

Vaccine Passport or pink slip? 70% say health workers, teachers & others should be fired for refusing inoculation

Canadians split on whether vaccine focus should remain on boosters or shift to low-income countries

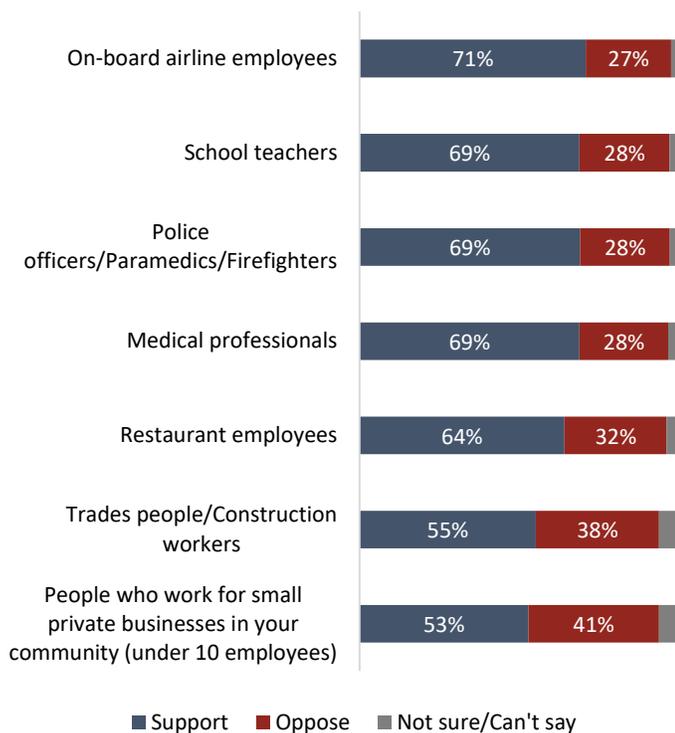
November 15, 2021 – As Quebec and Ontario backtrack on vaccine mandates for healthcare workers, new data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds a majority of Canadians – including in those respective provinces – support dismissing workers who refuse to get the jab across a variety of industries.

A majority of Canadians believe airline employees, schoolteachers, first responders, medical professionals, restaurant employees, construction workers and people who work for small businesses should lose their job if they refuse to get vaccinated. In Quebec (65%) and Ontario (71%), support for dismissal of unwilling medical professionals is considerable, despite their provincial government's respective decisions.

This comes as Canadians are hoping to build on the relative progress the country has made in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of people who describe their mental health in dealing with the ongoing pandemic as "great" has doubled since the spring, perhaps as vaccine passports have allowed some semblance of normal life to return across the country.

Questions remain about the future and Canada's prioritization for COVID-19 vaccines. After Health Canada [approved Pfizer booster shots](#) for adults 18 years of age and older, some have questioned whether the focus should indeed be on boosting immunity at home or transitioning more fully to helping low-income countries, where [vaccine access inequality](#) persists. Canadians are divided. Two-in-five (43%) would continue to focus on boosters at home, while the same number would shift resources abroad (42%).

Do you support or oppose workers being fired from these places if they refuse to be vaccinated? (All respondents, n=1,611)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Nov. 3-7, 2021 among a representative randomized sample of 1,611 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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More Key Findings:

- Half (52%) of Canadians are personally concerned about contracting the virus, a five-point decline from October. Those who are vaccinated are much more likely to say they are concerned (55%) than those who are not (19%).
- Three-in-five (63%) remain concerned about loved ones contracting the virus, but that represents a low on that measure since the pandemic took hold 20 months ago.

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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Part One: Most support dismissal of those who refuse to be vaccinated

Canada's vaccine mandate for federal workers is believed to be among the world's strictest and has since been extended to federally regulated spaces (e.g., those travelling by air, rail). Some provincial governments and private sector employers are following suit and asking their employees to get the job to keep their job.

This has already led to many being dismissed or placed on unpaid leave. In October over 4,000 health-care workers were put on unpaid leave after failing to show proof of vaccination in B.C., for example, while Ottawa's largest hospital recently announced that it had similarly placed 186 staff on unpaid leave.

The stakes were recently raised even higher when Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough recently said that it was likely that those who lose their jobs for not complying with employer vaccine mandates will not be eligible for employment insurance.

Beyond contributing to a surge in demand for labour lawyers, the imposition of vaccine mandates has also raised concerns about labour shortages in already tight markets.

