Health Reform in Canada: Where from here?

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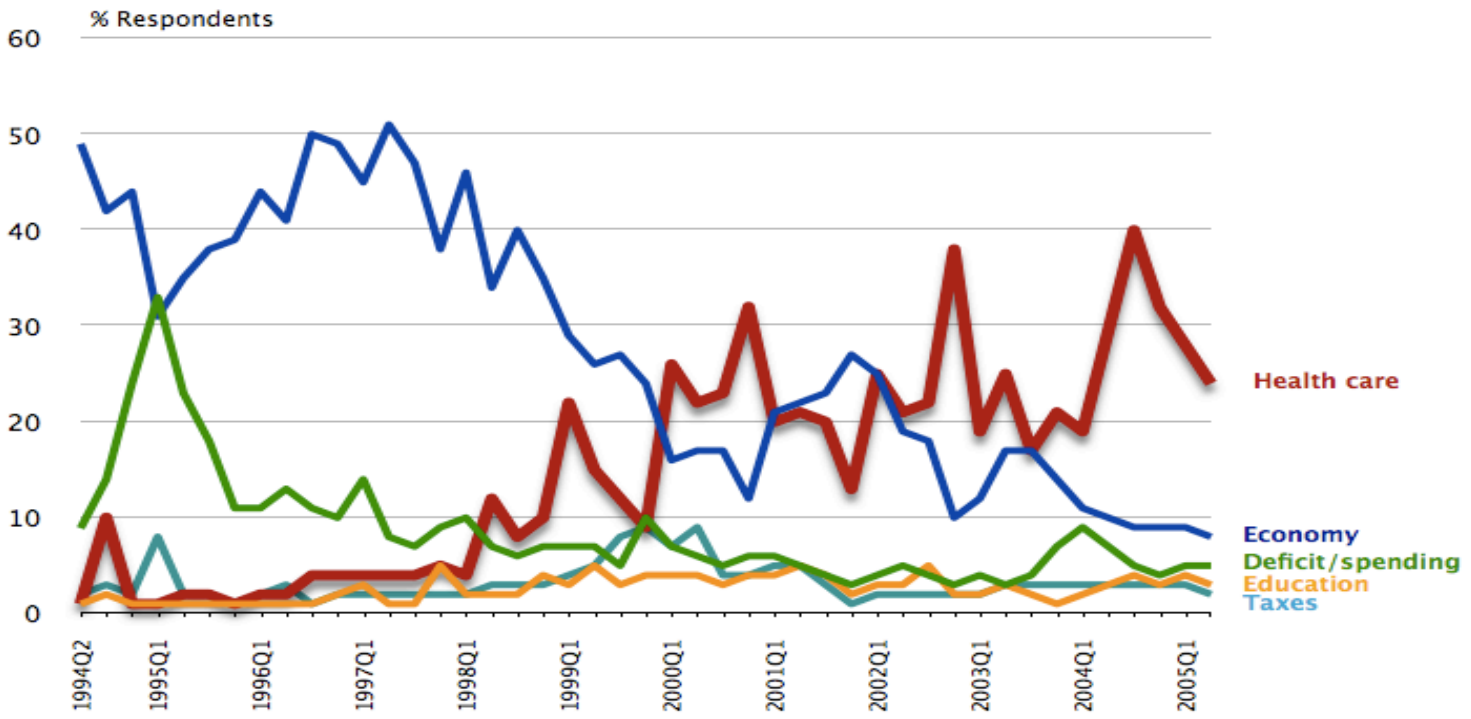
MUHC Institute for Strategic Analysis and Innovation
The Canadian Health System Comes of Age
Montréal, May 29, 2008

The most important issue for Canadians

Figure 3 Section 1.1 Context

The Importance of Health Care

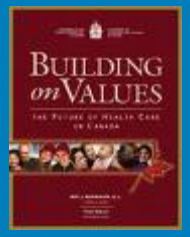
In your opinion, what is the single most important problem facing Canada today?



Source: CRIC, as reported in Portraits of Canada, 2005 (N=~1000/survey)

Federal reports …

- In the past decade, there have been several major federal health care reports
  - 1997: National Forum on Health
  - 2002: Commission on the Future of Health Care (Romanow Report)
  - 2002: Senate Standing Committee on Health (Kirby Report)
  - 2004: SARS report (Naylor report)



Provincial reports …

- Practically every province in the mix, often more than once
  - Quebec
    - Clair; Ménard; Castonguay

  - Ontario (Sinclair)
  - Alberta (Mazankowski)
  - Saskatchewan (Fyke)

Funding Agreements …

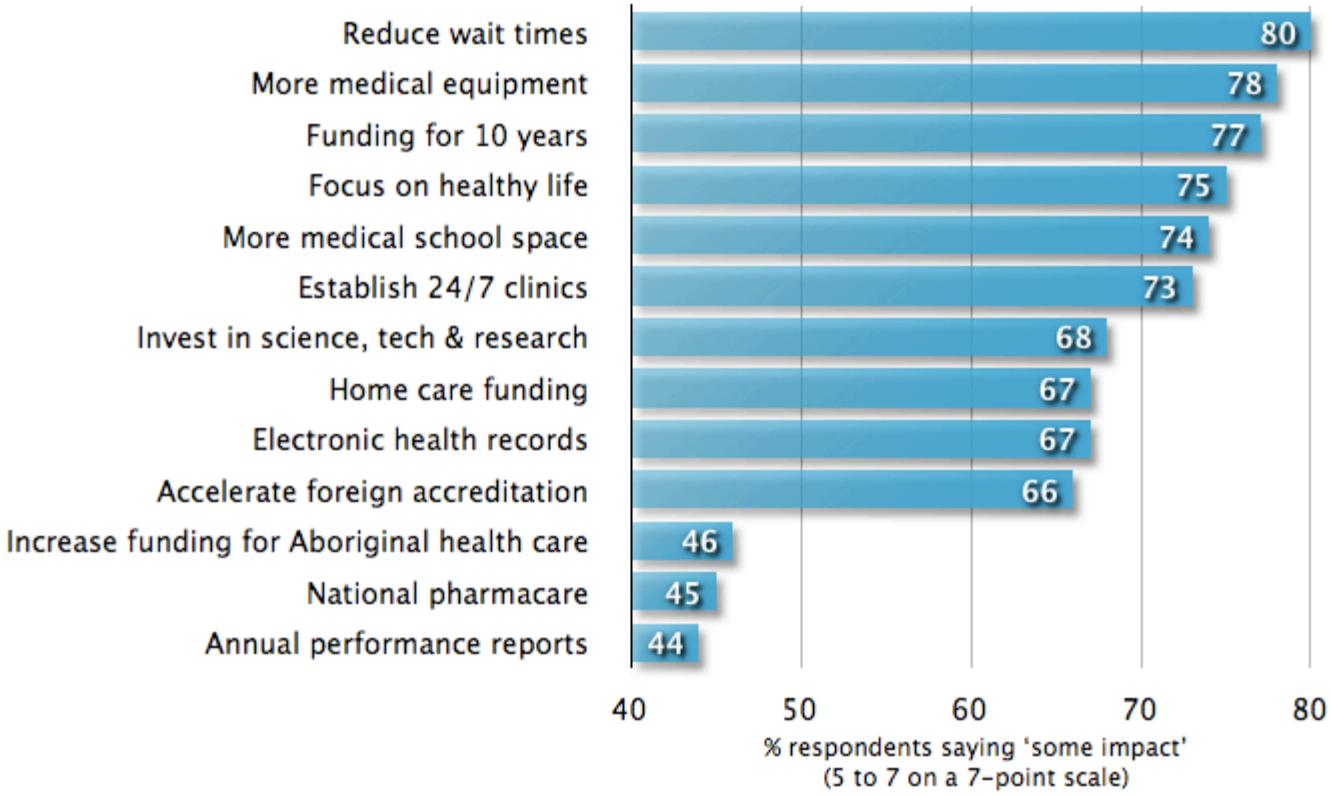
- 3 major Federal-Provincial-Territorial funding agreements

  - 2000 FPT *Health Accord*
  - 2003 *Health Care Renewal*
  - 2004 *Ten-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care*

Figure 32 Section 2.2 Policy Priorities

Policy Priorities, 2004 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Healthcare

For each of the following elements included in the 10-year Plan to Strengthen Health Care, please tell me to what extent you believe it will make a difference in improving the quality of health care.



Source: The Strategic Council, for Health Canada, Sept 2004 (N=~2000)

Supreme Court decisions …

- 2 landmark court decision in health care
  - *Auton v. British Columbia (2005)*

F.E.A.T. of B.C. Families for Early Autism Treatment of British Columbia

Dedicated to "Medically Necessary" autism treatment

  - *Chaoulli v. Québec (2005)*

Considerable impact

- Major legislation in Alberta, Quebec, Ontario
- Primary care initiatives
- Western Canada Waiting List Project; Wait Time Alliance
- More federal money as reinvestment in provincial health care systems
- New Public Health Agency of Canada
- Creation of Canadian Institute for Health Information and Health Council of Canada
- Consolidation of Canadian Institutes for Health Research

