



Calgary



# Overview of COVID-19 Public Opinion Research

Research Results for Calgary and Alberta

May 12, 2020

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# Background

## Objective

The City of Calgary's Corporate Research Team prepared an overview of COVID-19 public opinion research conducted with Calgarians in order to better understand citizens' opinions, beliefs and concerns about the pandemic and moving forward. As relevant research specific to Calgarians is limited, the scope was broadened to include research at the provincial level.

## Data Sources

The surveys referenced in this report were publicly-released or shared directly with The City by the research firm that conducted the survey. All were online surveys conducted with members of online research panels either owned or subcontracted by the research firm. Comparability of results of a survey to those of any other survey is limited due to different research panels being used and variation in timing of the surveys. Details about each survey are provided in the References section.

## Timeframe

Given the quickly evolving nature of the pandemic and the large volume of information about it being shared via the news media and social media, some people's opinions, beliefs and concerns about this topic might be changing more quickly than they would about other topics. The surveys selected to be referenced in this report were conducted no earlier than April, with the most recent conducted May 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> in order to capture as current opinions as possible at the time of writing the report. Readers should note that some citizens' opinions, beliefs and concerns about COVID-19 might have changed since the time the survey was conducted.

# Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented emergency for the entire world. Governments and public health authorities have been working tirelessly to respond to the crisis, sometimes in the absence of data to inform decisions. While the focus has been, understandably, on data about the virus and epidemiological statistics, public opinion research that seeks to measure and understand people's opinions, beliefs and concerns about the pandemic and its impacts is also important.

The majority of publicly-released opinion research on COVID-19 in Canada reports provincial-level data rather than at the level of municipalities and surveys with Albertans overall have been more prevalent than those with Calgarians specifically. This report includes findings of surveys conducted with Albertans and highlights results for Calgarians where they are available. As the COVID-19 situation continues to change rapidly and to dominate the news, this report focuses on the most recent research available at the time of writing the report in order to ensure as up-to-date opinions and concerns as possible. The surveys referenced were conducted no earlier than mid April and one was conducted as recently as May 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Not surprisingly, Calgarians and Albertans overall tended to be concerned about the spread and impact of COVID-19, with a majority of Calgarians (66%) and, to a lesser extent, Albertans overall (58%) very concerned.<sup>1</sup> Albertans were more afraid of an immediate family contracting the virus than of themselves getting it (75% vs. 56%, respectively).<sup>3</sup>

By late April, Calgarians perceived COVID-19 to be a high threat to the world (76% and 72%, respectively), although less so to Canada (59%) and Alberta (60%) and even less so to their local community (47%), their personal financial situation (45%), their family (32%) and their personal health (28%).<sup>8</sup> Generally, most of those who didn't say it was a high threat viewed it as at least a moderate threat. The majority (78%) of Calgarians and Albertans overall (83%) did not think the outbreak was contained as of late April.

Most Calgarians said they had the right amount or more than enough information (79%) in late April, although there are some (30%) who are confused by all the information out there.<sup>8</sup> Many Calgarians also said they're knowledgeable about various aspects of the COVID-19 situation (ranging from 68% to 95%). A majority cited the local public health authority and the Province (62% and 61%, respectively) as the most trustworthy and accurate sources of information at the time. The Federal government trailed behind (44%), as did The City (14%). Interestingly, despite opinion about The City's trustworthiness and accuracy in providing COVID-19 information, the majority (73%) of Calgarians said they were satisfied with the information from The City.

Most Calgarians said they had been following various recommended protocols for limiting the spread of COVID-19: social distancing/avoiding physical contact with others (94%), more frequent handwashing and use of disinfectants (92%) and avoiding gatherings of more than five people (92%).<sup>8</sup> Results were similar for Albertans overall.<sup>3</sup>

As one would expect, the COVID-19 situation was negatively impacting mental health for Calgarians and Albertans overall by mid to late April. One-half (50%) of Calgarians agreed that due to the COVID-19 situation, they'd been feeling depressed and a majority (66%) agreed that'd been feeling isolated.<sup>8</sup> Negative emotions/feelings were reported by Albertans: anxious (45%), worried (44%) depressed (18%) and



pessimistic (15%). In total, a large majority (83%) reported at least one negative emotion/feeling.<sup>5</sup> Despite this, some were feeling grateful (26%) and optimistic (18%).

Concern about the provincial economy was high (78% of Calgarians very concerned)<sup>1</sup> and the majority of Calgarians saw COVID-19 as a moderate (33%) if not high (45%) threat to their personal financial situation.<sup>8</sup> Some (36%) reported having a hard time keeping up with their bills because of the pandemic. This is not surprising given how many Calgarians reported either a reduction in their work hours (26%) or having been laid off (23%) as a result of COVID-19, as well as the pre-pandemic economic situation in Alberta in recent years. A relatively substantial proportion of Calgarians (27%) said they'd applied for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit or some other type of financial support by late April.

Calgarians were split on whether The City had done a good job of managing the outbreak (51% good vs. 36% fair and 13% poor) and whether The City should do more (50% vs. 39% saying The City has done the right amount, 3% should do less and 7% unsure).<sup>8</sup> Overall, Albertans tended to approve of the Province's performance regarding managing the spread and impacts of COVID-19 (72%)<sup>1</sup> as well as be satisfied with the Province's measures for fighting the pandemic (69%).<sup>3</sup>

Calgarians tended to support the various measures put in place, such as a ban on non-essential travel (88%) and forcing all non-essential businesses to close (72%), although some measures received slightly less support: closing all public spaces such as parks, trails and playgrounds (65%), making all people wear a mask in public (61%), and closing dog parks (56%).<sup>8</sup> Only one-third (33%) of Calgarians said they supported relaxing physical distancing rules for healthy people under 70.

Going forward during this pandemic, Calgarians would ideally like governments to either prioritize the protection of public health over the economy and jobs (55%) or find a way to balance the two priorities (31%) rather than prioritize the economy over public health (14%).<sup>1</sup> As recently as the first few days of May, Albertans wanted the Province to proceed cautiously, with a slight minority (44%) preferring the Province maintains the pace and one-half (50%) wanting to slow the pace.<sup>3</sup>

## Concern and Opinions about COVID-19

**Calgarians and Albertans overall are very concerned about the spread and impact of COVID-19 and worried about immediate family members and themselves contracting the virus despite a minority knowing someone outside of their household who's been diagnosed as having it.**

An online survey conducted by ThinkHQ in late April revealed that two-thirds (66%) of Calgarians are *very* concerned about the spread and impact of COVID-19 (compared to 61% of Edmonton residents and 58% of Albertans overall).<sup>1</sup>

