

The sanofi-aventis Healthcare Survey - 2011 - Canadian employees prefer peace of mind over cold hard cash

LAVAL, QC, June 16, 2011 /CNW Telbec/ - Fifty-nine percent of group health benefit plan members in Canada would rather keep their health benefit plan than receive \$10,000. When the money is doubled to \$20,000, 48% of those asked would choose their benefits over the money. This is one of the messages the health benefits industry can take away from *The sanofi-aventis Healthcare Survey*. Highly regarded as a credible reference tool for employers and insurers, *The sanofi-aventis Healthcare Survey* explores what Canadian employees in a wide range of industries think of their health benefit programs and interprets the findings to help employers better manage employee health benefits.

"Understanding employers and demonstrating the value of improving the health of Canadians is fundamental to sanofi-aventis Canada," said Hugh O'Neill, President and CEO. "The information in our survey highlights how employers and insurers can improve the satisfaction of their healthcare plans. Better healthcare plans mean healthier employees, better productivity and less pressure on Canada's public healthcare system."

Wellness programs continue to decline

The survey of employers, meanwhile, indicates solid support for health promotion or wellness programs. Sixty percent say they already offer such programs, and 68% plan to invest more money in this area within the next year. But on the other side, fewer plan members report that their employers promote or provide wellness programs: this year's result of 23% is down from 29% a year ago and 31% two years ago. "This slide is very concerning. There is an undeniable need to better engage Canadians, both in their work, and in their own health. Many employers support this, but the survey suggests more effort is needed to ensure their workforce investments are relevant, effective, and visible for the employees who stand to benefit," said Chris Bonnett, a member of the survey's Advisory Board and President of H3 Consulting.

Align corporate and wellness strategies in order to measure value

Virtually all (96%) plan sponsors surveyed agreed that it would be useful to link the health status of their employees to measures of profitability in order to better demonstrate the value of health benefits, but it seems very difficult to find effective tools to do this. For example, employers could show how reduced absenteeism and disability claims lead to increased productivity.

Almost half (45%) of plan members say they take at least one medication to manage a chronic disease such as diabetes or hypertension. Yet studies show that non-adherence is a real issue. "Complications arising from unmanaged chronic diseases are a huge challenge for our public healthcare system. For example, in Québec, people with three or more chronic diseases account for 71% of all hospital admissions. We should address the question of how we will collectively manage this issue, beginning now," said Hugh O'Neill.

Governments have a role to play - healthier workplaces mean healthier Canadians!

A clear majority (86%) of plan members agree that governments should actively support employers that promote better health and fitness. When asked what level of involvement governments should have in encouraging healthy workplaces and healthy employees, 93% responded they should have a high level of involvement.

"Governments, employers, employees and unions all want the same thing - a healthier population and a sustainable health system. Each party makes an important contribution. What's needed now is a more collaborative spirit and better coordination among those who are already doing good work in this field" said Chris Bonnett.

The sanofi-aventis Healthcare Survey has been published for 14 consecutive years and has amassed a wealth of data for insurers and employers to the benefit of Canadian employers and patients. For more information about *The sanofi-aventis Healthcare Survey*, including the complete text of this year's report, please visit www.sanofi-aventis.ca.

About the Survey

The 2011 edition of *The sanofi-aventis Healthcare Survey* was conducted between January 12th and 16th, 2011 by Ipsos-Reid on behalf of Rogers Business and Professional Publishing using an online (Internet survey) methodology. A total national sample of 1,598 primary holders of group health benefit plans completed the study. Completed interviews were conducted using a random sample drawn from the 180,000+ members of the Ipsos-Reid Canadian i-Say Panel.

Overall results have a 95% certainty within +/- 2.5% of what they would have been had the entire population of Canadian plan members been polled. The data has been statistically weighted to ensure that the age, gender, and regional composition of the sample reflect the adult population according to the 2006 Census data.

In addition, Rogers Business and Professional Publishing conducted 50 online surveys with employers from across the country from January 13th to 19th, 2011. These were augmented by further in-depth telephone interviews conducted with representatives of 10 benefit plan sponsors from February 14th to March 2nd, 2011.

Members of the survey's Advisory Board are among the most highly esteemed professionals in the Canadian health benefit industry with each member representing an essential industry stakeholder, including employers, healthcare service providers, insurers and consultants.

About Sanofi

Sanofi, a global and diversified healthcare leader, discovers, develops and distributes therapeutic solutions focused on patients' needs. Sanofi has core strengths in the field of healthcare with seven growth platforms: diabetes solutions, human vaccines, innovative drugs, rare diseases, consumer healthcare, emerging markets and animal health. Sanofi is listed in Paris (EURONEXT: SAN) and in New York (NYSE: SNY).

Sanofi is represented in Canada by the pharmaceutical company sanofi-aventis Canada Inc., based in Laval, Quebec, and by the vaccines company Sanofi Pasteur Limited, based in Toronto, Ontario. Together they employ more than 2,000 people across the country. With combined R&D investments of \$159.2 million in 2010, they are leaders in Canada's biopharmaceutical sector, a critical knowledge-based industry that generates jobs, business and opportunity throughout the country

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