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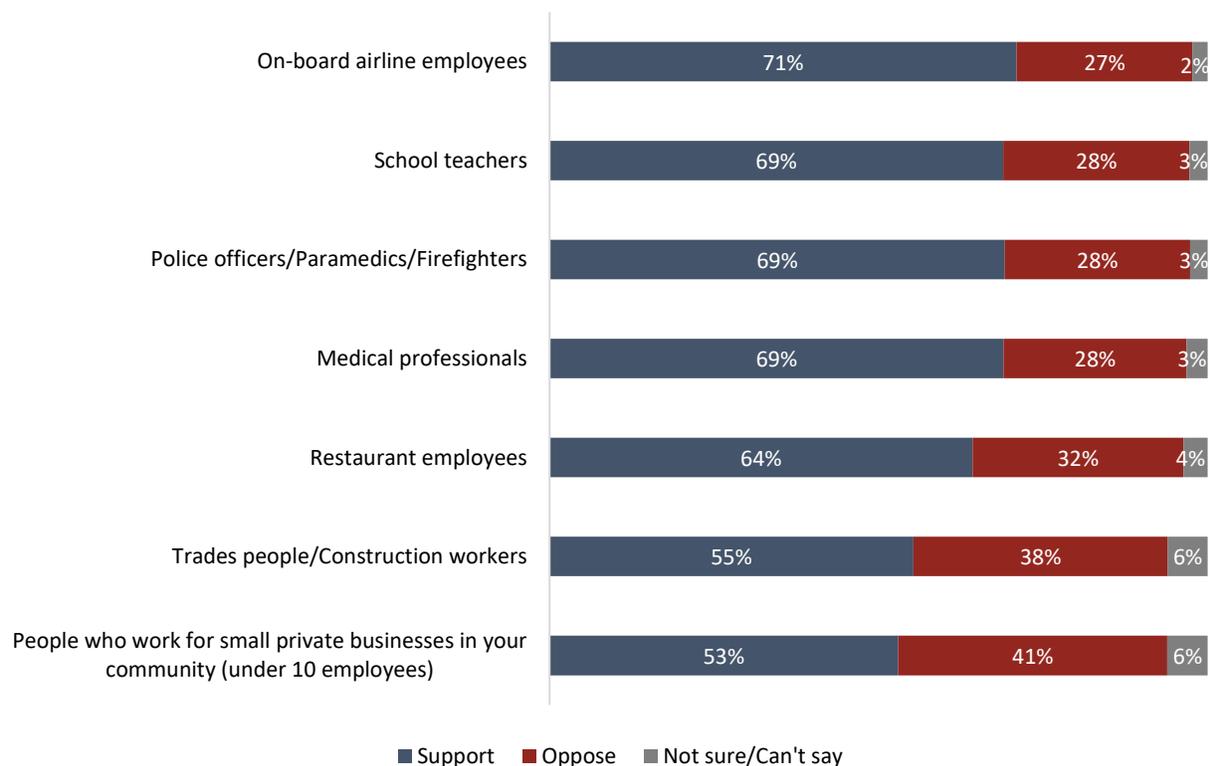
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Fears of staff shortages recently prompted Quebec to backtrack and cancel its vaccine mandate for healthcare workers. Ontario similarly announced earlier this month that it would not impose a vaccine mandate on healthcare professionals, citing similar fears. Of note, elections are expected in both provinces next year.

When it comes to the opinions of Canadians, a majority support unvaccinated workers being fired from a range of different professions. The level of support varies significantly between professions, however.

Seven-in-ten respondents support on-board airline employees (71%), teachers (69%), first responders (69%), and medical professionals (69%) being fired if they refuse to be vaccinated. While still supported by a slim majority, it would appear there is far less appetite when it comes to firing those who refuse vaccination in small businesses (53%) and in the construction industry (55%):

Do you support or oppose workers being fired from these places if they refuse to be vaccinated? (n=1,611)



There are important regional divides, with support for firing the unvaccinated highest in B.C., Atlantic Canada, and Ontario. Although support varies by profession, the Prairie provinces and Quebec are the least enthusiastic about these measures overall. Of note, in Quebec – where the government recently renounced its mandatory vaccination plan for healthcare workers – two-thirds (65%) of respondents indicated that they are in favour of healthcare workers being fired if they refuse to be vaccinated.

