

There will never be a better time  
to improve a catastrophic drug  
plan than during a catastrophe.



CanCertainty Coalition  
COVID-19  
Survey Results Summary



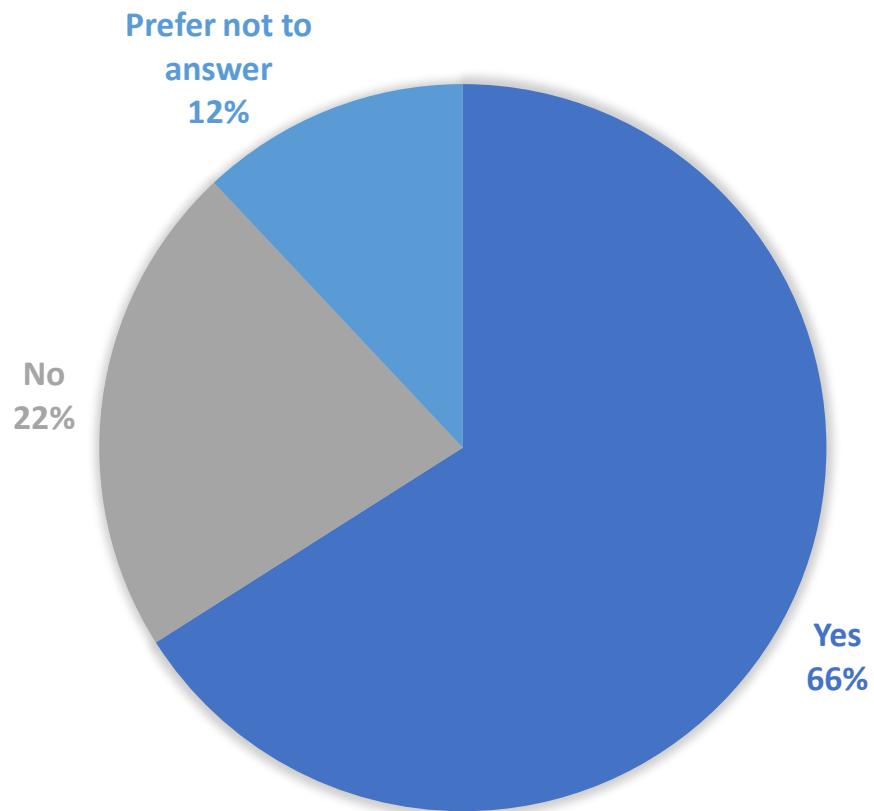
## Results Summary

In the summer of 2020, the CanCertainty Coalition surveyed over 5,000 Canadians to assess and understand the challenges people are facing related to accessing their necessary medications during the pandemic.

The findings reported here focus on people under the age of 65 – working-aged citizens who often do not qualify for publicly paid drug programs. The survey found the majority of these people take prescription medications and a significant portion require help to pay for these medications due to pandemic. In fact, one-in-six surveyed said their private insurance changed due to a change in employment status.

Even before the effects of the pandemic, it was reported only 20 per cent of Canadians had inadequate drug coverage or no coverage at all and must pay out-of-pocket. High expenses are known to impact whether a patient takes their treatment as prescribed which has an impact on health outcomes, as well as economic consequences such as disability, productivity, absenteeism and presenteeism.

For many cancer patients, their take-home prescriptions may be the only effective way to treat their disease.



## Canadians taking Prescription Medications

**Two-thirds** of Canadians under the age of 65 years said they (or someone in their household) takes at least one prescription medication.

Q. Do you take prescription medications?

## Need for Prescription Medications During Pandemic

Furthermore, **20%** said they require more prescription medications since the pandemic began.

Q. Have you required more prescription medications taken at home (for example pills, tablets or something you inject at home) since the start of the pandemic?



## Financial Assistance for Prescription Medications

The pandemic is affecting people in many ways – emotionally, financially, and employment security.

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**One-third** of people under 65 years said as a result of the pandemic, their household requires additional help to cover the costs of medications.

Q. Do you agree: As a result of the pandemic, my household requires additional help to cover the cost of medications.

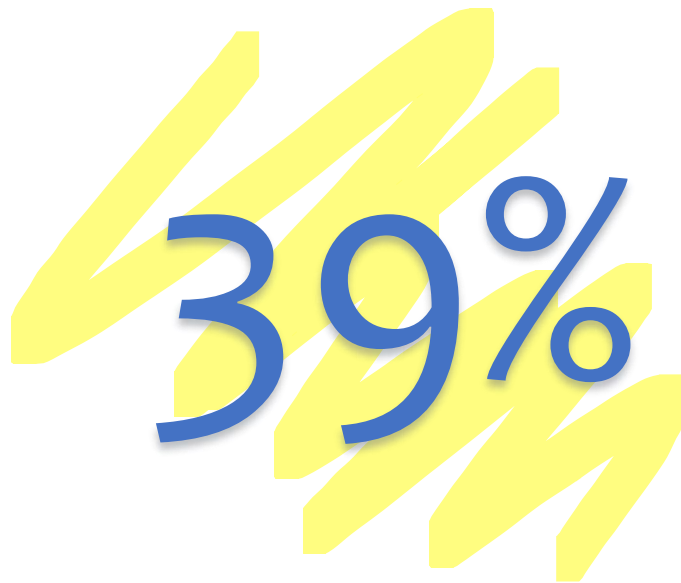
## Changes in employment and private insurance

According to the survey, **one in six** people under 65 years said their employment status changed, resulting in a change of insurance coverage for prescription medications. This can result in significant and unaffordable expenses for life-saving treatments.

Q: Has your employment status changed, resulting in a change of insurance coverage for prescription medications?



1 in 6



39%


## Challenges in Ontario

**More than one-third** of people diagnosed with cancer in Canada are younger than 65 years.

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Currently in Ontario the systems for patients under 65 years to access take-home cancer prescriptions and hospital-administered IV cancer drugs are completely different.

Major differences include the agonizing time patients spend waiting to start at-home treatment, administrative hurdles and out-of-pocket costs to the patient.



30%

## Challenges in Atlantic Canada

Less than **one-third** of people in Atlantic Canada have private insurance – the lowest rate in Canada

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While IV cancer treatments are funded publicly, patients in Atlantic Provinces rely upon a mixture of part private insurance, part public coverage, part pharmaceutical company sponsored Patient Assistance Programs (PAPs), and part personal savings for treatments taken at home.

To qualify for each of these programs, patients have to submit significant amounts of personal and financial information and often face stressful delays in starting their cancer treatment.



## Recommendations

Support cancer patients during the pandemic by:

- Providing immediate, short-term relief of upfront payments or deductibles for catastrophic drug expenses.
- Easing the transition to public drug programs as employer benefits are lost.

Close the Gap on funding for take-home cancer drugs to ensure that all cancer patients, regardless of age or private insurance status, have access to the treatments they require – if they can be treated outside of the hospital setting.



## About the Survey

Between July 15 – August 18, 2020, Strategic Directions conducted a survey of 5,028 randomly selected Canadians to study public awareness and opinions regarding access to prescription medications during the COVID-19 pandemic. Results have been weighted to accurately reflect actual Canadians age and gender demographics and can be considered to be accurate +/- 2.5 percent, 19 out of 20 times.

## About the CanCertainty Coalition

The CanCertainty Coalition is the united voice of more than 30 Canadian patient groups, cancer health charities, and caregiver organizations from across the country, joining together with oncologists and cancer care professionals to significantly improve the affordability and accessibility of cancer treatment. For more information and to view our list of members, visit [www.CanCertainty.com](http://www.CanCertainty.com).