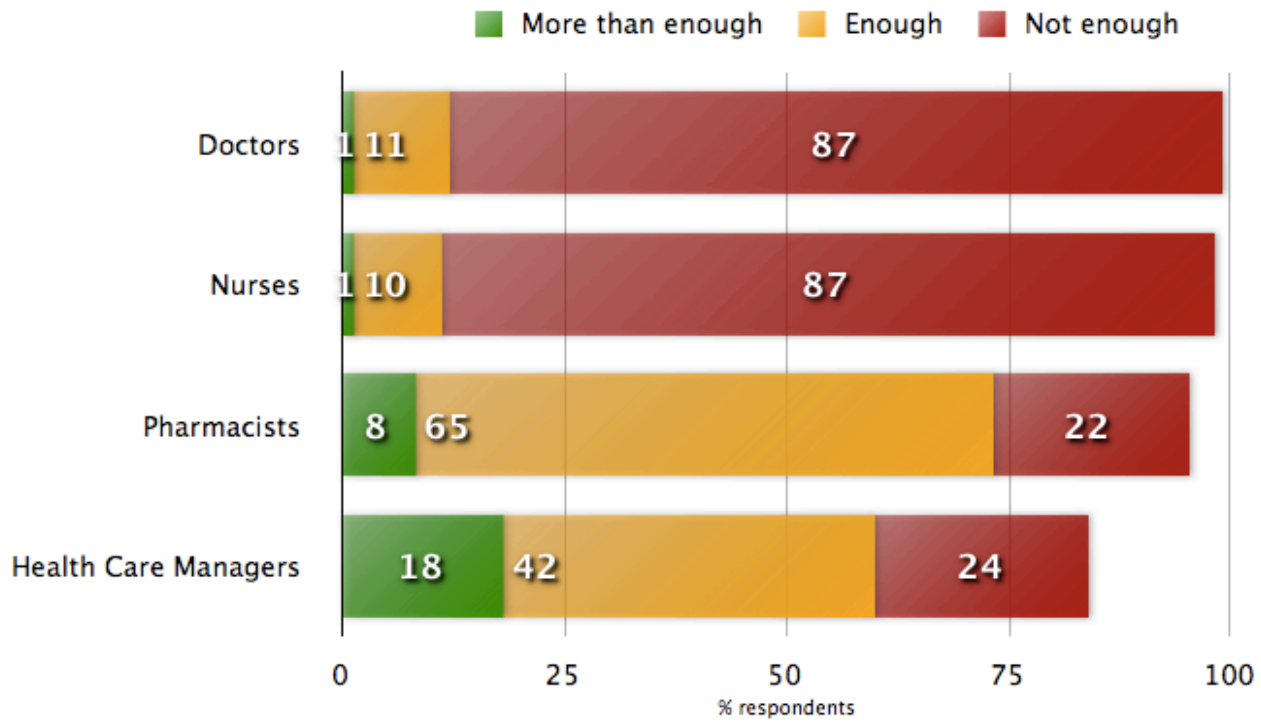
Lack of consensus on problems

- Aging baby boomers : time bomb or dud?
- Are wait times the problem or the symptom?
- Funding levels: too much, too little, just right?
- Primary health care reform: are we there yet?
- Health human resources: how many are enough?

Figure 57 Section 3.5 Health Human Resources

Human Resources

Do you believe that Canada has more than enough, enough, or not enough of each of the following skilled health care professionals.



Source: Pollara, HCIC 2004 (N=~1000)

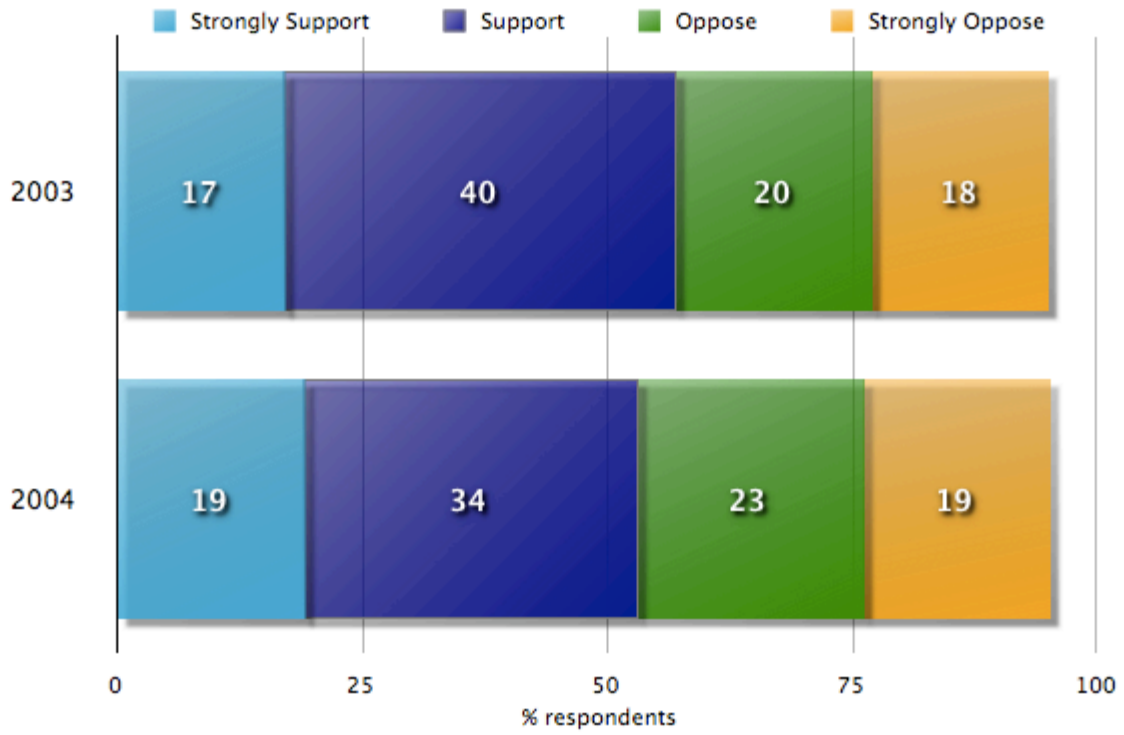
No consensus on the solutions

- More public money in the system or more private investment?
- Public-Private Partnerships, private delivery?
- Expand or retrench the medicare basket?
- Shopping abroad for answers or made in Canada solutions?

Figure 39 Section 2.3 Private Health Care

Private Clinics

Do you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose allowing the government to be able to contract out the delivery of publicly covered services to private clinics, for instance having medicare pay for knee surgery at a private clinic rather than a public hospital?



Source: Pollara, HCIC 2003, 2004 (N=~1000)

Public opinion and health care

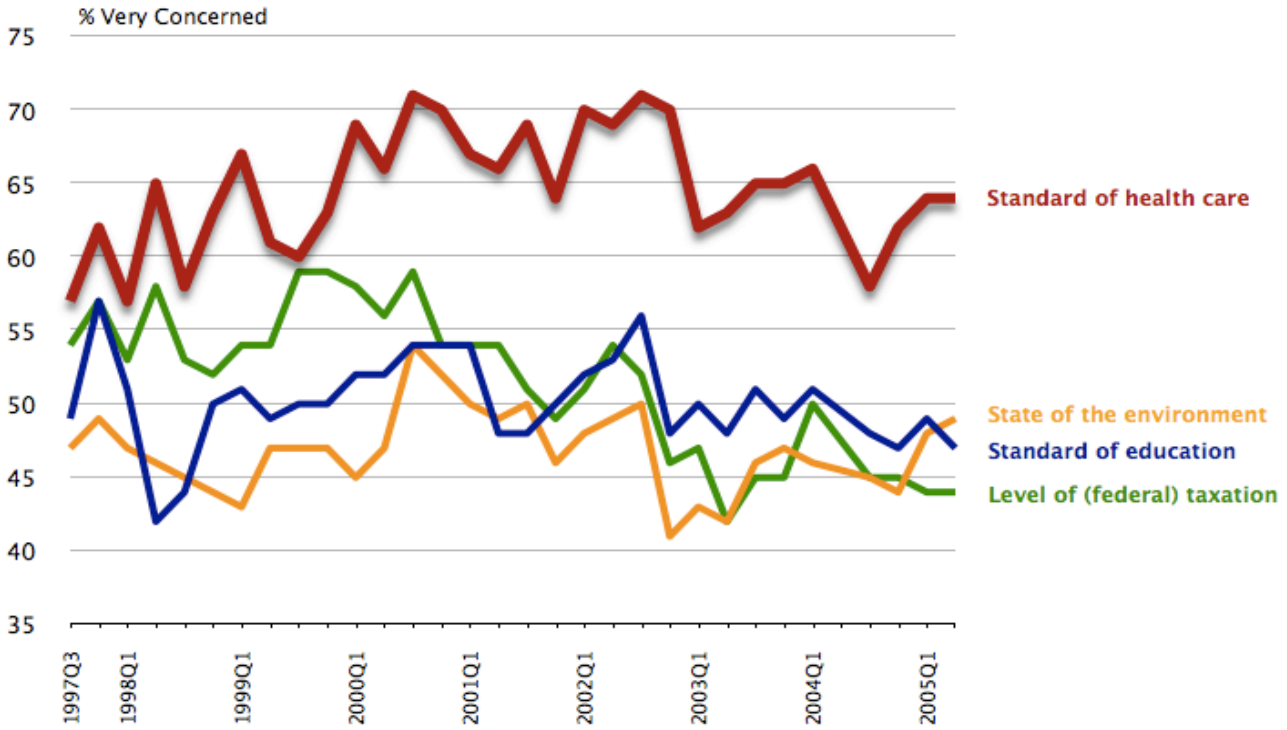
- The link between public opinion and policy on health care in Canada is complex and not yet well understood
- “Canadian paradox” of generally positive personal experiences and generally negative impressions of the system
- As politicians know too well: policy-making depends on more than public approval or disapproval

Canadians are concerned

Figure 4 Section 1.1 Context

Concern About Health Care

Now thinking more generally, would you say you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about the following issues?...



