day surgeries, according to a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Quebec has increasingly used private clinics as part of its universal health care system, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the surgical backlog,” said Yanick Labrie, Fraser Institute senior fellow and author of *Lessons from the Public Private Partnerships in Surgical Care in Quebec*.

“The Quebec experience shows that private clinics are a complement to, and not a substitute for, the public system.”

Following a 2006 Supreme Court ruling, private surgical clinics are allowed to perform select surgeries that are covered by the Quebec health-care system. Initially they were allowed only for knee and hip replacements and cataract surgeries, but now there are 51 procedures covered in Quebec’s public system that can also be performed in private surgical clinics.

As a result, the number of private surgical clinics in Quebec has grown from 45 in 2014 to 73 this year.

And the percentage of government-funded day surgeries performed by private clinics has increased from 6.1 per cent in 2011/12 to 17.1 per cent this year, or 1-in-6 surgeries.

Crucially, public hospitals in Quebec are allowed to enter into agreements with private surgical clinics to outsource certain surgeries if the hospital’s wait times exceed provincial targets.

“Other provinces can look to the Quebec experience with public private partnerships in health delivery to see what is possible even within the Canada Health Act,” Labrie said.

“Canadian patients everywhere should have the same opportunities to access timely care no matter where they are in the country, including private clinics which are thriving in Quebec.”

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