Support for workers being fired from these places if they refuse to be vaccinated							
(Unweighted sample sizes)	Region						
	BC (n=202)	AB (n=154)	SK (n=129)	MB (n=129)	ON (n=458)	QC (n=384)	ATL (n=155)
Medical professionals	76%	65%	52%	66%	71%	65%	74%
Police officers/ Paramedics/ Firefighters	75%	63%	54%	64%	72%	65%	75%
School teachers	74%	63%	54%	63%	74%	62%	76%
Restaurant employees	68%	57%	53%	56%	68%	60%	71%
On-board airline employees	76%	63%	56%	67%	73%	69%	77%
Trades people/Construction workers	60%	49%	46%	51%	62%	46%	63%
People who work for small private businesses in your community (fewer than 10 employees)	56%	52%	47%	47%	56%	45%	65%

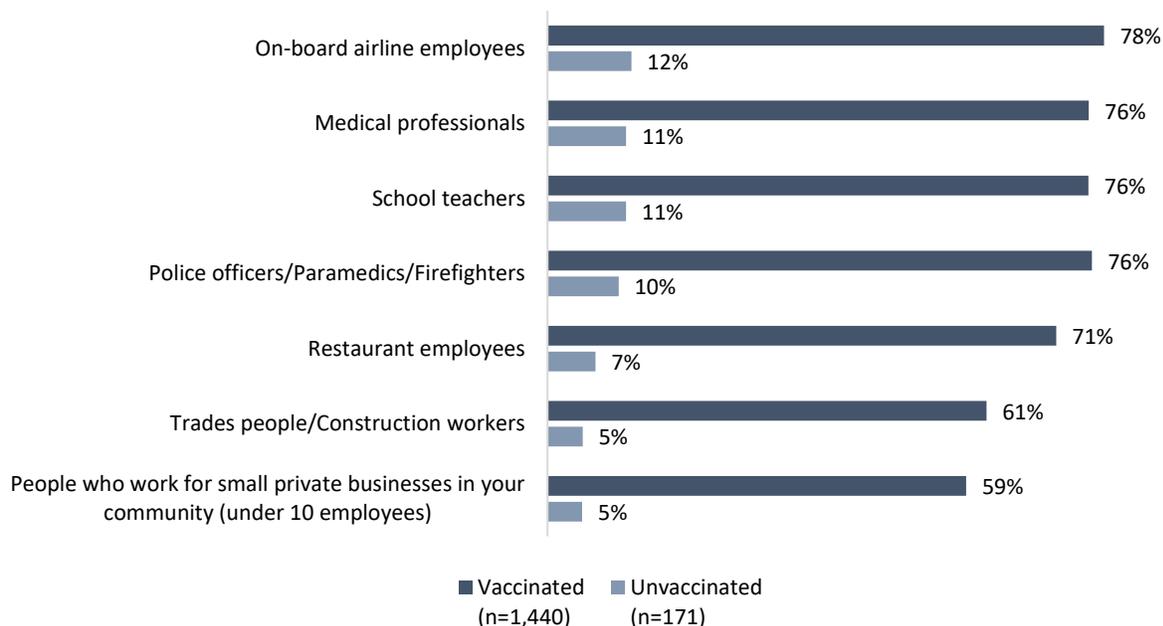
While support for these measures remains deeply divided by a respondent's own vaccination status, it is worth noting that one-in-ten unvaccinated Canadians are still in favour of dismissing airline employees (12%), medical professionals (11%), teachers (11%), and first responders (10%) if they don't have the job:

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Support for workers being fired from these places if they refuse to be vaccinated by respondent's vaccination status:



Partisan loyalties appear to be another good indicator of support for dismissing unvaccinated employees. Those who voted Liberal in September's federal election are most supportive, followed closely by past NDP voters and Bloc Québécois voters. CPC supporters are most divided, depending on profession canvassed ([see detailed tables](#)).

Part Two: COVID Concern declines

Canadians' concern over contracting COVID-19 has remained relatively consistent in the last four months as the fourth wave of the pandemic hit [some regions](#) of the country [harder than others](#). After a slight increase last month, personal concern over COVID-19 infection has declined to levels from the end of the summer. Half (52%) of Canadians say they are very or moderately concerned (see detailed tables).