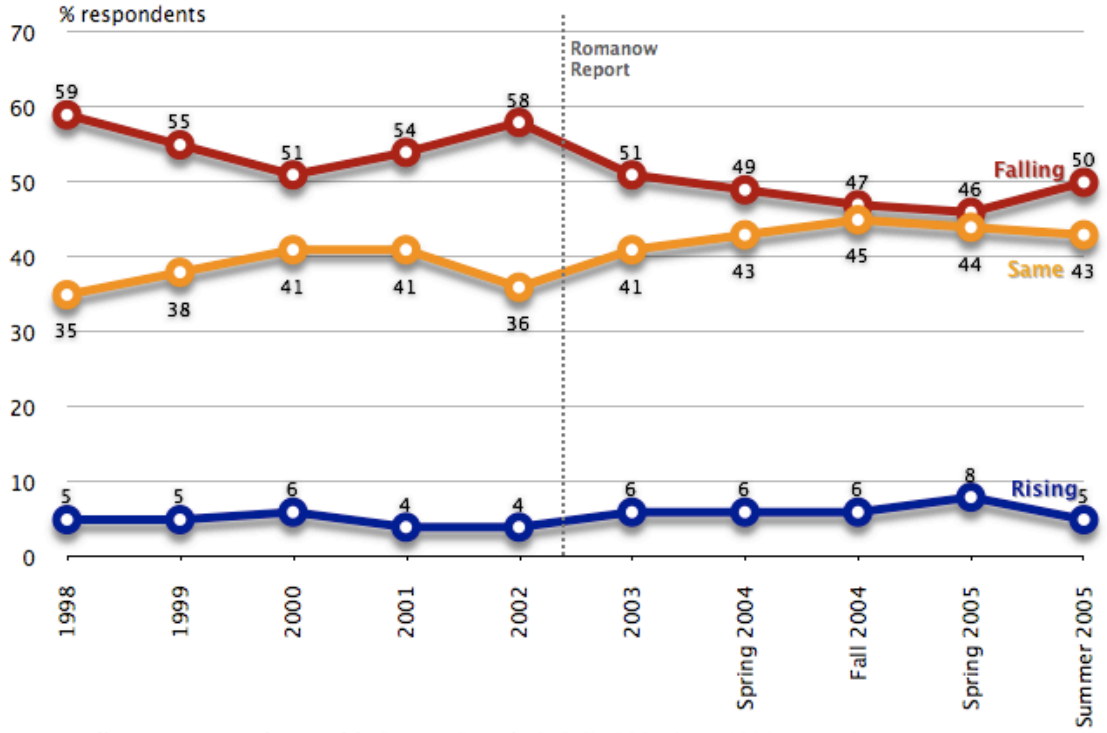
Source: CRIC, as reported in Portraits of Canada, 2005 (N=~1000/survey)

Confidence has been eroded

Figure 8 Section 1.2 The State of the Canadian Health Care System

Confidence in the Canadian Health Care System

Overall, would you say that your confidence in the Canadian health system is rising or falling, or is it about the same as it ever was?



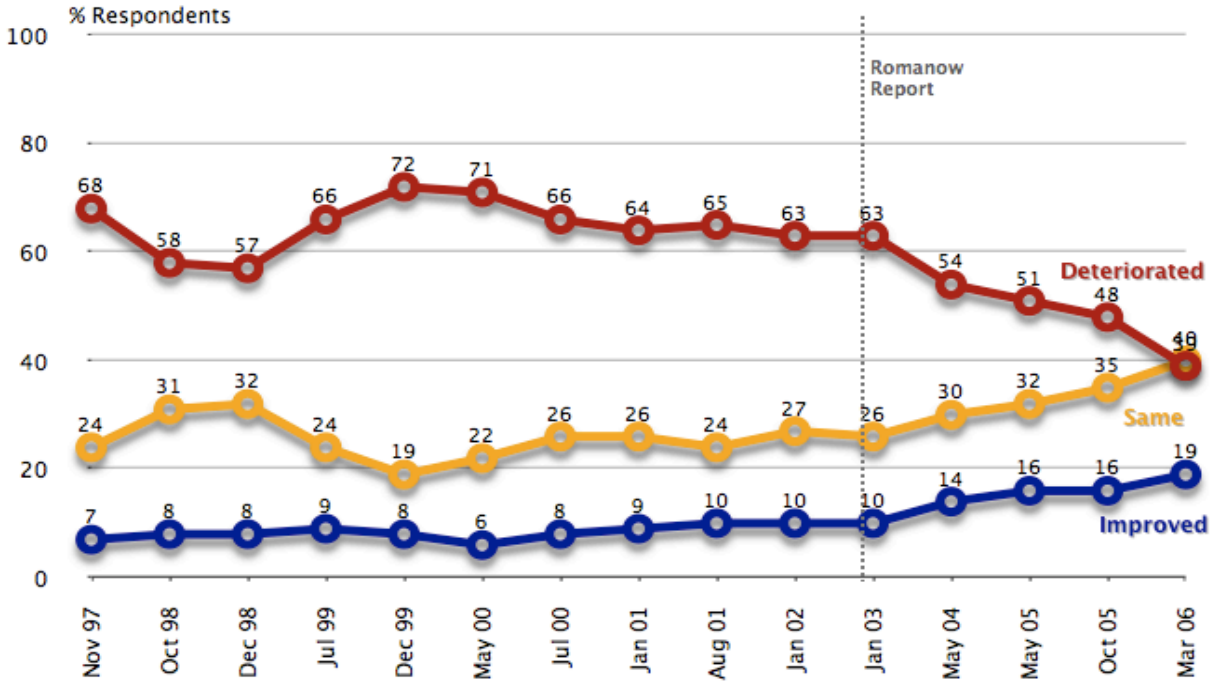
Source: Pollara, as reported in Health Care in Canada (HCIC), 2005 (N=~1000/survey)

Quality of care is an issue

Figure 9 Section 1.2 The State of the Canadian Health Care System

Perceived Trends in the Quality of Health Care

Has the quality of health care over the past two years improved, deteriorated, or stayed the same? Source: EKOS surveys



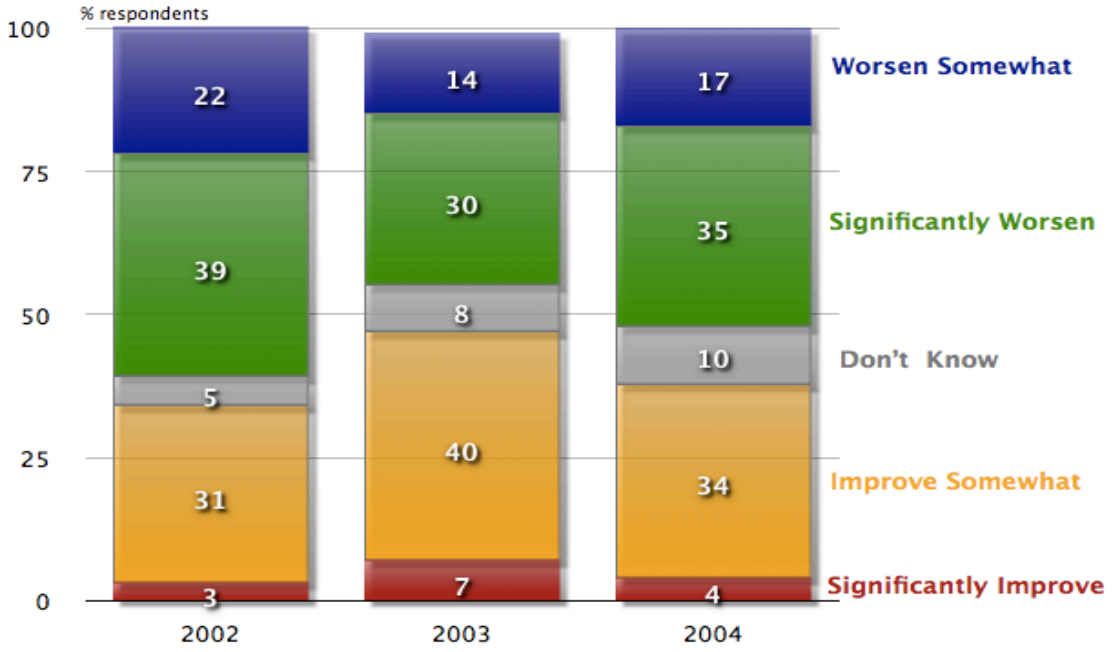
Source: Ekos surveys (N=~1000/survey)

As is access to care

Figure 47 Section 3.1 Access to Services

Perceived Future Access to Timely Care

Over the next five years, do you believe that Canadians' access to timely, quality health care will significantly improve, improve somewhat, worsen somewhat or significantly worsen?



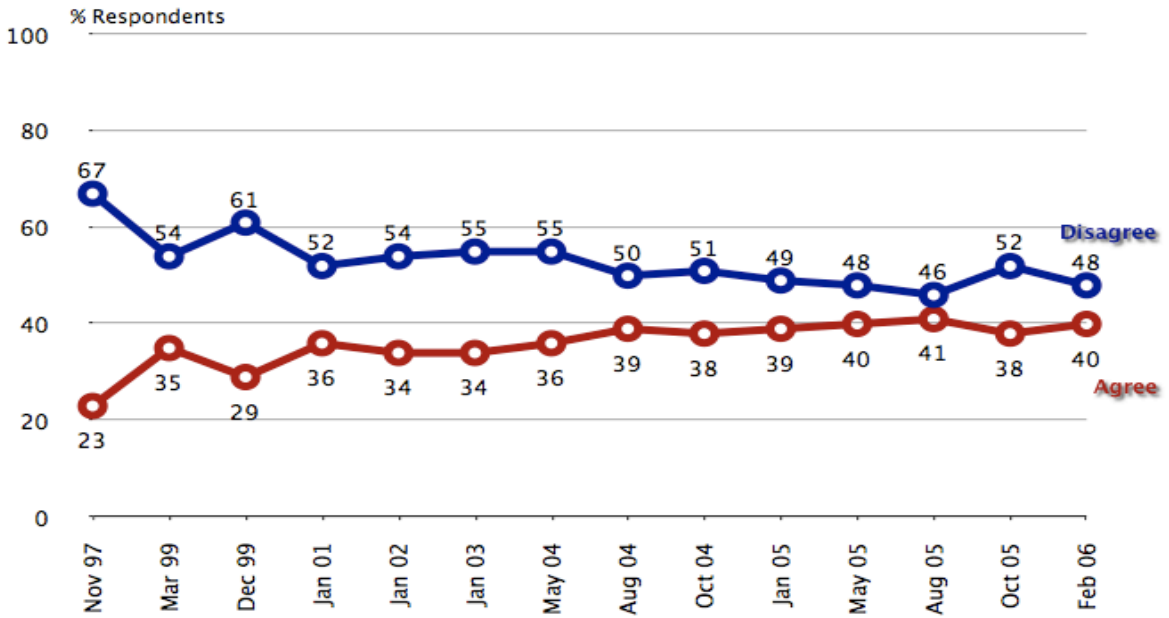
Source: Pollara, HCIC 2002-2004 (N=~1000)

Are attitudes changing?

Figure 34 Section 2.3 Private Health Care

Pay for Quicker Access

Individuals should be allowed to pay extra to get quicker access to health care services.