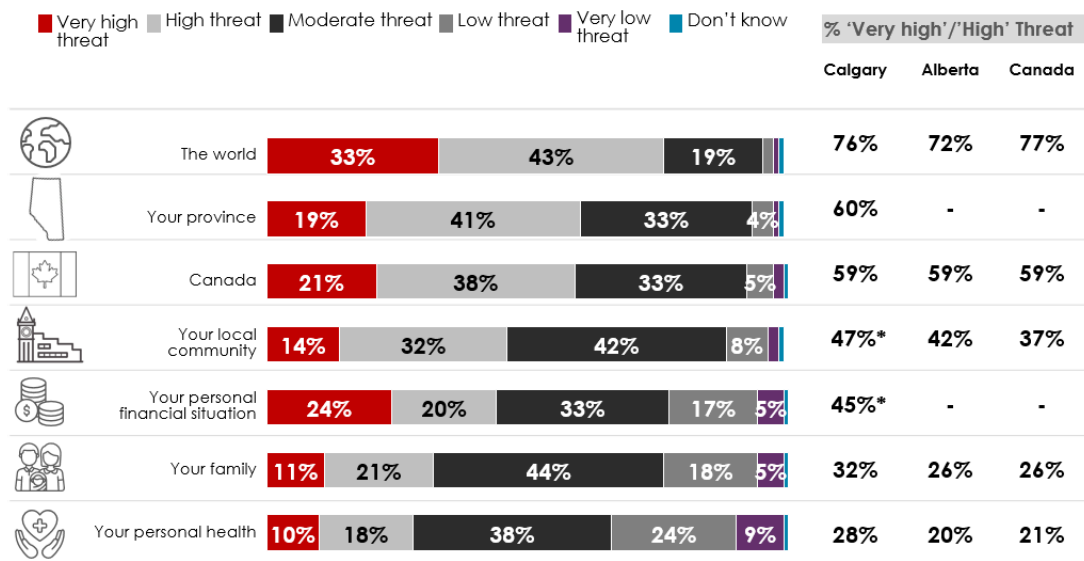
A Leger online survey conducted with Canadians in early May reported just over one-half (55%) of Albertans (results not available by municipality) said they were afraid (*very* or *somewhat*) of contracting the virus (17% *very* afraid). Over one-in-ten (16%) said they were *not at all* afraid.<sup>3</sup> More Albertans said they were afraid of an immediate family member contracting the virus (75%, with 16% *very* afraid), with only 4% reporting they were *not at all* afraid. One-in-ten Albertans reported having a friend or family member outside of the household (9%) and/or an acquaintance (9%) diagnosed with COVID-19.

**In late April, the majority of Calgarians see COVID-19 as being a high threat to the world, Canada and Alberta while fewer perceived a high threat to their local community, personal situation, family and personal health.**

An Ipsos online survey conducted in late April indicates Calgarians perceived the virus to be a high threat (*very high* or *high*) to the world (76%).<sup>8</sup> Fewer, although a substantial proportion, perceived a high threat to Canada (59%) and Alberta (60%). Somewhat fewer saw a high threat to their local community (47%), their personal financial situation (45%), their family (32%) and their personal health (32%). Albertans overall also perceived a high threat to the world (72%) and Canada (59%); however, slightly fewer saw this level of threat to their local community (42%), their family (26%) and their personal health (20%).

Many Calgarians who didn't perceive COVID-19 as a high threat still viewed it as a *moderate* threat: 38% said it's a *moderate* threat to their personal health, 44% to their family, 42% to their local community, 33% to Canada, 33% to Alberta, and 19% to the world. The highest proportions rating the virus as a low threat (*low* or *very low*) were for personal health (33%) and family (23%).

**Figure 1: Calgarians' Perceived Threat of COVID-19**

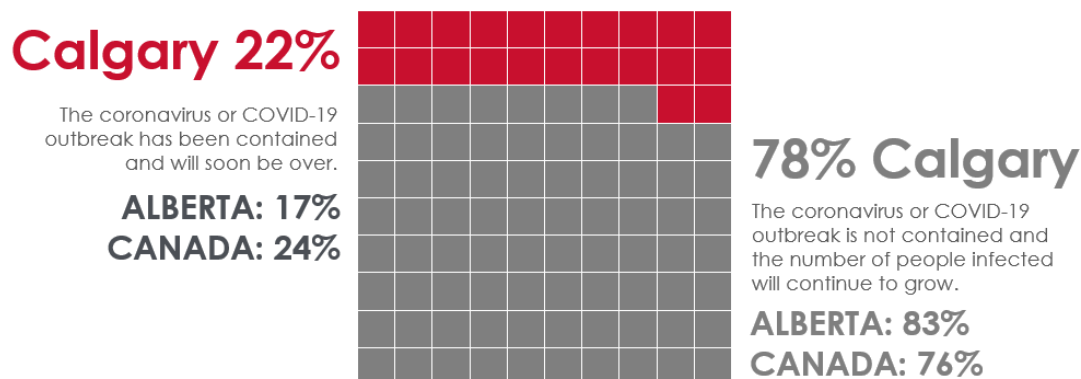


Source: Ipsos survey report: City of Calgary Municipal COVID-19 Study – May 4, 2020<sup>8</sup>

**A minority of Calgarians believed the COVID-19 situation had been contained/was behind us in late April while the majority thought transmission would continue to grow.**

In late April, Ipsos reported that one-in-five Calgarians (22%) thought the outbreak has been contained and would soon be over while 78% believed it was not yet contained and the number of people infected would continue to grow (results for Albertans overall are 17% and 83%, respectively).<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 2: Opinion about Current State of Containment of COVID-19 Outbreak**



Source: Ipsos survey report: City of Calgary Municipal COVID-19 Study – May 4, 2020<sup>8</sup>

Leger's survey at the beginning of May revealed that one-quarter (26%) of Albertans thought the worst of the crisis was behind us, while 20% thought we were in the worst period of it at the time and 35% said the worst was yet to come.<sup>3</sup> One-in-ten (19%) responded *don't know* to the question, reflecting uncertainty among some Albertans.

**Figure 3: Opinion about the Current State of the COVID-19 Crisis**

	TOTAL CANADA	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
Weighted n =	1,526	104	358	586	100	171	207
Unweighted n =	1,526	100	419	604	126	126	151
The worst of the crisis is behind us	22%	27%	13%	22%	29%	26%	28%
We are in the worst period of the crisis now	29%	22%	36%	32%	18%	20%	25%
The worst of the crisis is yet to come	31%	30%	39%	27%	33%	35%	26%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	18%	20%	12%	18%	20%	19%	21%

Source: Leger survey report: COVID-19 Tracking Survey Results – May 4, 2020<sup>3</sup>