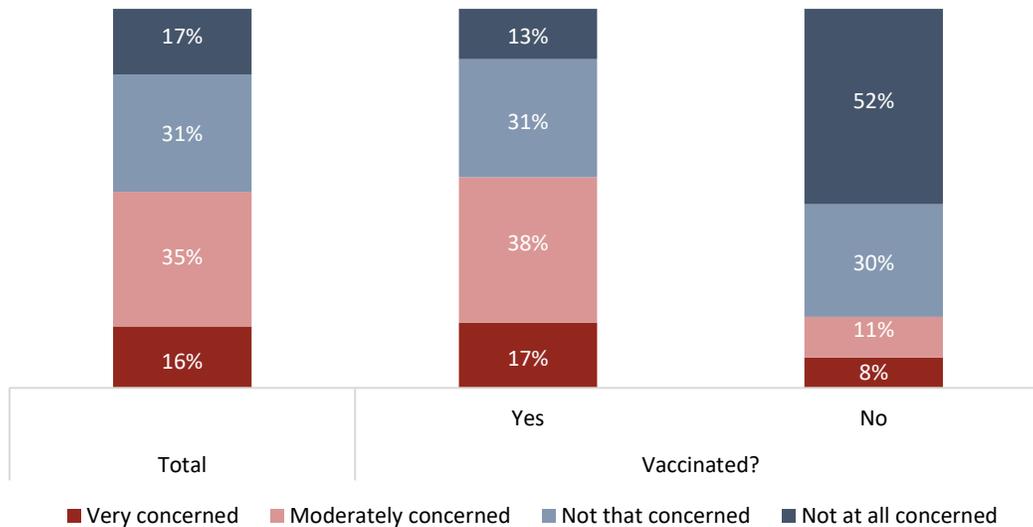
The fourth wave of COVID-19 did not wash over Canada equally. Amid surges of cases, [Alberta](#) and [Saskatchewan](#) both ended up in health-care crises, requiring military nurses to relieve overwhelmed medical staff. With case numbers falling, people in those provinces are the least concerned about personal infection by the virus. Elsewhere, at least half of people in every province remain worried about contracting COVID-19, including three-in-five of those in Atlantic provinces ([see detailed tables](#)).

Concern about potentially becoming sick from the coronavirus is much higher among those who are already vaccinated: two-in-five (38%) say they are concerned, while another one-in-five (17%) say they are very concerned. By contrast, four-in-five (82%) of those who are unvaccinated say they are either not that concerned, or not at all concerned:

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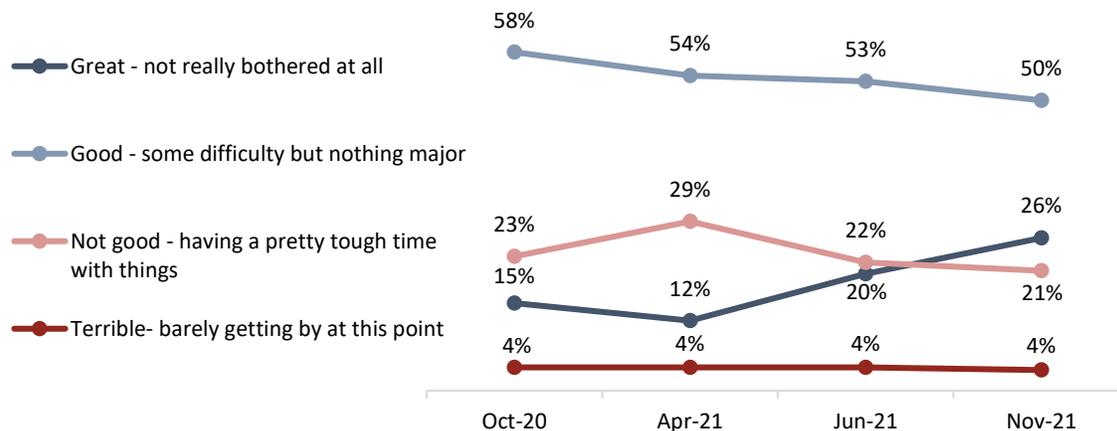
[You personally becoming sick from the coronavirus] How concerned are you about each of the following...?