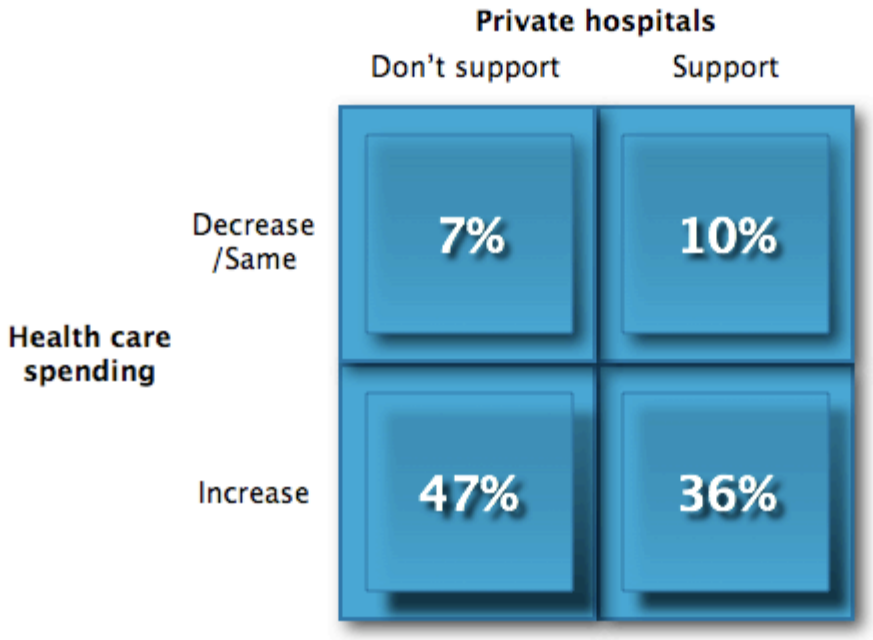


Source: Ekos surveys (N=~1000)

Figure 44 Section 2.3 Private Health Care

Support for Public *and* Private Health Care

Spending: Should the government spend more, spend less or spend the same amount as now on the following areas. Keep in mind that spending more in one area means spending less in another area or increasing taxes... Health care.
Hospitals: Do you favour or oppose having some private hospitals in Canada?



Cells show the percent of total respondents.

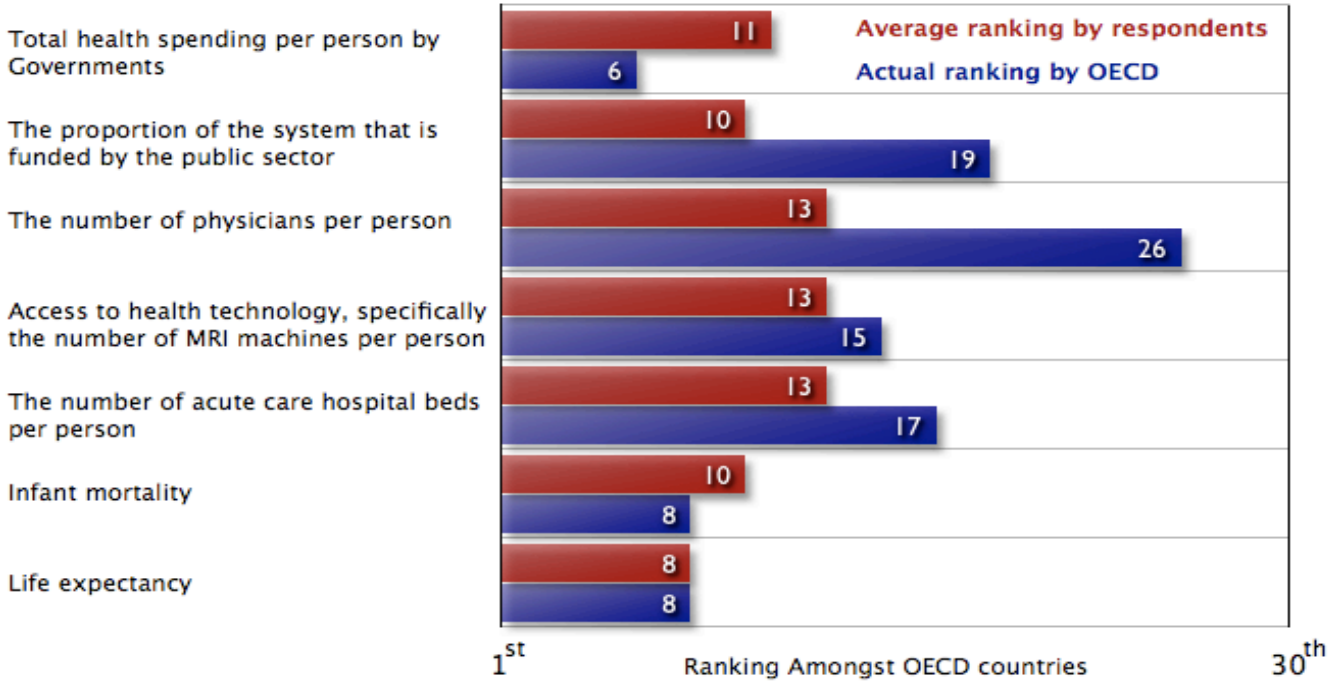
Source: 2004 Canadian Election Study (N=~2800)

Are Canadians well-enough informed?

Figure 62 Section 4 Perceptions and Reality

Canada Among Nations

For each of the following please tell me where you think Canada ranks when compared to the top 30 developed countries in the world. Please respond with a ranking from 1 (if you think Canada is first overall) to 30 (if you think Canada is last). You can also choose any number between 1 and 30. Where do you think Canada ranks in terms of...?

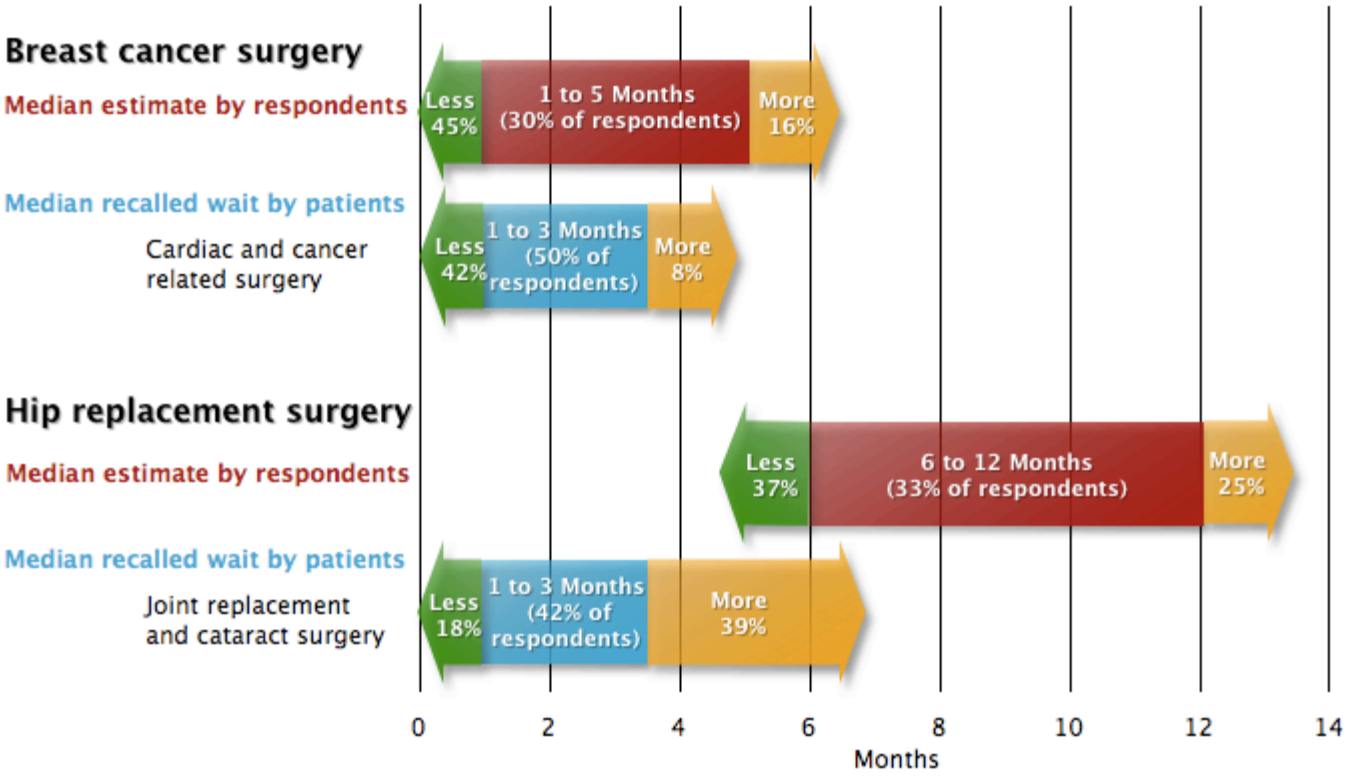


Source: Ipsos Health Report Card, August 2005 (N=~1000); OECD Health Data 2005

Figure 63 Section 4 Perceptions and Reality

Estimated Wait Times: Public and Patients

For question wording, see Figures 50–51.