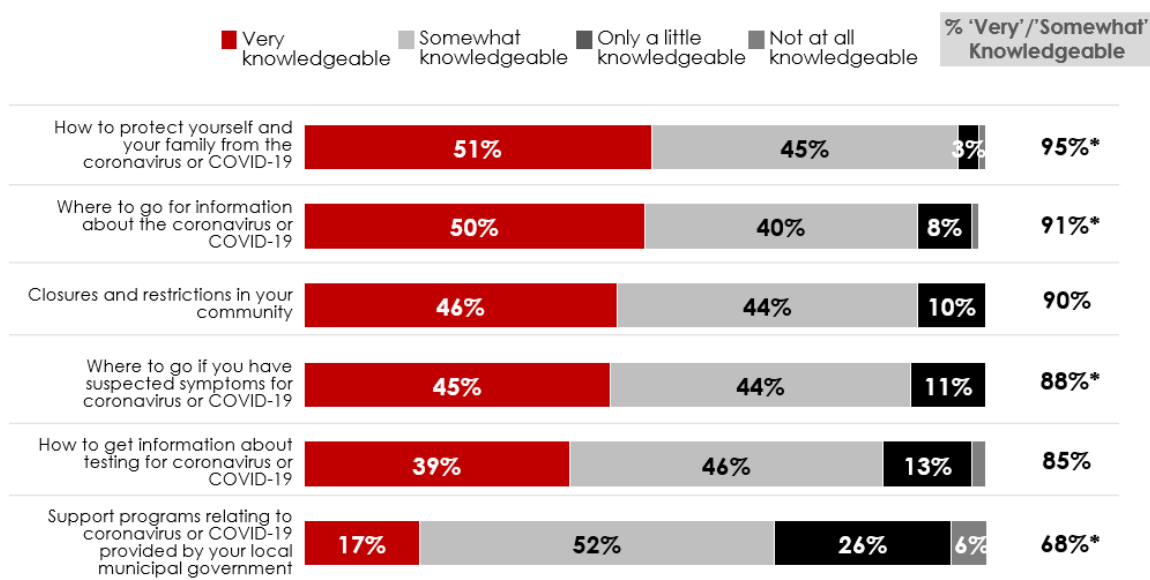
## Information and Knowledge about COVID-19

### In late April, Calgarians believed themselves to be knowledgeable about the COVID-19 situation and to know where to find information if needed.

According to an Ipsos survey in late April, most Calgarians self-reported being knowledgeable about the COVID-19 situation and/or where to find information. Nearly all (95%) said they were knowledgeable (*very* or *somewhat*) about how to protect themselves and their family from the virus (51% *very*). Most (91%) reported being knowledgeable about where to go for information about the virus (50% *very*) and about closures and restrictions in their community (90%, with 46% *very*). Calgarians also said they knew where to go if they have suspected symptoms of the virus (88% knowledgeable, with 45% *very*) and how to get information about testing (85%, with 39% *very*). The item about which relatively fewer Calgarians said they're knowledgeable was support programs relating to COVID-19 that are provided by The City (68%, with 17% *very*).



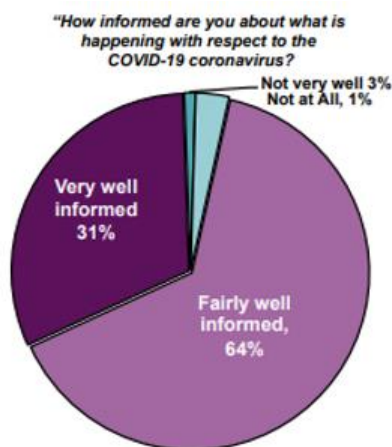
**Figure 4: Calgarians' Self-reported Knowledge about COVID-19**



Source: Ipsos survey report: City of Calgary Municipal COVID-19 Study – May 4, 2020<sup>8</sup>

According to a mid April survey conducted by Return on Insight on behalf of Genome Alberta, most Albertans considered themselves to be either *very well* or *fairly well* informed (31% and 64%, respectively) at the time.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 5: Albertans' Self-reported Knowledge about COVID-19**



Source: Genome Alberta media release: COVID-19 Boosts Trust in Scientific Experts and Prompts an Increase in Support for Genomics Research Funding – April 29, 2020<sup>6</sup>

## **As recently as late April, Calgarians thought there was enough or more than enough information available about the COVID-19 situation.**

When it comes to quantity of information available to Calgarians (not specific to a source), just under one-half (44%) think they have *more than enough*, while 35% have *just the right amount* and 20% think it's *not enough*.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps because of the abundance of information available, three-in-ten Calgarians (30%) agreed (*strongly* or *somewhat*) that they're confused by all the information out there about the virus (3% *strongly*).

A survey conducted in mid April by Return on Insight on behalf of Genome Alberta indicated three-quarters (76%) of Albertans (results not available by municipality) were following news/developments about COVID-19 *daily* while around one-in-ten (12%) were following *hourly or more often* and just as many (13%) *weekly or less often*.

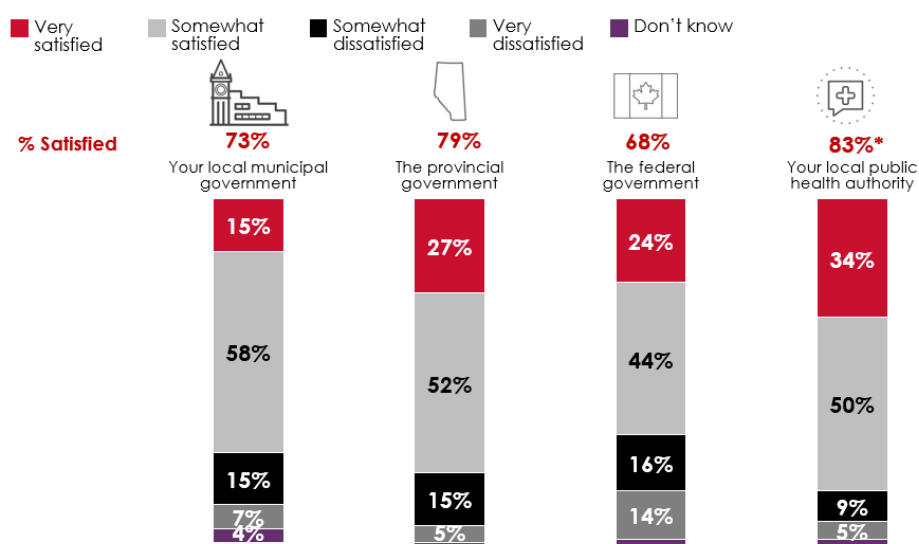
## **Calgarians tended to trust the local public health authority and the Province for accurate COVID-19 information in late April while a minority considered The City to be one of the most trustworthy sources of this information.**

The sources of COVID-19 information considered to be the most *trustworthy* and *accurate* by the highest proportion of Calgarians in later April were the local public health authority (62%) and the Province (61%).<sup>8</sup> These were followed by the Federal government (44%), the news media such as TV, radio and newspapers (27%), The City (14%), the internet in general (14%), and social media such as Facebook and Twitter (6%).

## **In late April, Calgarians overall were satisfied with the information about COVID-19, although satisfaction varied depending on the source.**

Satisfaction was highest for information provided by the local public health authority, with 83% of Calgarians saying they were satisfied (34% *very*).<sup>8</sup> Nearly as many (79%) were satisfied with the Province's information (27% *very*), slightly fewer with information from The City (73%, 15% *very*), and fewer still with the Federal government's information (68%, 24% *very*). Calgarians said they want governments to be forthcoming with data about COVID-19, with 97% in support of ensuring governments release all available data associated with the impacts of COVID-19 (66% *strongly*).

