

Presenting Author Name

Giselle Pessoa

Phonetic spelling of your (full) name

jee-ZEH-lee peh-SOH-ah

Presenting Author Category

Non-Trainee

Supervisor Name

Robert Schroth

Research Category

Community Health / Policy

Abstract Title

Awareness, Support and Motivation Surrounding the Canadian Dental Care Plan

Authors

Name	Role	Profession
Giselle CO Pessoa	Presenting Author	Research Assistant
Thiago HL Baltus	Co Author	Postdoctora l researcher
Carol Youssef	Co Author	Research Assistant
Eleanor Reimer	Co Author	Student Research Assistant
Anil Menon	Co Author	Associate Professor
Nikhil Lockman	Co Author	Student Research Assistant
Viviane Cruz de Jesus	Co Author	Pediatric Dentistry Resident (R3)
Robert J Schroth	Co Author	Full Professor

Background

The Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) was introduced to provide dental coverage for low-income families in 2024; assessing its reach and uptake is essential to improving new public policies.

Objective

The goal of this study is to investigate CDCP awareness, support, alongside motivators to apply among a national sample of Canadian residents.

Methods

This study analyzed data from a national public opinion survey conducted by the Strategic Counsel, on behalf of Health Canada's Oral Health Branch, from July to August 2023, before CDCP implementation. The survey included 2,250 participants from urban and rural/remote communities across Canada and assessed baseline awareness of the CDCP and barriers to dental care. Data were obtained from the Government of Canada Publications online archive. Specific variables were selected to observe associations among CDCP awareness, support, and motivators, with sociodemographic covariates. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Overall, 42.7% of respondents had heard of the CDCP, with lower awareness among females, younger adults, those with lower education, those employed, and those never married. Female parents and younger adults were more likely to have searched CDCP information, most commonly through news and media (53.0%). Overall, 81.5% supported the CDCP, with greater support among those without dental insurance, with university education, and regionally from the Atlantic Canada and British Columbia/North. Meanwhile, opposition was higher in the prairie regions. Leading motivators for applying included dental coverage, personal dental health and ease of enrollment; uninsured respondents reported significantly more motivators.

Conclusion

Despite low pre-implementation awareness, support for the CDCP was high. Based on these observations, future follow-up studies are pivotal to evaluate the program's development and uptake following implementation. Findings establish a national baseline for understanding public perceptions of the CDCP, and its potential role in improving access to essential oral health care in Canada.