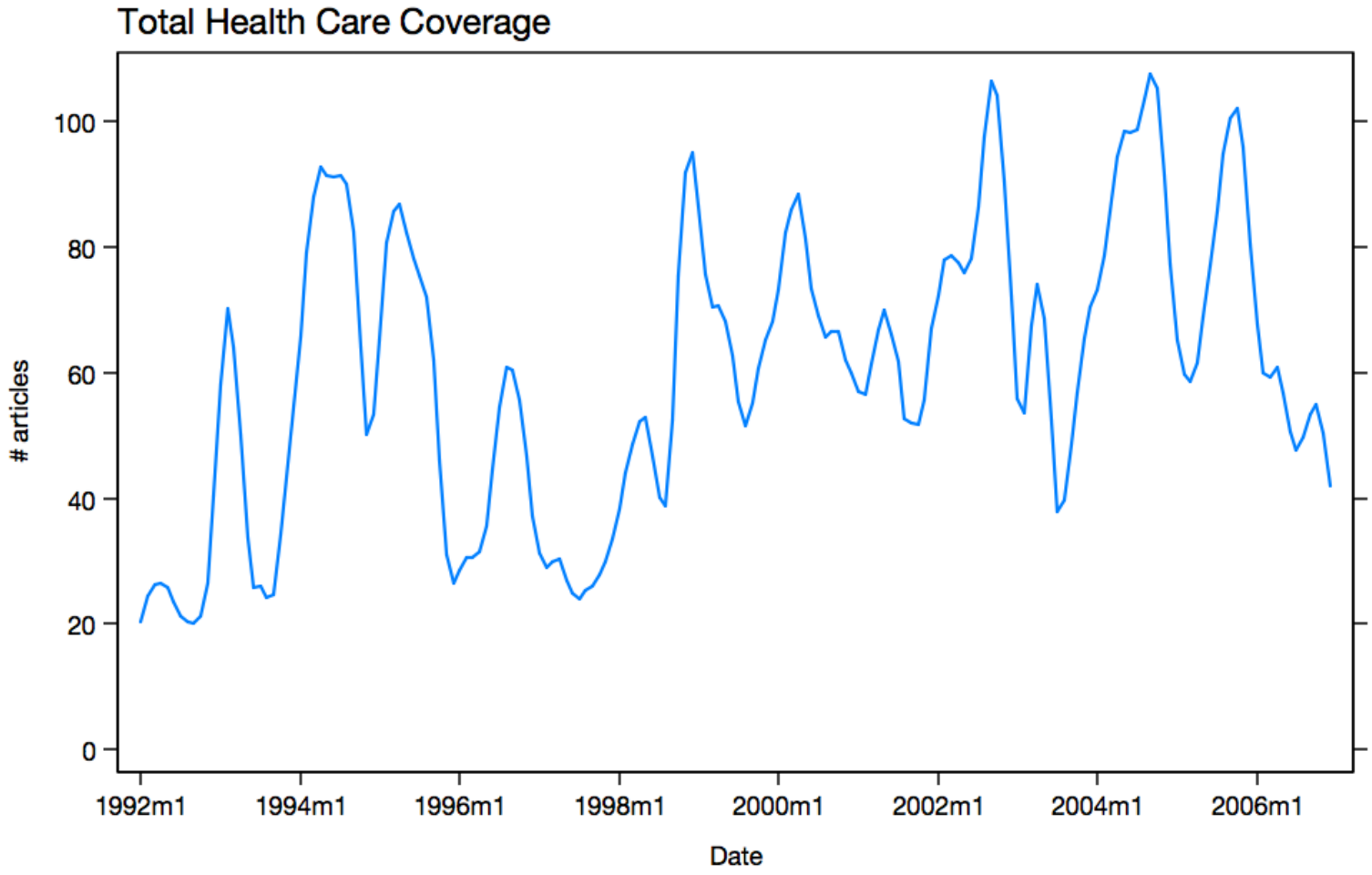


Source: Estimate by respondents: Pollara, HCIC 2005 (N=~1200); Recalled wait by patients: *Access to Health Care Services in Canada*, January to June 2005 (Statistics Canada). **See text for discussion of waiting time estimates.**

The role of the media

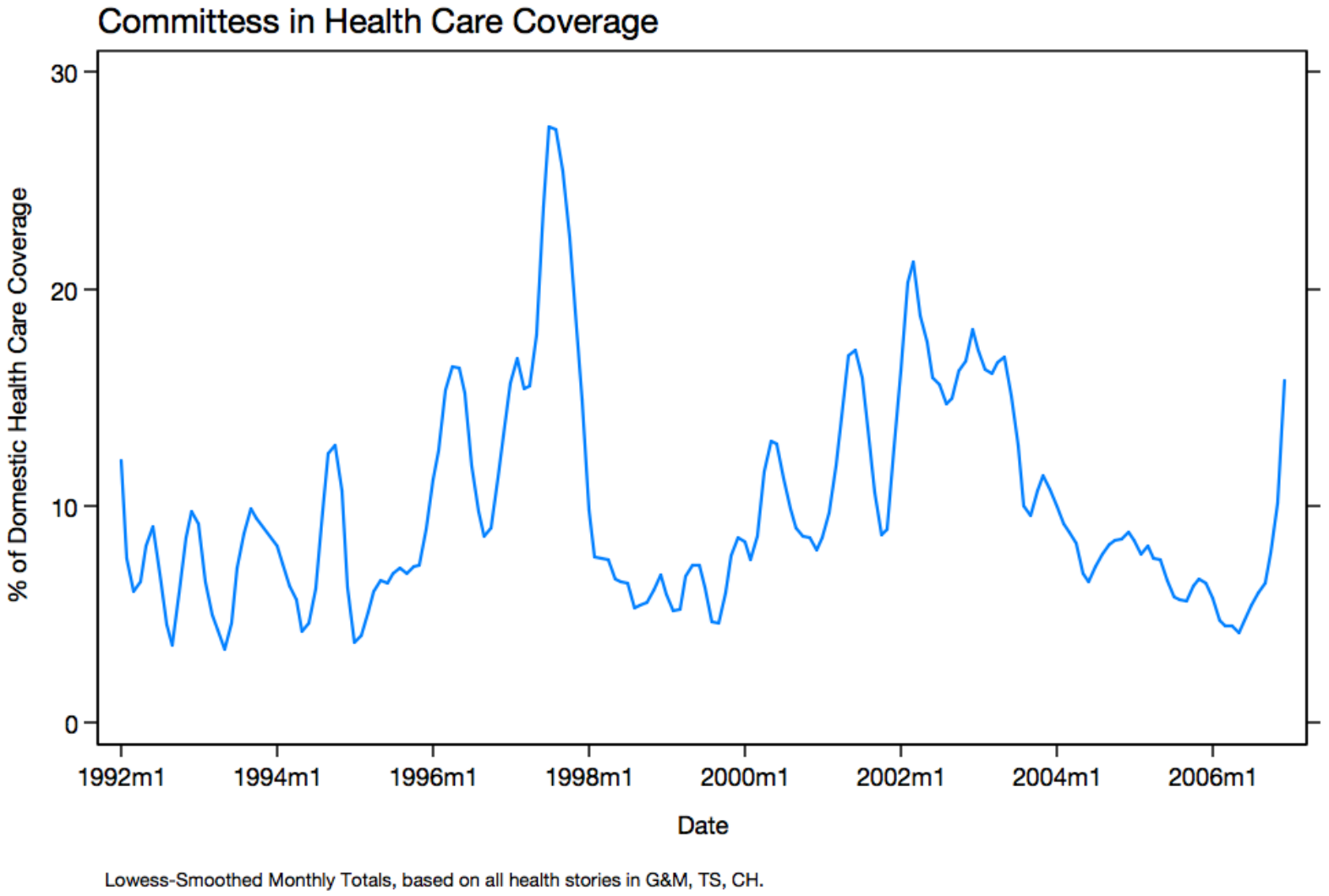
- media play a critical role in educating citizens about policies and politics
- media can reflect: media content reflects issues that are currently prominent in public debates
- media can affect: media content has the potential to affect citizens' or politicians' attitudes
- is the perceived "crisis" in Canadian health care in part the product of media content?

The media devote substantial coverage to health care issues

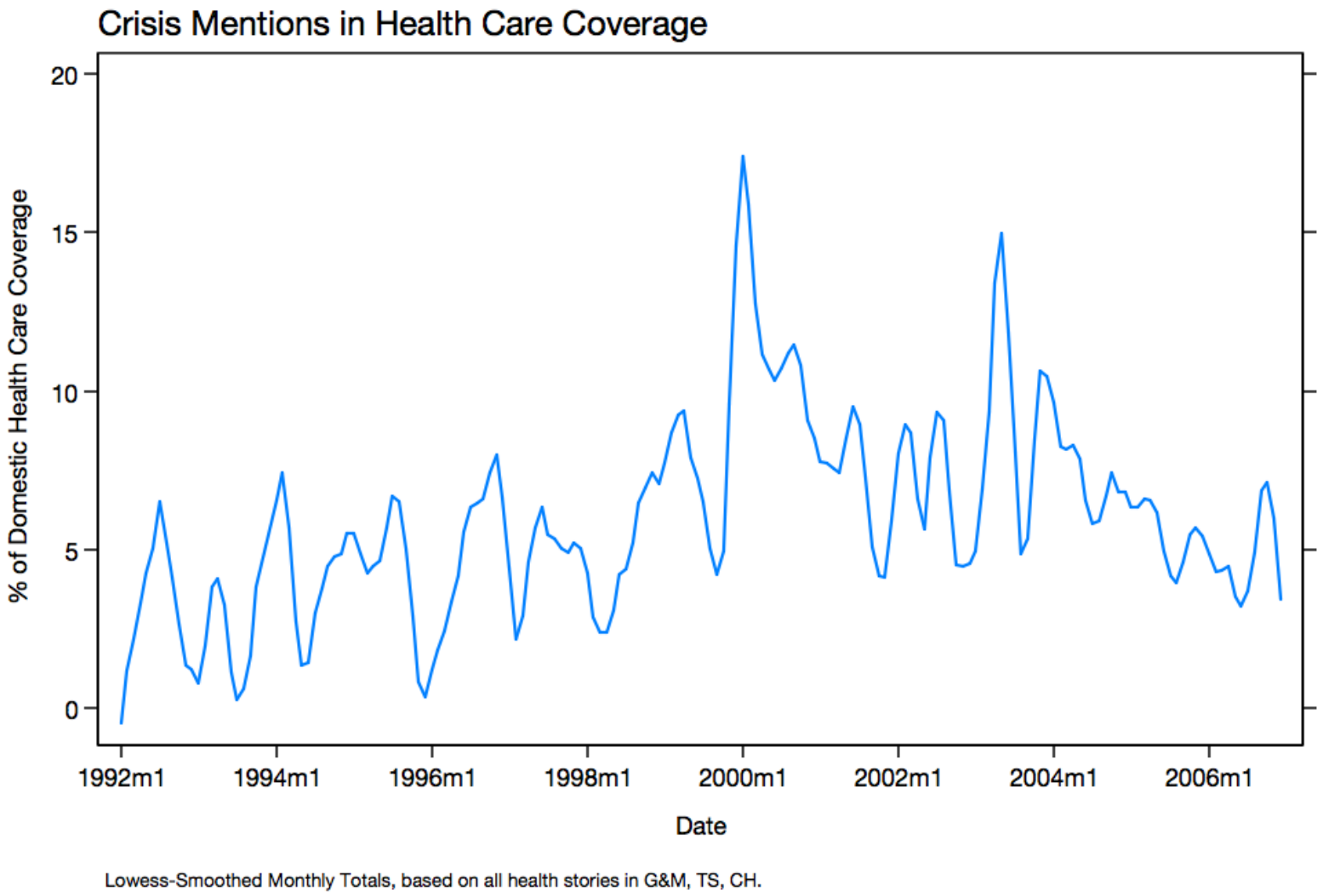


Lowess-Smoothed Monthly Totals, based on all health stories in G&M, TS, CH.