**Figure 6: Calgarians' Satisfaction with Information from Government**



Source: Ipsos survey report: City of Calgary Municipal COVID-19 Study – May 4, 2020<sup>8</sup>

## Self-reported Precautionary/Preventative Measures

**As of late April, most Calgarians reported following proper protocols to limit the spread of COVID-19, particularly social/physical distancing, washing hands and avoiding gatherings.**

Most Calgarians said in late April that, as a result of the COVID-19 situation, they'd avoided physical contact with others (94%), washed their hands or used disinfectant more frequently (92%) and avoided gatherings of more than five people (92%).<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, despite nearly all Calgarians saying they've avoided physical contact with others, only 58% said they were confident that most people in their community were taking physical distancing measures seriously.

Two-in-five Calgarians (39%) worked from home more often and 35% wore a face mask in public.<sup>8</sup> Just over one-half (56%) said they'd been helping friends, family members or neighbours. Approximately three-quarters (78%) agreed (strongly or somewhat) they were able to easily buy groceries and food for them/their household (27% *strongly*).

In Leger's survey at the beginning of May, virtually all respondents in Alberta (99%) said that in the previous week, they'd practiced social distancing and nearly all (96%) had kept a safe distance of two metres from other people.<sup>3</sup> Most said they used their elbow when coughing or sneezing (93%) and washed their hands more frequently than usual (91%). A majority (83%) also stopped going out except to pick up necessities. One-half (48%) had worn a protective mask in public areas in the previous week and one-quarter (23%) visited friends or family (the survey did not indicate whether or not these visits involved social distancing).

Note: It's possible that the actual percentages who have practiced preventative measures is somewhat lower than what is stated, as some respondents wouldn't want to admit to not doing the 'right thing.'

## Vaccination Intentions

**Reported likelihood of getting the vaccine (assuming one is developed) was high among Calgarians at the beginning of May, although it's difficult to predict actual vaccination rates based on these data.**

In Leger's early May survey, a slight majority (60%) of Albertans said that if a vaccine is developed, it should be mandatory for all.<sup>3</sup> While the vast majority (84%) of Calgarians who completed the ThinkHQ survey said they'd be likely (*very* or *somewhat*) to get the vaccine (69% *very*), ThinkHQ calculated an "adjusted likely score" (actual calculation not reported by ThinkHQ) to account for the fact that usually some people who report they're likely to do something don't actually follow through<sup>2</sup> (although while it's common for likelihood to be overstated in surveys, as the COVID-19 situation is unprecedented, the actual likelihood of getting the vaccine might be higher than the adjusted likely scores suggest). The adjusted likely score for Calgarians was 38%. For comparative purposes, 88% of Edmontonians reported they'd be likely to get the vaccine (73% *very*), with an adjusted likely score of 40%. Among Albertans overall, 80% reported being likely to get the vaccine (adjusted likely score of 36%).

**Figure 7: Likelihood of Getting Vaccinated Against COVID-19**

	TOTAL (n=1,231)	CGY (n=429)	EDM (n=389)
Likely	80%	84%	88%
<i>Very likely</i>	64%	69%	73%
<i>Somewhat likely</i>	16%	15%	15%
Not likely	14%	11%	9%
<i>Not very likely</i>	6%	6%	5%
<i>Not at all likely</i>	8%	5%	4%
Unsure	5%	5%	2%
ADJUSTED LIKELY SCORE*	36%	38%	40%

Source: ThinkHQ Media Release: Albertans' Perspectives on Living Through the COVID Crisis – May 4, 2020<sup>2</sup>

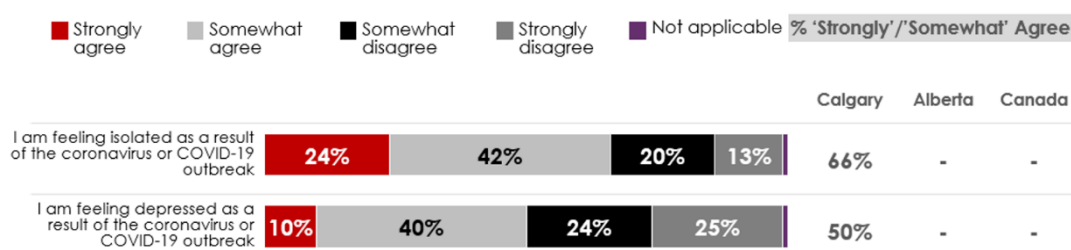
Perhaps not surprisingly, anticipated likelihood to get vaccinated against COVID-19 was higher among Albertans who think governments should favour public health over the economy at this time: 92% likely (43% adjusted) vs. 60% (26% adjusted) of those who think the economy should be favoured over public health.

## Self-reported Health Impacts of COVID-19

**As of mid April, Albertans, including Calgarians, were experiencing negative mental and physical health impacts in recent weeks.**

In Ipsos' late April survey, one-half (50%) of Calgarians agreed (*strongly* or *somewhat*) they'd been feeling depressed as a result of the COVID-19 situation (10% *strongly*) and two-thirds (66%) agreed they'd been feeling isolated (24% *strongly*).<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 8: Calgarians' Feelings of Depression and Isolation Resulting from COVID-19 Outbreak**



Source: Ipsos survey report: City of Calgary Municipal COVID-19 Study – May 4, 2020<sup>8</sup>

In a survey conducted by Angus Reid Institute in mid April, respondents were presented a list of words and asked to choose the ones (up to three answers were allowed) that best described their feelings in the two weeks prior to the survey.<sup>5</sup> *Anxious* and *worried* were selected by the most Albertans (results not available by municipality), at 45% and 44%, respectively. Other negative emotions/feelings selected were *bored* (29%), *depressed* (18%), *pessimistic* (15%) and *numb* (12%). Overall, 83% of Albertans selected at least one negative emotion/feeling. Interestingly, one-half (50%) chose one or more positive emotions/feelings (instead of or in addition to a negative one). Specifically, 26% reported being *grateful*, 18% *optimistic*, 14% *normal*, and 10% *untroubled*.

Respondents to the Angus Reid Institute survey were also asked to rate their current state on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being *my life is at its worst* and 10 being *my life is at its best*.<sup>5</sup> Only around one-in-ten Albertans (12%) gave a rating of 8, 9 or 10. The majority (71%) gave a rating of 4, 5, 6 or 7 while 17% gave a rating of 3 or lower. When asked to compare their current health to what it was six weeks prior to the survey, nearly one-half (47%) reported *no change* in their physical well-being while one-third (33%) said *a little worse* and 9% felt it had become *a lot worse*. Only 1% reported their physical well-being was *a lot better* and 10% said it was *a little better*, possibly suggesting some have recently paid more attention to their physical health in order to reduce their likelihood of contracting COVID-19.