Mental health improving from spring

High vaccination rates, the implementation of [vaccine passports](#) and overall national declining case numbers have allowed many Canadians to return to some semblance of pre-pandemic normalcy in the last few months. Three-quarters are thus feeling “good” or “great” when it comes to their mental health. The remaining quarter are having a rougher time with things. This represents a significant improvement of Canadians’ mood from the spring:

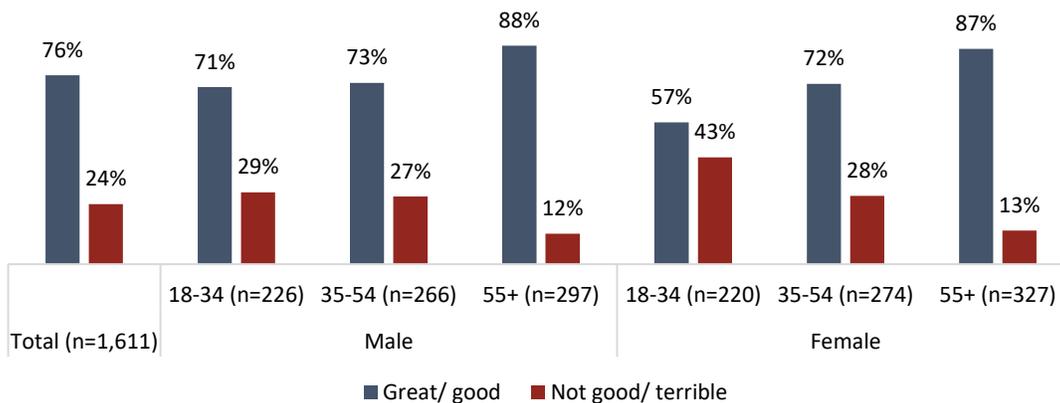
Now thinking about how you feel personally when it comes to your mental health in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. How would you say you are feeling over the past few weeks...?



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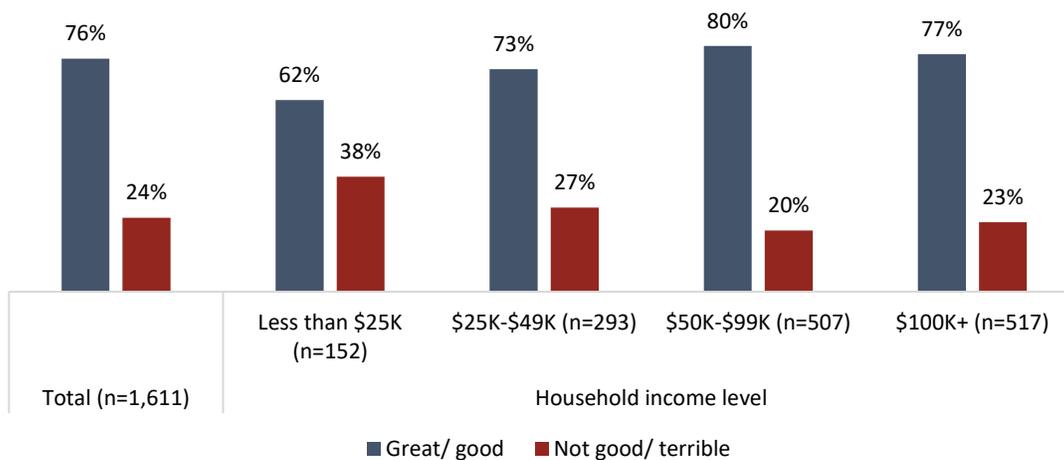
Younger people, women in particular, continue to voice the worst self-appraisals of their mental health levels. More than two-in-five (43%) women younger than 35 say their mental health has been poor in recent weeks, fully 14 points higher than the next closest age and gender combination:

Now thinking about how you feel personally when it comes to your mental health in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. How would you say you are feeling over the past few weeks...?



Lower-income households also suffer from higher levels of stress, though it is worth noting that at least one-in-five Canadians across all income levels say their mental health has been suffering in recent weeks:

Now thinking about how you feel personally when it comes to your mental health in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. How would you say you are feeling over the past few weeks...?



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Part Three: Canadians split on whether or not vaccination focus should remain domestic

With the willing and eligible largely vaccinated – and the dwindling group of the unwilling entrenched against the vaccine – there remain two major steps in the domestic vaccination program: booster shots and immunizing children 11 and under.