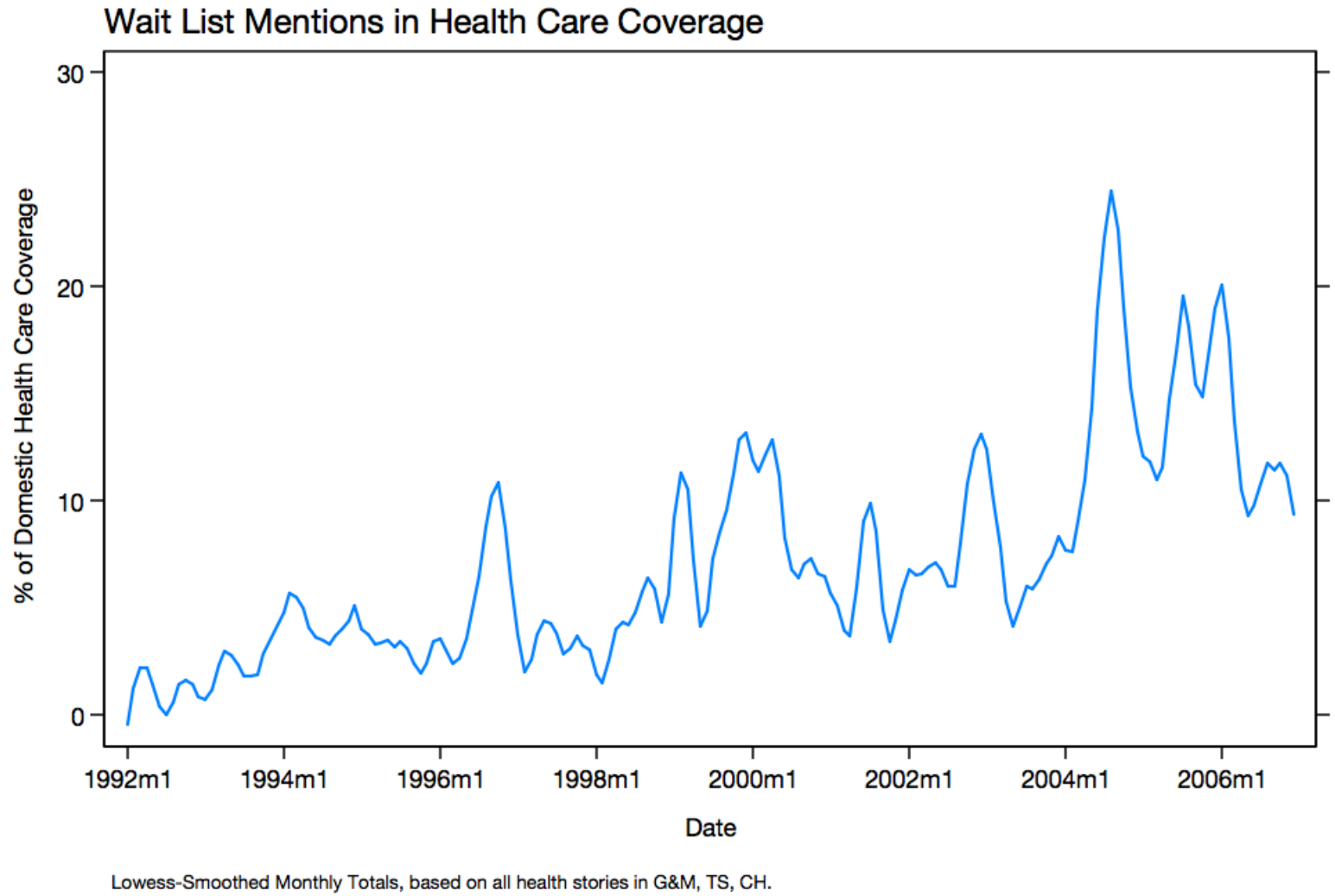
… even commissions, committees, and reports!



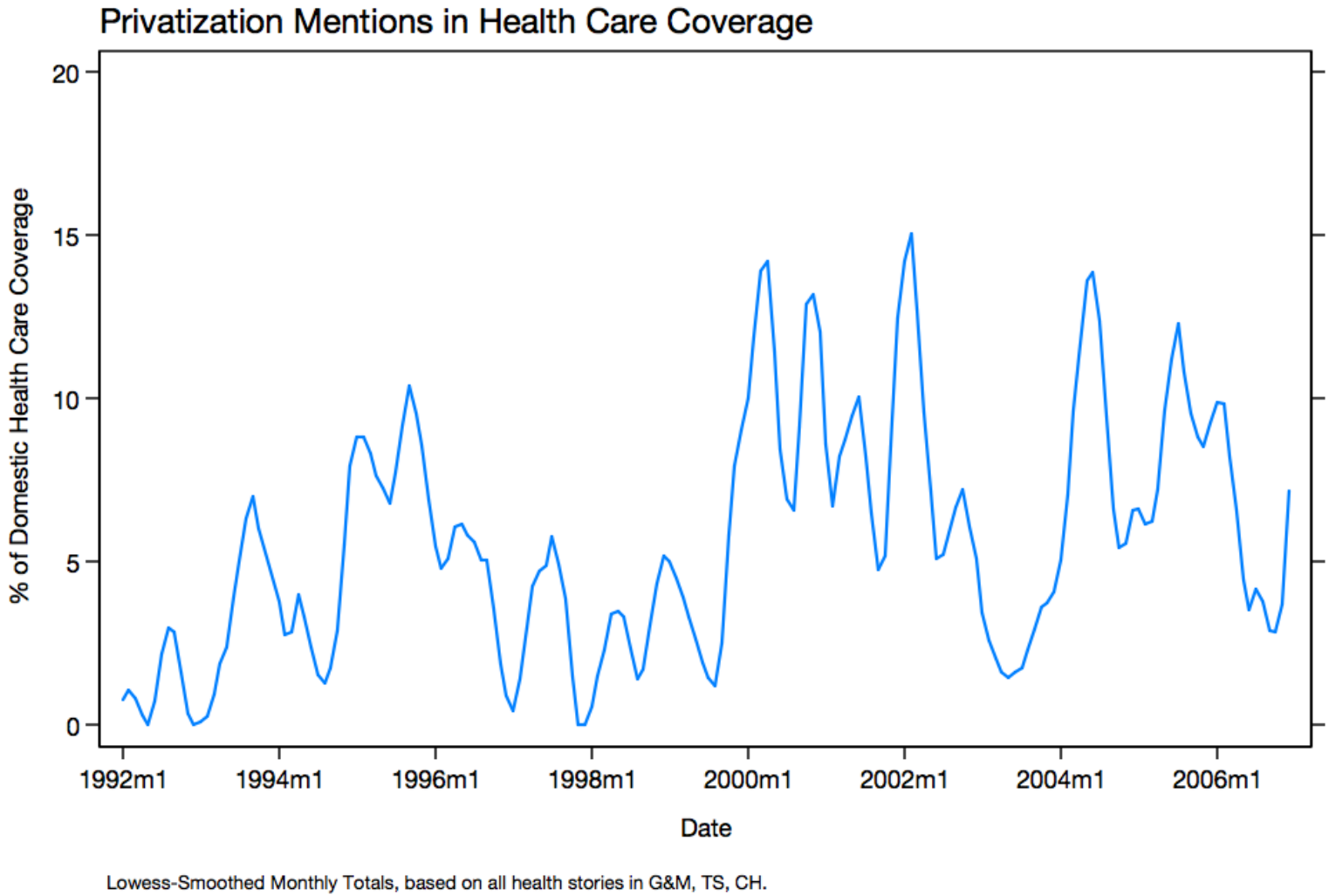
Media frame the issues in health care reform