Of concern, reported changes in mental health were somewhat more pronounced.<sup>5</sup> While two-in-five Albertans (39%) reported *no change* in their mental health compared to six weeks prior, just as many (43%) said it had become *a little worse* and 11% reported it was *a lot worse*. One's mental health had become *a little better* for 5% and *a lot better* for 2% of Albertans. To compare, while 42% reported their physical well-being had become worse, mental health was reported to be worse by 54% of Albertans.



## Self-reported Financial Impacts of COVID-19

**Not surprisingly given the pre-existing economic conditions in Alberta, many Calgarians and Albertans in general have been concerned about the economy and unemployment and the threat of COVID-19 to their personal financial situation.**

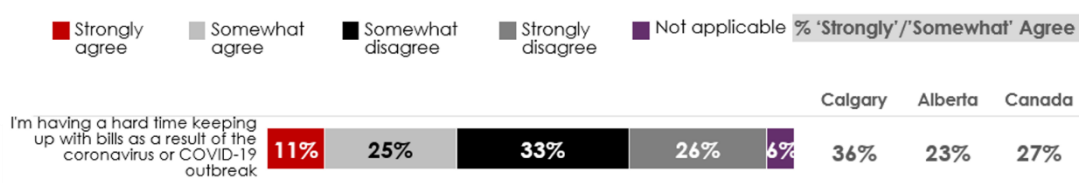
As of late April, around three-quarters of Calgarians were very concerned about the provincial economy (78%) and/or unemployment (72%) in Alberta (in Edmonton, 75% and 68% were very concerned, respectively).<sup>1</sup>

As noted earlier in this report, just under one-half (45%) of Calgarians saw COVID-19 as a high threat (*very high or high*) to their personal financial situation, one-third (33%) saw it as a *moderate* threat and 22% thought it was a low threat (*low or very low*).<sup>8</sup>

**Albertans, including Calgarians, have experienced negative impacts to their job/income and/or their financial situation as a result of COVID-19, with a relatively high proportion reporting being laid off.**

In the Ipsos survey, one-quarter (26%) of Calgarians reported that, as a result of the COVID-19 situation, they've been working reduced hours and approximately as many (23%) said they've been laid off. Approximately one-third (36%) of Calgarians agreed they're having a hard time keeping up with bills as a result of the COVID-19 situation (11% *strongly*).

**Figure 9: Calgarians' Capacity to Keep Up with Bills as a Result of COVID-19**



Source: Ipsos survey report: City of Calgary Municipal COVID-19 Study – May 4, 2020<sup>8</sup>

The early May Leger survey revealed that at the very least, many Albertans (60%) had experienced a negative impact on their retirement savings or other investments as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.<sup>3</sup> One-half (50%) experienced a decrease in their income, 41% had less financial capacity to assist other family members, 29% had less capacity to pay their bills on time and 23% reported a negative impact on their ability to pay their mortgage or rent. This is not surprising given that 8% of Albertans in this study reported permanent job and pay loss since the beginning of the crisis, 16% had temporarily lost their job/pay, and 17% lost some pay/income from work. Around one-quarter (23%) hadn't experienced a negative impact on their job at the time of the survey. Just over one-third (37%) said this was not applicable to them as they're retired, a homemaker or otherwise not in the workforce.

Among Albertans who completed the Angus Reid Institute survey, 42% reported *no change* in their household financial situation compared to six weeks prior to the survey, 29% said it was *a little worse* and 22% said it was *a lot worse* (total of 51% worse).<sup>5</sup> Only 7% reported that their situation was *better* (1% *a lot* and 6% *a little*).

### **A minority but not insignificant proportion of Calgarians have applied for financial support.**

Among Calgarians, 27% said they've applied for financial support (CERB or some other support).<sup>8</sup> According to the Leger survey, 14% of Albertans have applied for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB): 11% applied and received the payment and 3% applied but hadn't received payment yet.<sup>3</sup> Just over one-third (37%) didn't apply for CERB and one-half (48%) reported not being eligible for it.

## **Angus Reid Institute's COVID-19 Impact Index**

### **A minority of Albertans are considered to be managing well while the majority have experienced worsened mental health, a worsened financial situation, or both.**

Based on their survey data, the Angus Reid Institute calculated a COVID-19 Impact Index.<sup>5</sup> The categories are:

*Hardest Hit* (both their mental health and household financial situation have worsened during the pandemic)

*Struggling Mentally* (their mental health has worsened but their household financial situation hasn't)

*Struggling Financially* (their household financial situation has worsened but their mental health hasn't)

*Managing Well* (neither their mental health nor their financial situation have worsened)

The Angus Reid Institute determined that 32% of Albertans were Hardest Hit, 22% were Struggling Mentally, 19% were Struggling Financially, and 26% were Managing Well. Comparable data for Calgary specifically is not available.

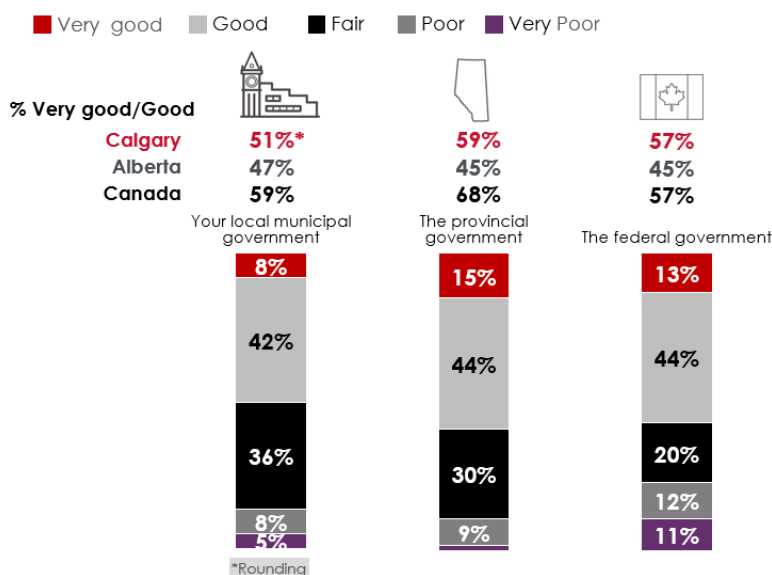
## Opinions about Government Performance Regarding COVID-19

**In late April, Calgarians were split on The City's performance in managing the outbreak and whether The City had done enough to limit the spread of the virus.**

In late April, one-half (51%) of Calgarians said The City had done a good job (*very good* or *good*) of managing the outbreak (8% *very*), while 36% said they did a *fair* job. One-half (50%) of Calgarians reported The City should be doing more to limit the spread (compared to 39% saying The City had done the right amount, 3% thinking it should do less and 7% unsure).<sup>8</sup> Although there isn't directly comparable data from prior to the pandemic, an Ipsos survey conducted in late March indicated 83% of Calgarians approved of The City's performance in responding to the crisis<sup>7</sup>, which suggests a possible decline in approval of The City's performance regarding COVID-19.<sup>8</sup>

A slight majority of Calgarians thought the Province (59%) and the Federal government (57%) had done a good job of managing the outbreak, followed by 30% fair and 20% fair, respectively; however, many thought each should be doing more to limit the spread of COVID-19 (53% Province and 48% Federal).<sup>8</sup> Two-in-five said the Province and the Federal government had done the right amount (40% and 41%, respectively).

