



## CANADIANS VOTE FOR HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

### Woman with a rare disorder among those encouraged by results of new national poll

**OTTAWA, ON (May 11, 2015)** – Maureen Smith thinks Canadians got it right when they said in a recent poll that health and medical research makes an important contribution to health care and to the economy. Ninety-two percent of Canadians say basic research should be supported by the federal government — an increase from results in 2006 and 2009.

The new poll, *CanadaSpeaks 2015*, conducted by Vision Critical on behalf of seven national and provincial organizations, found that Canadians are more likely to vote for a candidate in this year's election who supports increased funding for health care and health and medical research.

"I am proof of what research can do," says the Ottawa woman, who was born with a rare, disorder of the pituitary gland called congenital panhypopituitarism. Because of research, Smith has been able to lead a productive life, which includes advocating for Canadians with rare diseases who she believes could also benefit from health research.

Deborah Gordon-El-Bihbety, President and CEO of Research Canada, the lead partner in the poll, says, "Canadians continue to be dedicated to investments in health and medical research even in the face of the country's ongoing economic challenges." Furthermore:

- A very strong majority of Canadians think it is important for both federal and provincial governments to invest in the education and training of health and medical researchers.
- Four out of five Canadians agree that the federal government should support tax and regulatory policies that encourage private industries to conduct more medical research. Agreement is on par with results from 2009.

- Health and Medical Researchers are highly trusted. Almost half of Canadians rank Health and Medical Researchers 8 or higher on a 10-point scale.
- Three quarters of Canadians say they are willing to share personal health information as long as it is kept confidential.

Smith is hopeful the poll results will lead to increased investments in health and medical research, which represents hope for millions of Canadians with diseases like hers. During childhood, Smith participated in a clinical trial in Montreal aimed at replacing the human growth hormone her body could not produce.

“I received the drug for six months at a time. For six months, I would feel sluggish and ill but then I would get the drug and for the next six months I would feel normal,” says Smith. “The trial worked very well and I grew to just over five feet. I always say ‘thank you’ to health researchers now and ask them to please continue working.”

As an adult, Smith encountered many challenges due to the inability of her body to produce endocrine hormones. It was health research that transformed her life and gave her hope for the future. “I’m training for my third 10K run this May, an incredible goal that no one could have predicted,” says Smith.

The National Poll Partners include the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC), the Health Charities Coalition of Canada (HCCC), HealthCareCAN, Canada’s Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D) and Research Canada. Provincial Partners include the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research and the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation.

The poll partners are calling on Canadians to further demonstrate their support for health research by taking to Twitter and Facebook and using the hashtag #RESEARCHmeans to explain why it is so important to our health and our economy.

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For more information or to arrange an interview with Maureen Smith, any of the poll partners or other patients who have benefitted from health research:

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