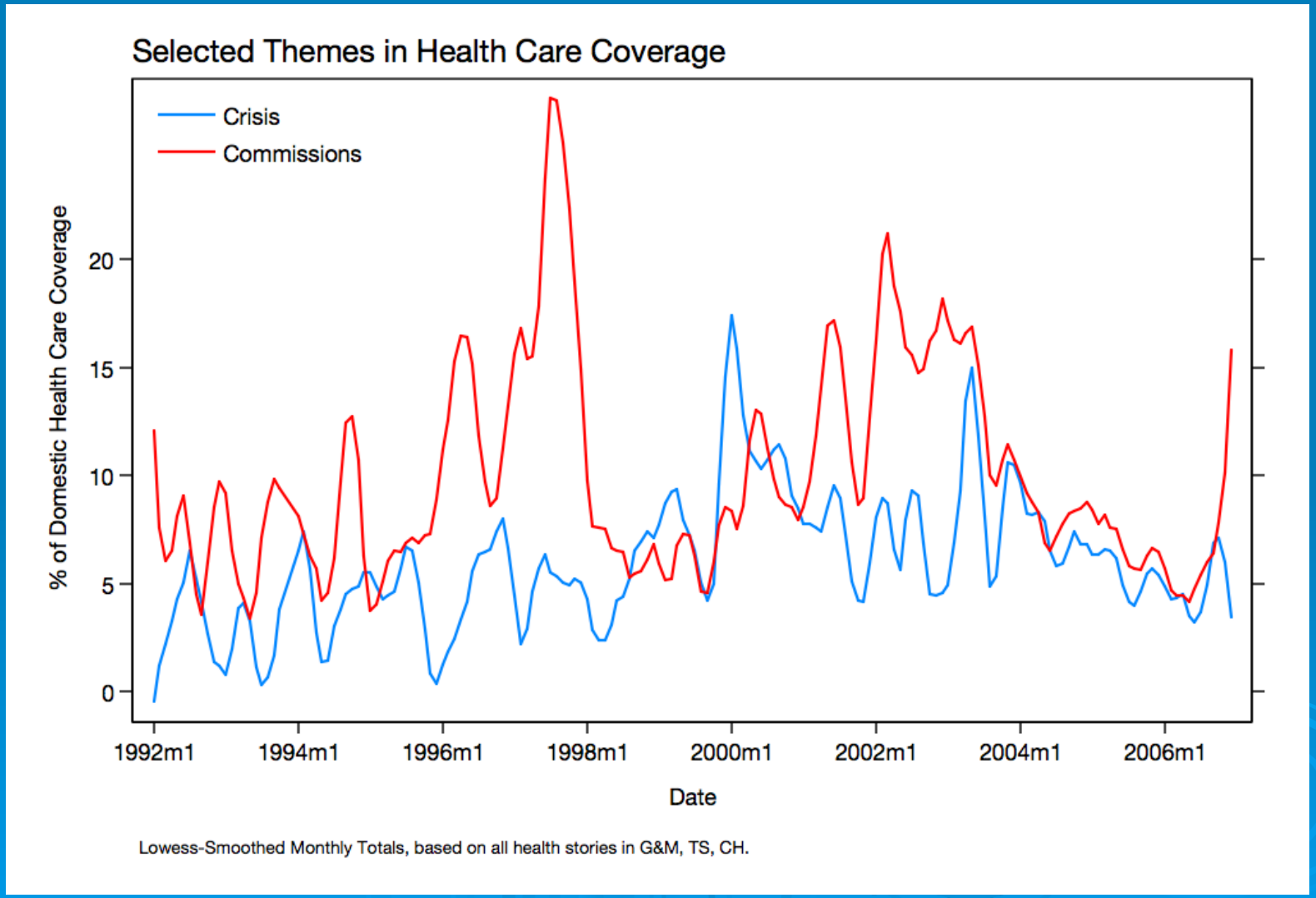
The media can help set reform agendas



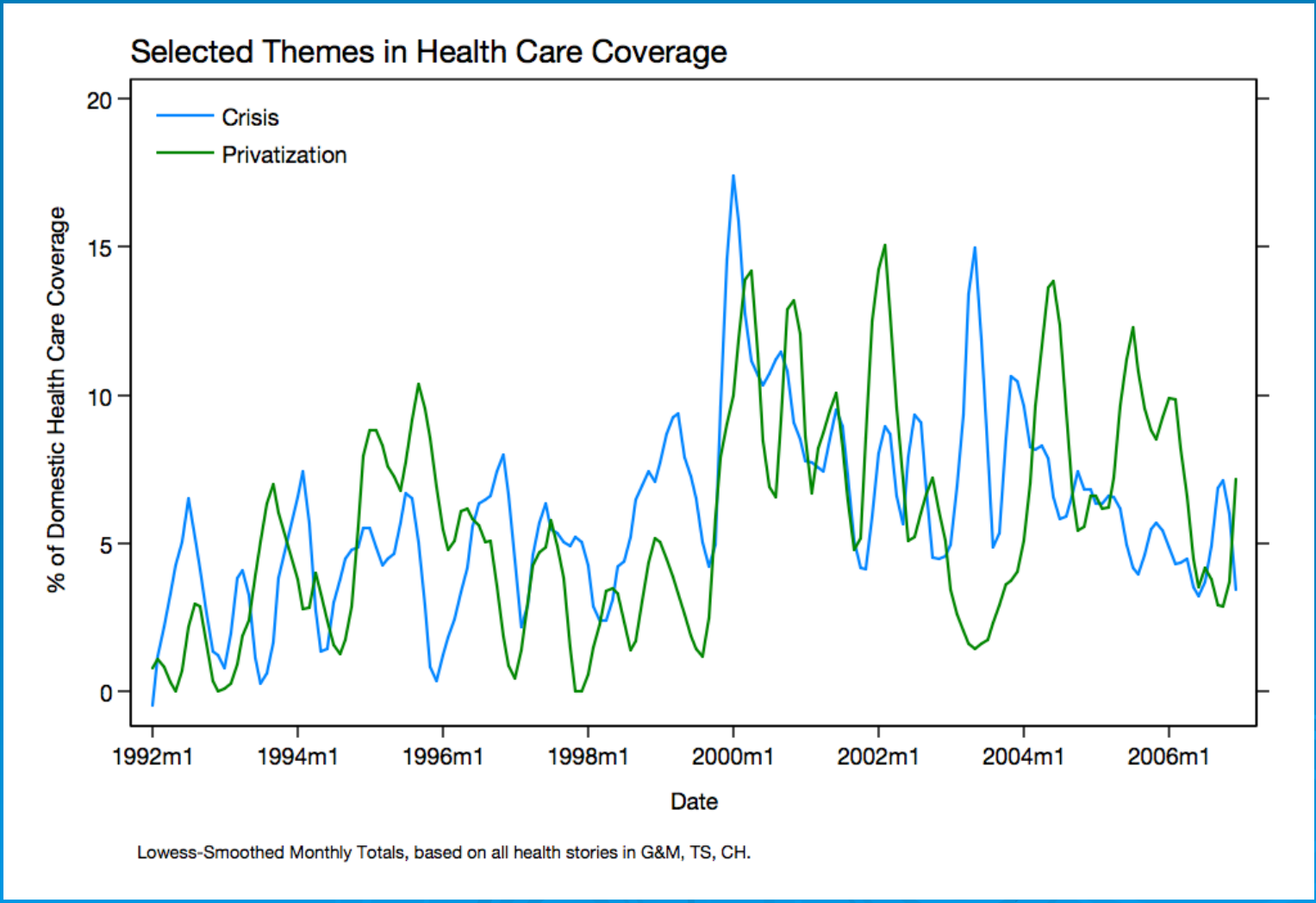
The media can bring forward policy ideas



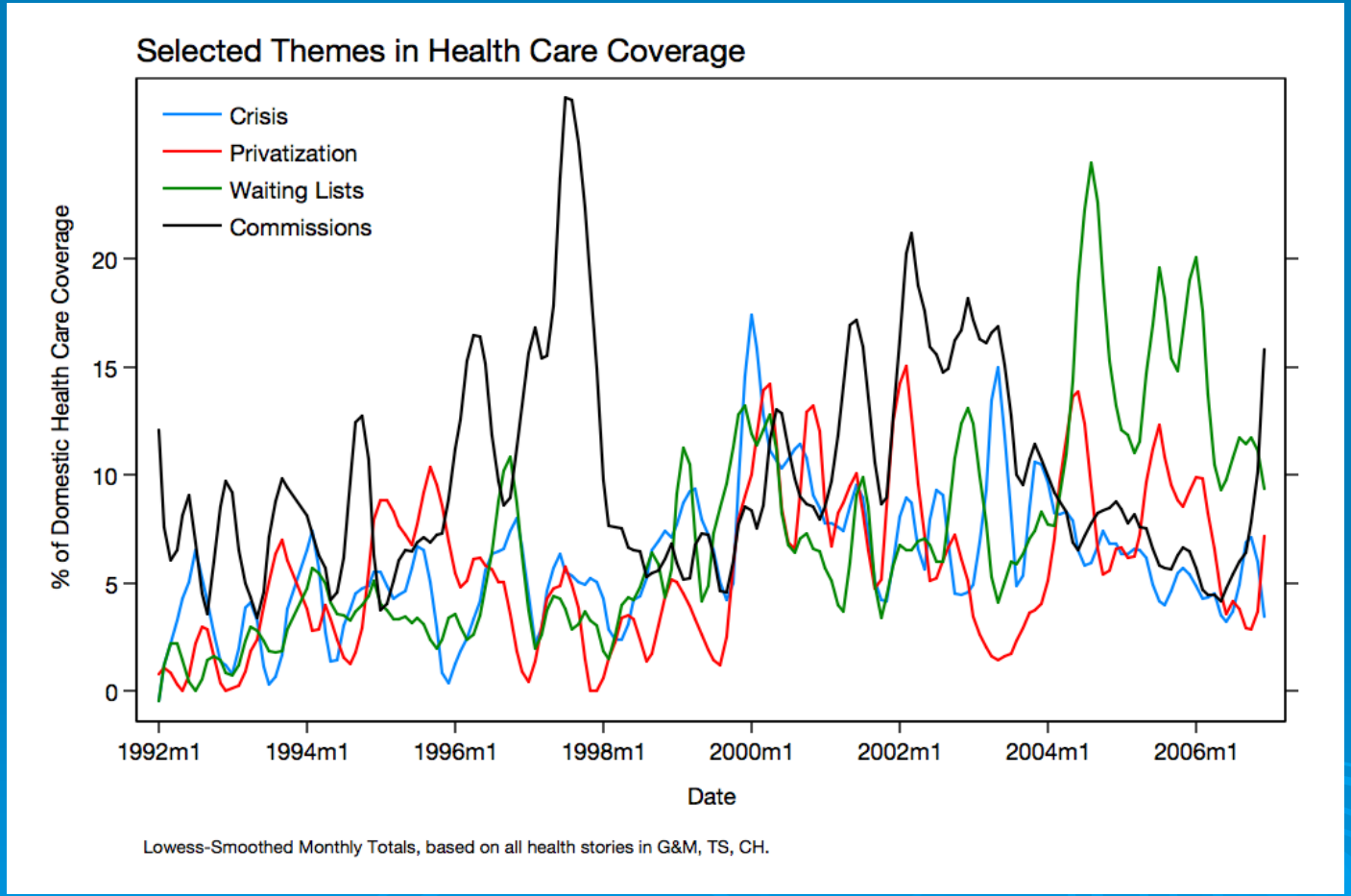
Do commissions alleviate crisis perception?



Does crisis-talk encourage alternative solutions?



Much ado about health care!



Where do we go from here?

… hey, what's holding up the parade?