**Figure 10: Calgarians' Assessment of Government Performance in Managing the Outbreak**



Source: Ipsos survey report: City of Calgary Municipal COVID-19 Study – May 4, 2020<sup>8</sup>

**Albertans generally approved of how the Province had managed the spread and impacts of COVID-19 by late April and a majority believed Jason Kenney accurately recognized the risk of the outbreak.**

ThinkHQ's survey shows the majority (72%) of Albertans approved of the Province's performance in managing the spread and impacts of COVID-19 in late April.<sup>1</sup> This finding is supported by the Angus Reid Institute survey in mid April that found 70% of Albertans thought the Province did a good job of handling the

outbreak<sup>4</sup> and another survey showing 69% being satisfied with the Province's measures for fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>3</sup> Around two-in-five (43%) approved of the Province's performance in ensuring the quality of the health care system in Alberta, with disapproval being the result of the dispute with Alberta doctors as well as healthcare cuts under the UCP government. Just under one-half (46%) approved of the Province's performance overall.<sup>1</sup> Among Albertans, 63% said the Province had done a good job (*very or fairly*) of handling the crisis (24% *very*).<sup>6</sup>

Two-thirds of Albertans said they were satisfied with the Federal government's measures for fighting COVID-19 (66%) while around as many (70%) were satisfied with their Municipal government's measures.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Angus Reid Institute survey, three-quarters (75%) of Albertans thought Alberta's public health officials recognized the risk of the outbreak accurately.<sup>4</sup> Fewer, but still a majority, said Jason Kenney did so (63%) while one-third (33%) thought the same of Justin Trudeau.

## Moving Forward: Priorities and Citizens' Comfort Levels

**While far more Calgarians said in late April that governments should prioritize public health over the economy rather than vice-versa, many preferred governments find a way to balance the two priorities.**

In late April, just over one-half (55%) of Calgarians thought governments should be prioritizing the protection of public health over the economy and jobs, 14% thought they should prioritize protecting the economy and jobs over public health, and 31% said there should be a balance (among Edmontonians, it was 62%, 12% and 26%, respectively).<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 11: Prioritizing Public Health vs. Economy/Jobs**

	TOTAL (n=1,231)	CGY (n=429)	EDM (n=389)
Public health	52%	55%	62%
Economy & jobs	17%	14%	12%
Both	31%	31%	26%

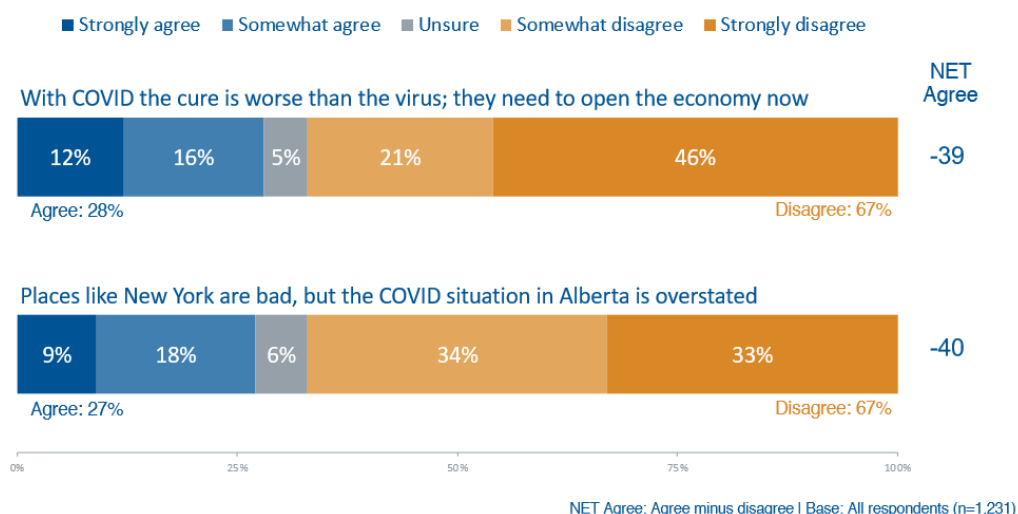
Source: ThinkHQ Media Release: Albertans Deeply Concerned about Economic Impacts but Prioritize Health Response to COVID – April 30, 2020<sup>1</sup>

**Albertans also said governments should find a balance between prioritizing public health and the economy but acknowledged that the COVID-19 situation in Alberta wasn't overstated.**

The Angus Reid Institute survey found that two-in-five Albertans (39%) said that if they were a government decision-maker, they would give more weight to “public safety and health depends on continuing restrictions” than to “restricting business operations is harming the economy” while 15% would give more weight to the latter.<sup>4</sup> Nearly one-half (46%) would weigh these perspectives equally.

Among Albertans, in late April, 28% agreed (12% *strongly*) with the statement “With COVID, the cure is worse than the virus; they need to open the economy now” while 67% disagreed (46% *strongly*).<sup>1</sup> The majority also disagreed (67%, 33% *strongly*) with the statement “Places like New York are bad but the COVID situation in Alberta is overstated.”

**Figure 12: Albertans' Attitudes about the Pandemic Situation in Alberta**



Source: ThinkHQ Media Release: Albertans Deeply Concerned about Economic Impacts but Prioritize Health Response to COVID – April 30, 2020<sup>1</sup>

**In early May, the majority of Albertans erred on the side of caution, saying we should slow down or maintain the pace of lifting restrictions rather than accelerate the pace.**

The Leger survey at the beginning of May found that a small minority (7%) of Albertans thought the Province should accelerate the pace at which it was relaxing social distancing/isolation measures.<sup>3</sup> Many (44%) thought they should maintain the pace and one-half (50%) said they should slow the pace. When it comes to the Federal government, 11% of Albertans said it should speed up the pace, 52% that it should maintain the pace, and 38% that it should slow down.

The mid April Angus Reid Institute survey indicated one-in-five Albertans (22%) thought it was time to start lifting some of the public restrictions imposed in the province while 69% thought it was too soon.<sup>4</sup> When asked when they thought restrictions for closed businesses, institutions and other places should be lifted,



one-quarter (23%) said this should start in late April, 46% thought May or June is appropriate, 22% said between July and October, 2% after October and 7% think we should wait until a vaccine is available.