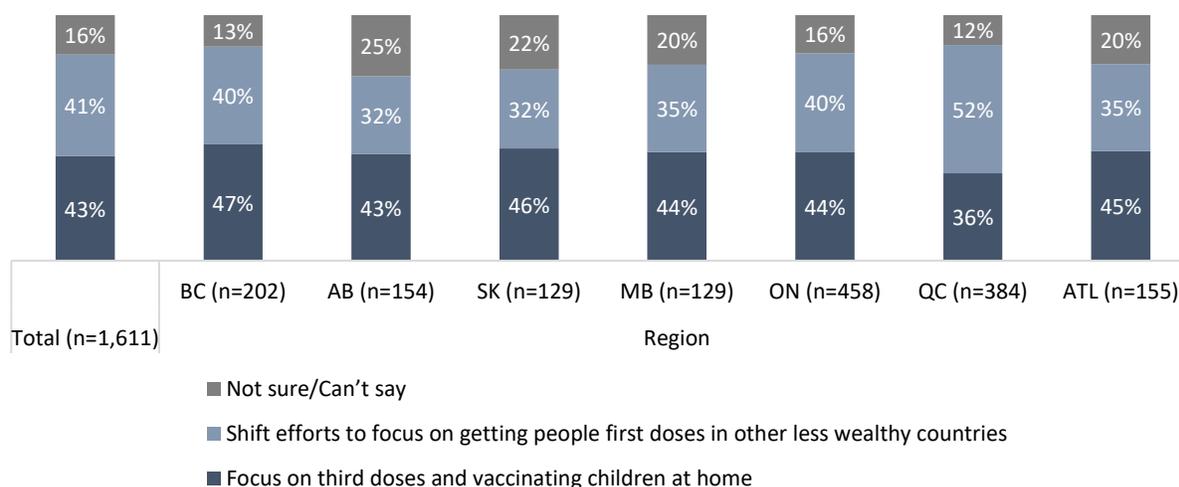
Health Canada is reviewing vaccines for those aged five to 11 and is expected to finish the review in the coming weeks. Meanwhile provinces have been providing booster shots to seniors and those who are vulnerable in recent months. In an effort to combat their recent surge in cases, the Yukon has started offering boosters to those over the age of 50 while Manitoba has opened up boosters to everyone 18 years and older.

Still, there are many that see the inequity of the vaccine distribution and wonder if perhaps Canada should be helping less wealthy countries get vaccinated first. Approximately 65 per cent of those in high-income countries have had at least one dose of vaccine, while just 5 per cent of those in low-income countries can say the same.

Canadians are split between prioritizing distribution domestically or abroad. Two-in-five say the focus should be on doing whatever can be done to beat COVID-19 in Canada first, while a similar number believe the focus should shift to getting first doses to countries with little access to the vaccine.

A plurality in most regions across the country prefer the vaccination efforts to stay focused at home except in Quebec, where a majority want the focus to shift to less wealthy countries:

If it were up to you, would you say Canada should:



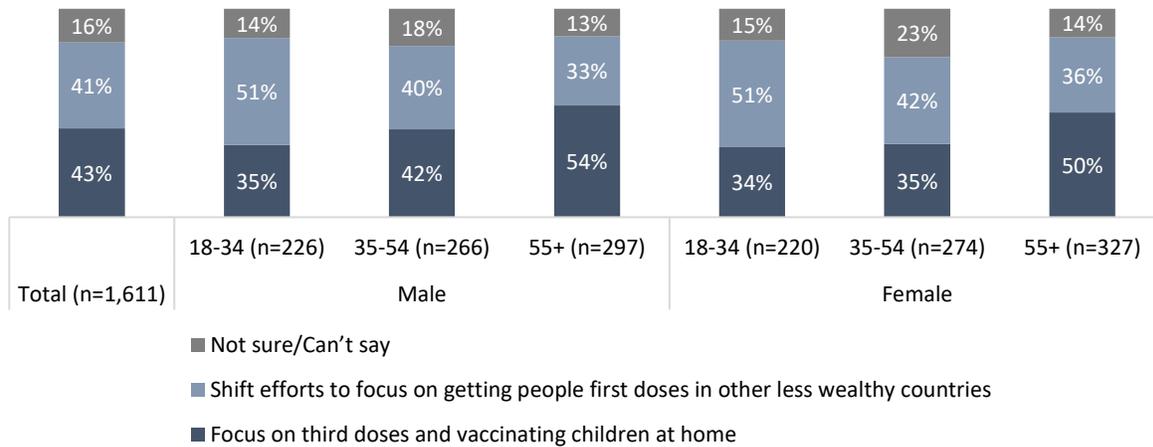
The largely unwilling unvaccinated would prefer to send doses abroad. Half (48%) say Canada should shift its efforts overseas, while two-in-five say they are “not sure” (See detailed tables.)

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Younger Canadians, too, want efforts to shift to less wealthy countries. A majority of 18- to 34-year-old men and women say that's what Canada should do, while Canadians 55 and older prefer the focus to be on booster shots and children at home:

If it were up to you, would you say Canada should:



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here.](#)

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