

NEWS RELEASE

Health-care costs for typical Canadian family will eclipse \$12,000 this year; up nearly 70% since 1997

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—A typical Canadian family of four will pay \$12,057 for health care in 2017—an increase of nearly 70 per cent over the last 20 years, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Health care in Canada isn’t free—Canadians actually pay a substantial amount for health care through their taxes, even if they don’t pay directly for medical services,” said Bacchus Barua, senior economist with the Fraser Institute’s Centre for Health Policy Studies and co-author of *The Price of Public Health Care Insurance, 2017*.

Most Canadians are unaware of the true cost of health care because they never see a bill for medical services and may only pay a small public health insurance “premium” tax (in provinces that impose them).

And because general government revenue—not a dedicated tax—funds health care, it’s difficult for Canadians to decipher how many of their tax dollars pay for public health insurance.

Using data from Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the study estimates that the average Canadian family with two parents and two children with a household income of \$127,814 will pay \$12,057 for public health-care insurance this year. After adjusting for inflation, that’s an increase of 68 per cent since 1997 – the first year for which estimates could be calculated.

For single Canadians, health-care costs more than doubled over that same time period—from \$2,276 (in 2017 dollars) to \$4,596 this year.

Across the income spectrum, Canadian families pay vastly different amounts for health care. For example, the 10 per cent of Canadian families with the lowest incomes (earning \$14,641, on average) will pay \$471 for public health insurance in 2017, while families among the top 10 per cent of income earners (earning a household income of \$292,063 on average) will pay \$39,123.

“It’s important for Canadians to understand how much they pay for public health-care insurance so they’re in a better position to decide whether they get good value for their money,” Barua said.

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