In Leger's early May survey, Albertans were asked when they'd be comfortable with the government (level of government not specified) lifting restrictions on workplace and leisure activities and allowing Canadians to return to work.<sup>3</sup> One-in-ten (8%) said it was time (provided we protect/isolate the elderly and other vulnerable people) while one-in-five (20%) said to wait until the pressure on the healthcare system has reduced and it's able to manage a moderate flow of new cases over time. Three-in-ten (31%) thought it should be when there are only sporadic cases being discovered and there are no pressures on the healthcare system and 27% said after there have been no new cases for at least two weeks. Just over one-in-ten (13%) said the government should wait until there's a vaccine available before lifting restrictions.

**Figure 13: Opinions about When the Government Should Lift Restrictions**

	TOTAL CANADA	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
Weighted n =	1,526	104	358	586	100	171	207
Unweighted n =	1,526	100	419	604	126	126	151
Not until there is a COVID-19 vaccine	16%	21%	15%	17%	10%	13%	18%
Not until there have been no new cases for at least two weeks	27%	24%	22%	31%	30%	27%	26%
When there are only sporadic cases being discovered and there are no pressures on the healthcare system	28%	23%	21%	28%	40%	31%	32%
When the pressure on healthcare system has reduced and it is able to manage a moderate flow of new cases over time	19%	19%	25%	18%	9%	20%	17%
Now. Protect/isolate the elderly and other vulnerable people, but the rest of the population should get back to work	10%	12%	18%	7%	11%	8%	8%

Source: Leger survey report: COVID-19 Tracking Survey Results – May 4, 2020<sup>3</sup>

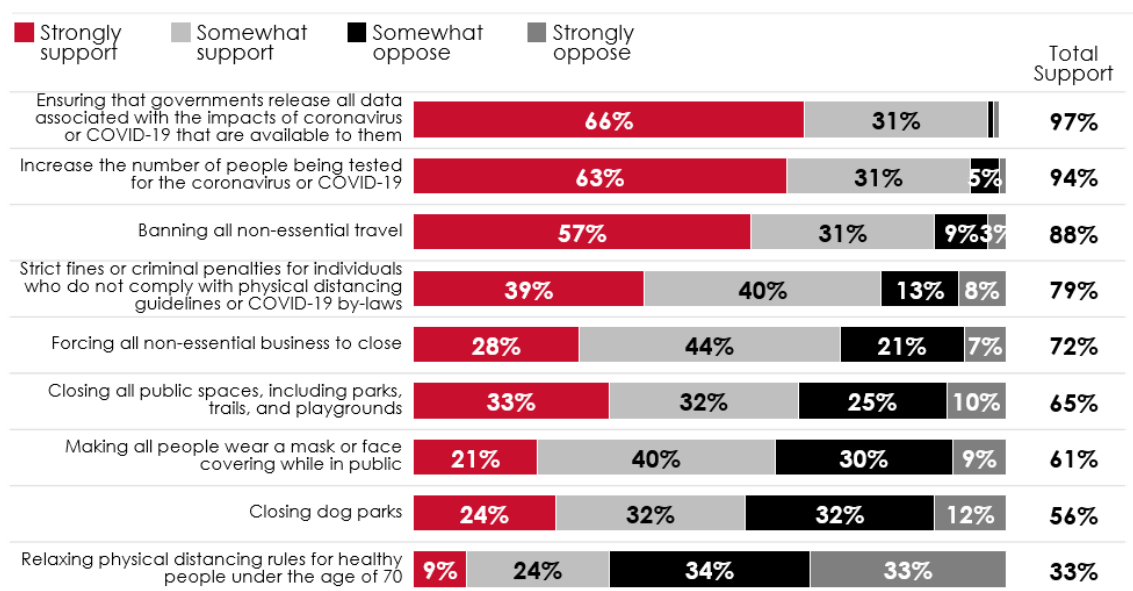
**As of late April, Calgarians generally supported the various measures put in place to limit the spread of the virus although somewhat less so when it came to closing public spaces.**

In late April, nearly all Calgarians (94%) supported increasing the number of people being tested for the virus (63% *strongly*) and most (88%) supported banning all non-essential travel (57% *strongly*).<sup>8</sup> Around three-quarters (72%) said they supported forcing all non-essential businesses to close (28% *strongly*) and fewer supported making all people wear a mask or face covering while in public (61%, 21% *strongly*). Of note, in Leger's early May survey, 8% of Albertans thought non-surgical masks totally protects one from getting the virus, 70% said they partially protect against the virus, and 22% thought they're not at all effective.<sup>3</sup>

A majority (65%) of Calgarians supported closing all public spaces including parks, trails and playgrounds (33% *strongly*), although fewer equally support closing dog parks (56%, 24% *strongly*).<sup>8</sup> Four-in-five (79%) said they supported strict fines or criminal penalties for individuals who don't comply with physical distancing guidelines or COVID-19 bylaws (39% *strongly*). Support for relaxing physical distancing rules for

healthy people under the age of 70 was reported by one-third (33%) of Calgarians (9% *strongly*), with the majority (67%) being opposed to it (33% *strongly*).

**Figure 14: Support for Various Measures Aimed at Reducing Spread of COVID-19**



Base: All respondents, Calgary (n=300)

Source: Ipsos survey report: City of Calgary Municipal COVID-19 Study – May 4, 2020<sup>8</sup>

**Many Calgarians said that prior to a vaccine being available, they'll be comfortable doing all the things they did prior to the pandemic; however, just as many would be comfortable doing only most or some.**

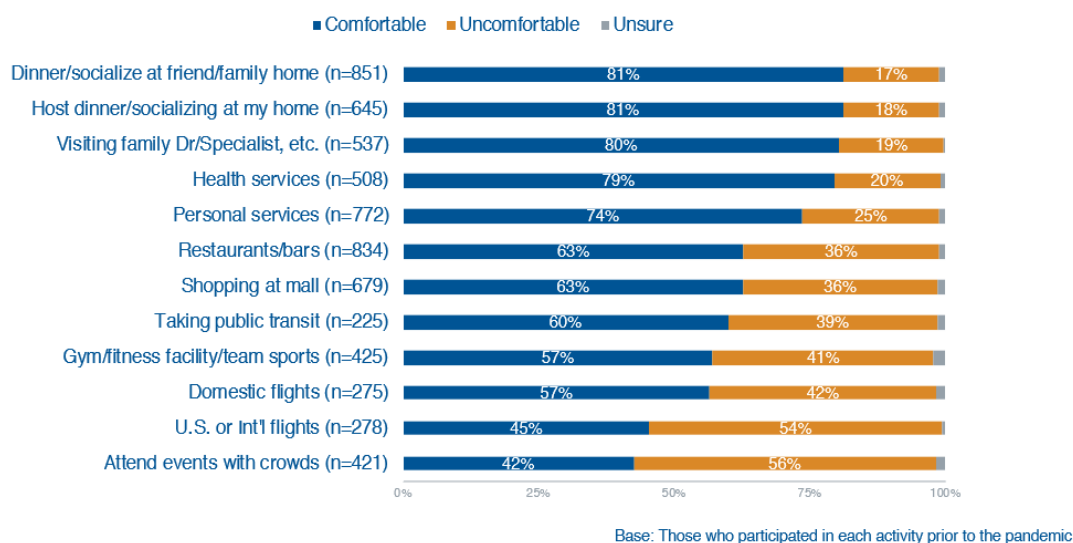
According to ThinkHQ's survey in mid April, before a vaccine is available, two-in-five Calgarians (42%) would be comfortable doing everything they did prior to the pandemic.<sup>2</sup> One-in-five (19%) would be comfortable doing most of the things they did before and just as many (20%) would be comfortable doing some things while 17% would not be comfortable doing any of the things they did before. The results among Edmontonians are similar: 40% everything, 24% most, 21% some, and 13% none.

