

FINANCIAL POST

Interactive survey provides instant snapshots of Canadians' concerns

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OTTAWA - Even in the middle of an economic downturn, Canadians are more concerned about health care than about the economy, according to a survey by a Canadian public affairs research company that is being used as the basis of an interactive web-based survey called the Concern Index.

Health ranked 82 on a scale from 1 to 100 in terms of areas of concern, making it No. 1. On the other hand, swine flu was second only to salmon farming as the least pressing concern, suggesting that Canadians are not buying into the global fears over a possible pandemic.

“Health as the number one concern among Canadians is consistent with past surveys we have done,” says Dr. Brian Owen, president of NRG Research Group. “But those surveys were conducted before the meltdown of the global economy. So it's surprising that the economy is of secondary concern after health. And even though Canadians' health is the highest concern, there's a low concern over the possibility of a global pandemic.”

The telephone survey to a sample of 1,000 people was completed between May 13 and 17. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.16 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

Whereas most surveys are a static snapshot of public sentiment, this survey will constantly be updated.

Visitors to nurgspace.com will have the opportunity to weigh in on a key issue from the survey by answering the question of the day - a recent question was: “At this time how much of a concern to you is the economy?” Their responses are immediately added to the results of the original survey so that the level of concern around the issue can be tracked.

In the May poll, the economy registered an average concern score of 74 with the next greatest concern shown for child poverty, personal finances, food safety and personal relationships. Terrorism was near the bottom of the list, while taxation narrowly beat out global warming as a Top 10 concern.