

## Pain hurts Canada's economic recovery

*Research reveals significant productivity loss — particularly among young Canadians*

**Toronto – March 21, 2011** – Pain is taking a startling toll on Canada's economy, according to an Angus Reid national survey released today. The survey, conducted for the Canadian Pain Society, a coalition of health professionals and researchers, found that moderate-to-severe chronic pain is hitting the economy where it really hurts: in lost productivity and absenteeism. In the past three months, nearly one-third of all Canadians (32 per cent) report having suffered a loss of income, booked off sick days, experienced a reduction in workplace productivity and responsibility, or even lost their jobs as a result of their pain.<sup>1</sup>

Alarming, 23 per cent of Canadians between the ages of 18 to 34 reported missing work days due to pain<sup>2</sup> - more than any other age group surveyed. One in five within this demographic said they experienced a loss in productivity at work because of pain.<sup>3</sup> In addition, 15 per cent of those in this age bracket said they had suffered a loss of income as a result of pain – higher than the national average of 11 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

“This national survey shows that pain doesn't just hurt Canadian patients; it hurts Canada's economy,” says Dr. Mary Lynch, President of the Canadian Pain Society. “As health professionals and researchers, we're calling for a national pain strategy that involves co-ordinating resources, increasing education and improving pain treatment for all Canadians. It's time to treat pain for what it really is — a growing health crisis.”

A National Health Population survey estimated that chronic pain costs Canadians approximately \$14,744 per affected person per year.<sup>5</sup> Estimates place direct health care costs for Canada at more than \$6 billion per year (in year 2000 dollars) for individuals suffering from chronic pain. By 2025, these costs are expected to rise to more than \$10 billion per year.<sup>6</sup>

Of all Canadians surveyed, well over half (56 per cent) experienced moderate-to-severe pain in the past three months.<sup>7</sup> Pain occurrence varies across Canada:

Regional Prevalence of Pain								
Prevalence (%)		Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	MB/SK	Alberta	British Columbia	National Average
	Experienced pain		56	50	55	63	68	60

### Interview opportunities

To learn more about the negative impact of pain on our economy and the need for an integrated pain strategy, members of the CPS are available for insight and comment.

### About the Canadian Pain Society

[www.canadianpainsociety.ca](http://www.canadianpainsociety.ca) / [www.twitter.com/CanadianPain](https://twitter.com/CanadianPain)

The Canadian Pain Society has been a chapter of the International Association for the Study of Pain since 1982. The aim of the CPS is to foster and encourage research on pain mechanisms and pain syndromes and to help improve the management of patients with acute and chronic pain by bringing together the basic scientists and health professionals of various disciplines and backgrounds who have an interest in pain research and management.

### **About the survey**

From March 4 to March 7, 2011, an online survey was conducted among 1,108 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panellists. The margin of error – which measures sampling variability – is +/- 2.9%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

-30-

### **To schedule an interview or for additional information, please contact:**

Caroline De Silva

Argyle Communications

(416) 968-7311 ext. 231

[cdesilva@argylecommunications.com](mailto:cdesilva@argylecommunications.com)

Kristina Rikunova

Argyle Communications

(416) 968-7311 ext. 243

[krikunova@argylecommunications.com](mailto:krikunova@argylecommunications.com)

### **References**

---

<sup>1</sup> Angus Reid Research for the Canadian Pain Society (March 4 to 7, 2011)

<sup>2</sup> IBID

<sup>3</sup> IBID

<sup>4</sup> IBID

<sup>5</sup> Statistical Report on the Health on Canadians. Health Canada (1999). <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-570-x/82-570-x1997001-eng.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> The economics of Chronic Pain. CJ Phillips D Schopflocher (2008). In S Rashid D Schopflocher, P Taenzer E Jonsson (Eds) Chronic Pain: A Health Policy Perspective. Weinham, Germany: Wiley-Blackwell.

<sup>7</sup> IBID