**Albertans' anticipated comfort levels with various activities pre-vaccine are lower for activities that involve many people and being in close proximity to them.**

With respect to anticipated comfort participating in activities before a vaccine is available, in late April the percentage of Albertans who said they would be comfortable (*very* or *somewhat*) declined with activities that would involve more strangers and/or closer proximity to others (note that the results for each activity are among only those who participated in that activity pre-pandemic).<sup>2</sup> For example, 81% of people who dined/socialized at a friend or family's home pre-pandemic would be comfortable doing this before a vaccine

is available. The same is true for hosting dinner/socializing at one's home (81%). The majority of Albertans said they'd be comfortable going to a doctor/specialist (80%), other health services such as physiotherapy or massage (79%), and personal services such as nail salons and hair salons (74%). Fewer would be comfortable doing activities that potentially involve close proximity to multiple people, such as going to a restaurant/bar or a shopping mall (63% each). The activities with which the fewest Albertans would be comfortable are taking US or international flights (45%) and attending events with crowds (42%).

**Figure 15: Anticipated Comfort with Activities Prior to a COVID-19 Vaccine being Available**



Source: ThinkHQ Media Release: Albertans' Perspectives on Living Through the COVID Crisis – May 4, 2020<sup>2</sup>

The survey conducted by Leger in early May also asked about comfort with activities once governments lift protective measures put in place to fight COVID-19. Of the activities listed, there were only two that more than one-half of Albertans would be comfortable doing: allowing in-home renovations (59%) and shopping at a mall (54%). Notably, only 18% said they'd be comfortable going to schools or daycare centres.

**Post-pandemic, many Albertans think they'll be comfortable taking a vacation by car (rather than flying) and vacationing within Canada, with the large majority saying they won't feel comfortable travelling within the US until 2021 or a vaccine is available.**

In terms of vacationing, seven-in-ten (69%) Albertans said in early May that once the pandemic has ended, they'd be comfortable taking a vacation by driving rather than flying and nearly as many (62%) would be comfortable taking a vacation in Canada.<sup>3</sup> Far fewer would be comfortable staying at a hotel or resort (36%), taking a vacation that requires flying (28%), and taking a vacation abroad (19%). Around one-in-ten said they'd be comfortable renting or buying a timeshare (12%) or going on a cruise (7%). When asked specifically about when they'll feel comfortable travelling in the US (no transportation mode specified), 3% of

Albertans said in May or June, 3% in July or August, 8% in September or October, 4% in November or December, 33% in 2021, and 50% won't be comfortable doing this until a vaccine is available.

Note that these results didn't control for those who would have been comfortable doing these things pre-pandemic; therefore, comfort might be slightly understated for some of the travel activities. For example, some people are never comfortable with flying, regardless of whether or not there's a pandemic; therefore, their anticipated future discomfort doing this isn't necessarily fully attributable to the pandemic.

# References

<sup>1</sup>ThinkHQ media release: Albertans Deeply Concerned about Economic Impacts but Prioritize Health Response to COVID, April 30, 2020 (available via: <https://thinkhq.ca/albertans-deeply-concerned-about-economic-impacts-but-prioritize-health-response-to-covid-health-care-experts-lauded-for-covid-response/>)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with online research panelists (panels by ThinkHQ and MARU), aged 18 years or older
- Conducted April 22 – 26, 2020
- Sample size = 1,231 Albertans (including 471 Calgarians)
- Data weighted to reflect gender, age and region of Alberta

<sup>2</sup>ThinkHQ media release: Albertans' Perspectives on Living Through the COVID Crisis, May 4, 2020 (available via: <https://thinkhq.ca/albertans-perspectives-on-living-through-the-covid-crisis/>)

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- Sample size = 1,231 Albertans (including 471 Calgarians)
- Data weighted to reflect gender, age and region of Alberta

<sup>3</sup>Leger survey report: COVID-19 Tracking Survey Results, May 4, 2020 (available via: <https://leger360.com/surveys/concerns-about-covid-19-may-5-2020/>)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with Leger's LEO online research panelists, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted May 1 – 3, 2020
- Sample size = 1,526 Canadians (including 126 Albertans)
- Data weighted to reflect gender, age, mother tongue, region, education level and presence of children in the household

<sup>4</sup>Angus Reid Institute release: COVID-19 & return to normal: when restrictions lift, most would wait at least two weeks before resuming routines, April 20, 2020 (available at: <http://angusreid.org/covid19-return-to-normal/>)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with members of the Angus Reid Forum, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted April 15 – 17, 2020
- Sample size = 1,912 Canadians (including 243 Albertans)



<sup>5</sup>Angus Reid Institute release: Worry, Gratitude & Boredom: As COVID-19 affects mental, financial health, who fares better; who is worse? April 27, 2020 (available at: <http://angusreid.org/covid19-mental-health/>)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with members of the Angus Reid Forum, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted April 15 – 17, 2020
- Sample size = 1,912 Canadians (including 243 Albertans)

<sup>6</sup>Genome Alberta media release: COVID-19 Boosts Trust in Scientific Experts and Prompts an Increase In Support for Genomics Research Funding, April 29, 2020 (available at: [https://genomealberta.ca/files/News\\_Release/Genome\\_Alberta\\_Full\\_Science\\_Survey\\_Media\\_Release\\_backgrounder.pdf](https://genomealberta.ca/files/News_Release/Genome_Alberta_Full_Science_Survey_Media_Release_backgrounder.pdf))

Survey methodology:

- Online survey conducted by Return on Insight with online research panelists, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted April 16 – 21, 2020
- Sample size = 750 Albertans

<sup>7</sup> Ipsos Global News Poll news release: Canadians Support Their Municipal Governments' Response To COVID-19 <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/Canadians-Support-Municipal-Governments-Response-To-Covid-19>, May 2, 2020

Survey methodology:

- Online survey conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Global News with Ipsos' online research panelists, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted March 24 – April 2, 2020
- Sample size = 2,400 Canadians (including 300 Calgarians)

<sup>8</sup>Ipsos survey report: City of Calgary Municipal COVID-19 Study, May 4, 2020 (not available online)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey conducted by with Ipsos' online research panelists, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted April 20 – 27, 2020
- Sample size = 300 Calgarians
- Data weighted to reflect gender and age of Calgary's population