

This bulletin is a quick inventory of recent social research information. Its purpose is to promptly disseminate the most current external and internal research relevant to social policy.

COVID-19 in Canada: An Update on Social and Economic Impacts, Fall 2021 by Statistics Canada, December 2021.

While Canadians have remained resilient through various waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, the direct and unforeseen impacts of the pandemic continue to affect households and businesses across the country. Many Canadians continue to report elevated levels of stress and greater challenges related to mental health, particularly in sociodemographic groups that were disproportionately impacted by public health measures.

- From April 2020 to March 2021, opioid toxicity deaths were up nearly 90% from pre-pandemic levels seen from April 2019 to March 2020
- Over one-half of net employment gains during this period were among young workers, as employment among 15- to 24-year-olds rebounded to pre-pandemic levels by August 2021
- [S]ubstantial differences persisted across sectors, with cumulative losses in accommodation and food services totalling over 200,000 workers, while employment in professional, scientific and technical services has risen by 190,000 workers since the start of the pandemic
- Consumer inflation has accelerated at the fastest pace in nearly two decades, driven by upward pressure from gasoline, shelter costs and consumer durables. In recent months, consumer inflation has outpaced annual wage growth, with average hourly wages—adjusted for changes in the composition of the workforce during the pandemic—rising at a slower pace than the headline Consumer Price Index

Link to the presentation: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2021003-eng.pdf>

The Implications of an Aging Population for Government Finances in Ontario by Fraser Institute, September 2021.

This report is one of five in a series about the financial pressures facing provincial governments due to the aging population. These bulletins are intended to be short summaries rather than exhaustive analyses, and will not explore debt ratios in detail or make specific policy recommendations. Instead, the purpose of this series is to inform Canadians of the effects that our aging population will have on government expenditures, and to a lesser extent, deficits, in their respective province or region.

- Seniors currently compose 17.6 percent of Ontario's population, and their share of the province's population will continue to grow and reach nearly 24 percent by 2043
- Health care expenditures are estimated to increase by approximately 4.1 percent annually from now until 2040/41. Put differently, Ontario's health care spending will increase from 7.1 percent of GDP in 2019 to 7.6 percent in 2040
- Ontario is expected to run primary deficits (excluding interest costs) equivalent to between 0.3 and 0.4 percent of GDP, unless it makes changes to its spending or tax policies

Link to the bulletin: <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/implications-of-aging-population-for-government-finances-in-ontario.pdf>

The Achievements, Experiences and Labour Market Outcomes of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Women with Bachelor's Degrees or Higher by Paula Arriagada, Statistics Canada, October 2021.

This study examines the educational attainment and labour market outcomes of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women with a bachelor's degree or higher, primarily between the ages of 25 to 64, using data from the 2006 and 2016 Censuses of Population, the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the 2018 National Graduates Survey. Comparisons are made across Indigenous identity groups, and between the sexes, as well as to the non-Indigenous population.

- In 2016, half (52%) of Indigenous women aged 25 to 64 had a postsecondary qualification, including the 14% of Indigenous women with a bachelor's degree or higher
- The majority (92%) of Indigenous women with a bachelor's degree or higher were employed in 2018, significantly higher than the corresponding proportion for Indigenous women with postsecondary qualifications below the bachelor's level (78%)
- The educational attainment of Indigenous women has increased over time. By 2016, 14% of Indigenous women aged 25 to 64 had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, which is up from 9% a decade earlier in 2006
- 46% of Indigenous men obtained postsecondary qualifications including 8% who graduated with a bachelor's degree or higher

Link to the study:

https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/75-006-x/2021001/article/00009-eng.pdf?st=9M_QIMLP

How's Life in Canada? by OECD, July 2021.

To understand how people and societies are doing, and to design effective public policies to improve well-being, governments need to look beyond the functioning of the economy, to also consider a diverse range of living conditions. For this, we need data and statistics that reflect people's lives in areas such as income, health, life satisfaction, safety and social connections. It requires looking beyond average numbers to understand not only whether life is getting better, but also where it is getting better and for whom. Finally, it requires measuring not just well-being today, but also the resources that will help to sustain well-being into the future.

- Canada is in the top tier of indicators for Educational Attainment of Young Adults and Trust in Government, but among the bottom-performing tier for Household Debt, Greenhouse Gas Emissions per Capita and Material Footprint
- 12% of the population live in relative income poverty
- 20% of poor households spend more than 40% of their income on housing costs
- 7% say they have no friends or family to turn to in times of need
- Canada has shown consistent improvement on Household Wealth and Household Income, but consistent deterioration on Housing Affordability and Social Interactions

Link to the report:

<https://www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-country-note-Canada.pdf>

<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9870c393-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/9870c393-en>

Freedom on the Net 2021 by Freedom House, September 2021.

In the high-stakes battle between states and technology companies, the rights of internet users have become the main casualties. A growing number of governments are asserting their authority over tech firms, often forcing the businesses to comply with online censorship and surveillance. These developments have contributed to an unprecedented assault on free expression online, causing global internet freedom to decline for an 11th consecutive year.

- The greatest deteriorations were documented in Myanmar, Belarus, and Uganda, where state forces cracked down amid electoral and constitutional crises
- China ranks as the worst environment for internet freedom for the seventh year in a row. Chinese authorities imposed draconian prison terms for online dissent, independent reporting, and mundane daily communications
- The United States' score declined for the fifth consecutive year. False, misleading, and manipulated information continued to proliferate online, even affecting public acceptance of the 2020 presidential election results
- 21% of the global internet population is Free, 28% Partly Free and 39% Not Free

Link to the report: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/FOTN_2021_Complete_Booklet_09162021_FINAL_UPDATED.pdf

Survey on Access to Health Care and Pharmaceuticals During the Pandemic, March 2020 to May 2021 by Statistics Canada, November 2021.

In the 10 provinces, approximately half of Canadian adults needing health care in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic experienced a difficulty receiving the services they needed. This finding is based on results from the Survey on Access to Health Care and Pharmaceuticals during the Pandemic, which was conducted from March to May 2021. Data from the survey, released today, cover topics such as access to pharmaceuticals, impacts of delayed health care, barriers to receiving health care, and general health status among Canadians aged 18 years and older living in the 10 provinces.

- Almost 1 in 10 needing health care services were not able to schedule one or more appointments needed during the first year of the pandemic
- Most needing health care services in 12 months preceding the survey reported that they received all the services needed, while one in seven reported an unmet need
- Canadians took the pandemic into consideration when deciding whether or not to seek services: over one-quarter of Canadians delayed contacting a medical professional during the first year of the pandemic
- Over half of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis adults needing health care services experienced difficulty during the first year of the pandemic

Link to the survey: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/211123/dq211123b-eng.htm>

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