- what matters for Canadians is whether the health care system is living up to needs and, increasingly, how the system can respond to expectations

- politics and policy are equally important in health care reform.

Who decides?

- Crucial political questions surrounding political scope of health reform and jurisdictional roles and responsibilities are still out there

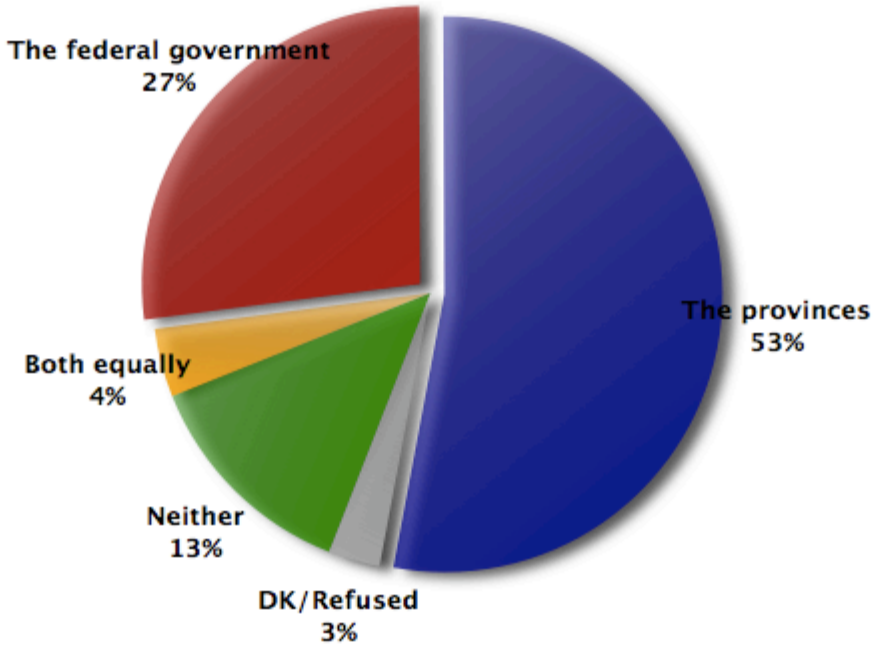
- Who decides? This is the question that conditions the direction, content and timing of health care reform:

  - Who gets what?
  - Who pays?
  - Who profits?

Figure 22 Section 1.3 Health Care and Governments

Confidence in Federal & Provincial Governments

Which level of government do you have more confidence in to lead changes to the health care system? Source: The Strategic Council, for Health Canada, Sept 2004.

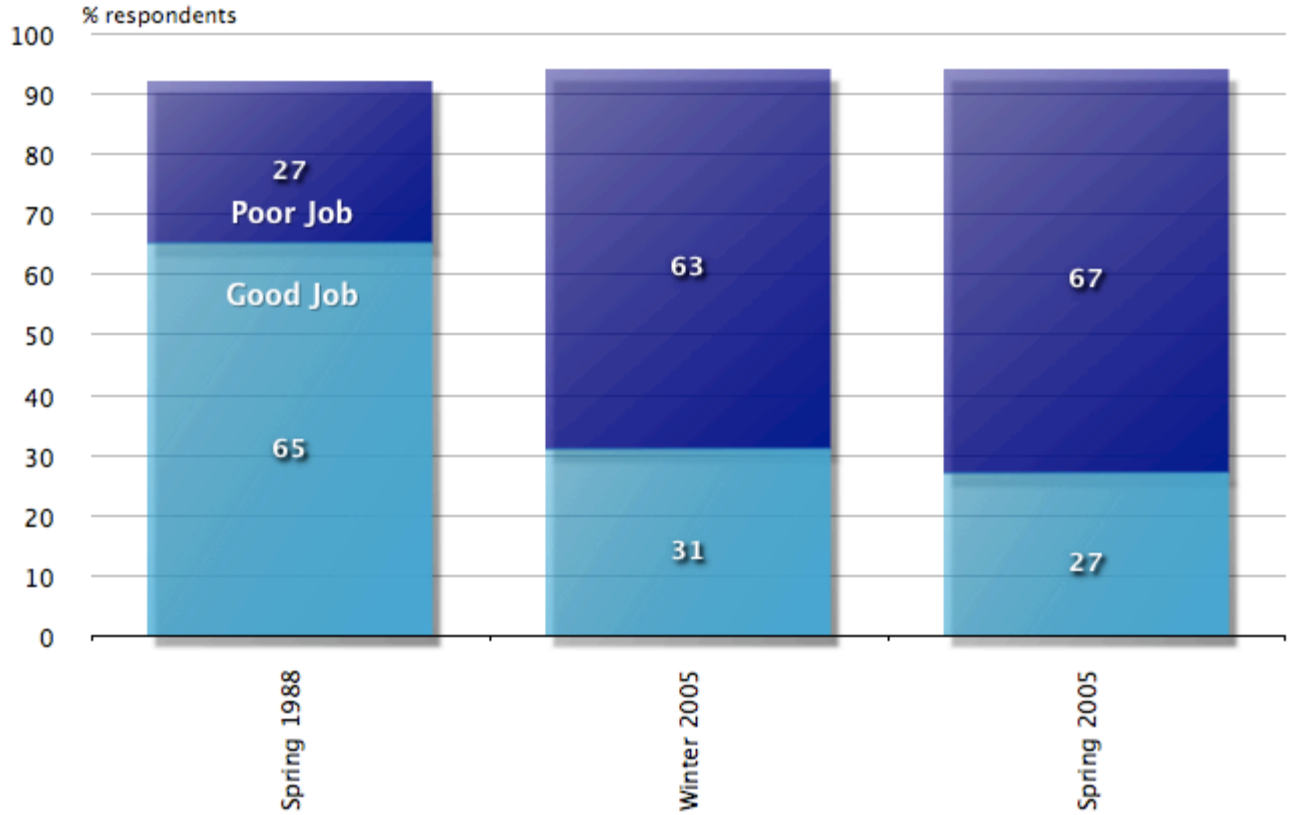


Source: The Strategic Council, for Health Canada, Sept 2004 (N=~2000)

Figure 16 Section 1.3 Health Care and Governments

Satisfaction with Federal Government Performance I

'Improving health care'.

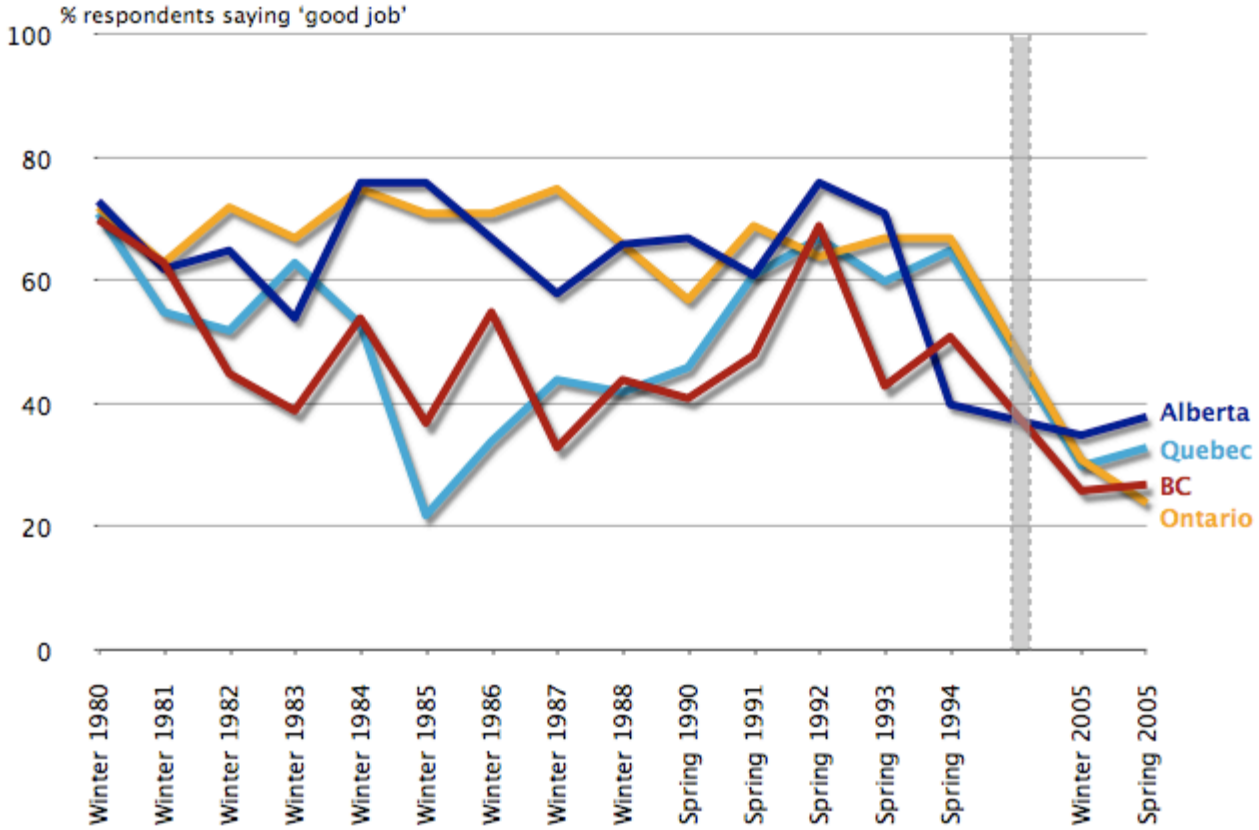


Source: Decima surveys (N=~1000/survey)

Figure 19 Section 1.3 Health Care and Governments

Satisfaction with Provincial Governments

'Improving health care'.



Source: Decima surveys (N=~1000)

Plus ça change …

- Changing actors: provincial autonomy and the Conservative government
- New actors: *Chaoulli* and its successors in Alberta and Ontario courts
- Renewed actors: agressiveness of interest groups such as CMA
- Broadening of scope of policy alternatives

… plus c'est la même chose?

- Public still worried about future of health care, but remain wary about drastic change that may increase cost and affect access to care
- Politicians still worried about future sustainability of health care public funding, but even more about backlash from voters