

May 2025



Dubé reform increasingly unpopular

Our survey confirms it



APTS
ALERT

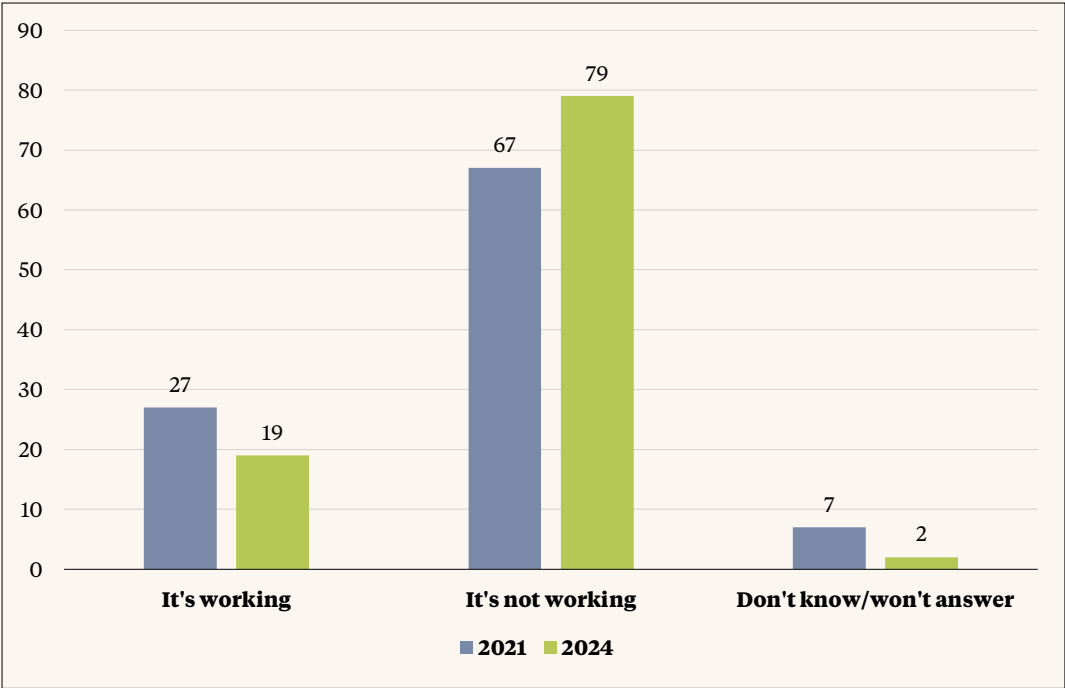
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WHAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE STATE OF THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM

For the past few years, we’ve been regularly commissioning surveys to better understand public opinion about major issues affecting the health and social services system. Our most recent survey revealed that people are becoming more pessimistic about the system. As **graph 1** shows, 79% of Quebecers believe that the health and social services system isn’t working — an increase of 10% in just 3 years.

Graph 1: Perception of how Québec’s health and social services system is working (as a %)



But at the same time, 76% of respondents report being satisfied with the care and services they received. What should we make of this paradox? There is a distinction to be made between the way the system functions and the quality of care. The former receives constant media attention, generally negative, which has an impact on people's perceptions. And the sorry state of the system's infrastructure doesn't inspire confidence.

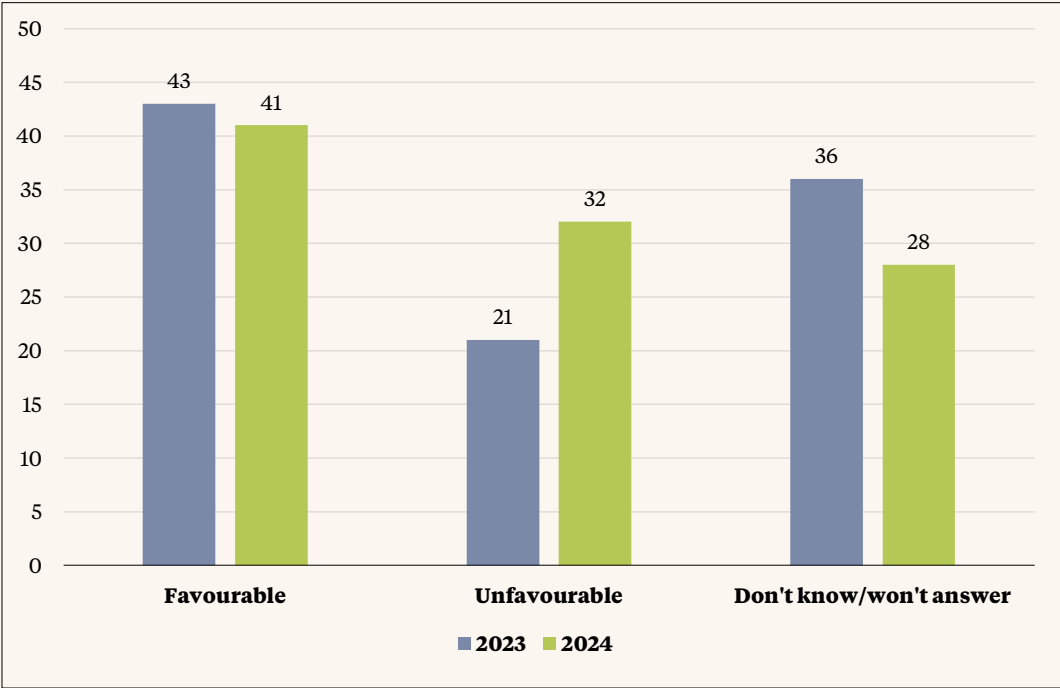
What's more, the dissatisfaction isn't about the system itself, but about difficulty accessing it. Whether with respect to wait times or the lack of clear paths to access care and services, the negative view of how the system is working primarily relates to the fact that it's hard to get through the door.

WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK OF THE REFORM?

If, on the one hand, Quebecers are reporting deep dissatisfaction with the health and social services system, it's no surprise that the same people shared a favourable opinion about the Dubé reform and the creation of Santé Québec. When nothing seems to be working, trying something always seems better than doing nothing.

That said, there is an evolution in opinions on this question. When the creation of Santé Québec was announced, 43% of people surveyed said they had a favourable opinion of the reform. One year later, things don't appear to have changed. But there has been a sharp increase in negative opinions alongside a significant drop in respondents who didn't know or refused to answer. This suggests that Minister Dubé's grace period is coming to an end. Our data is from December 2024, and an upcoming survey may reveal whether this trend continues.

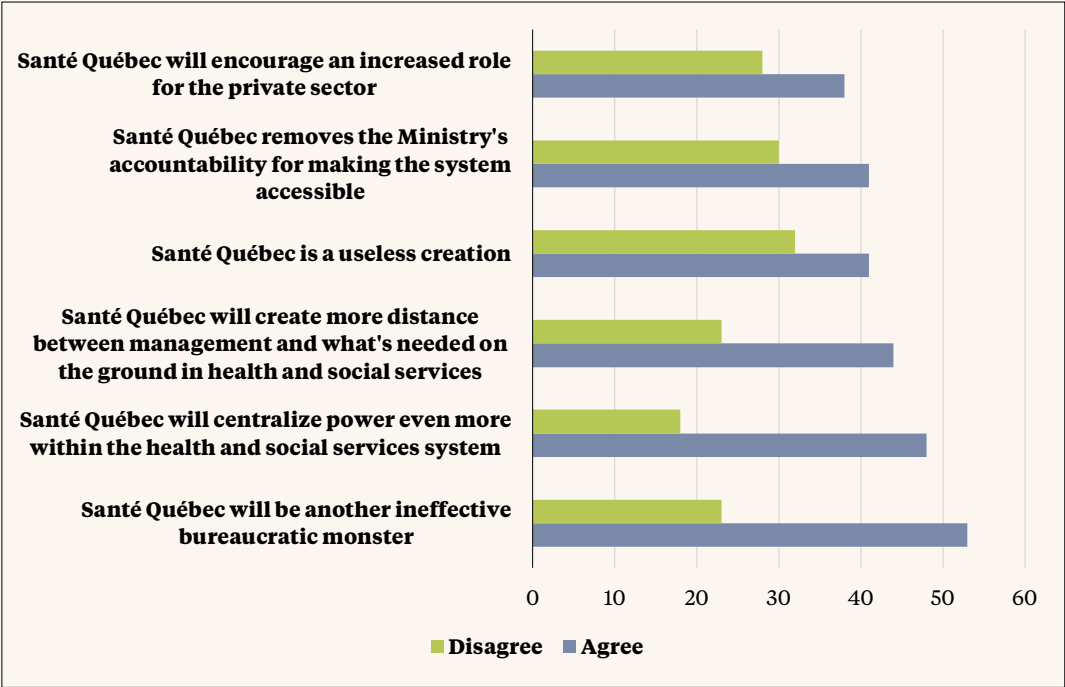
Graph 2: Opinion about the health care reform (as a %)



We should also note that two categories stood out from the others when we asked Quebecers why they think the health and social services system is in bad shape. 37% of respondents point the finger at “management and the Ministry,” and another 29% point to “politicians.” Conversely, a mere 3% believe health and social services employees are responsible for the situation.

These results are notable because they’re in line with how people assess what they expect Santé Québec to achieve. When we ask people to project themselves into the future, a significant proportion of Quebecers understand the reform will result in centralization. Most respondents believe that Santé Québec will ultimately be another “inefficient bureaucratic monster,” and a large proportion believe that the agency will centralize powers and that decisions will be increasingly out of touch with reality on the ground.

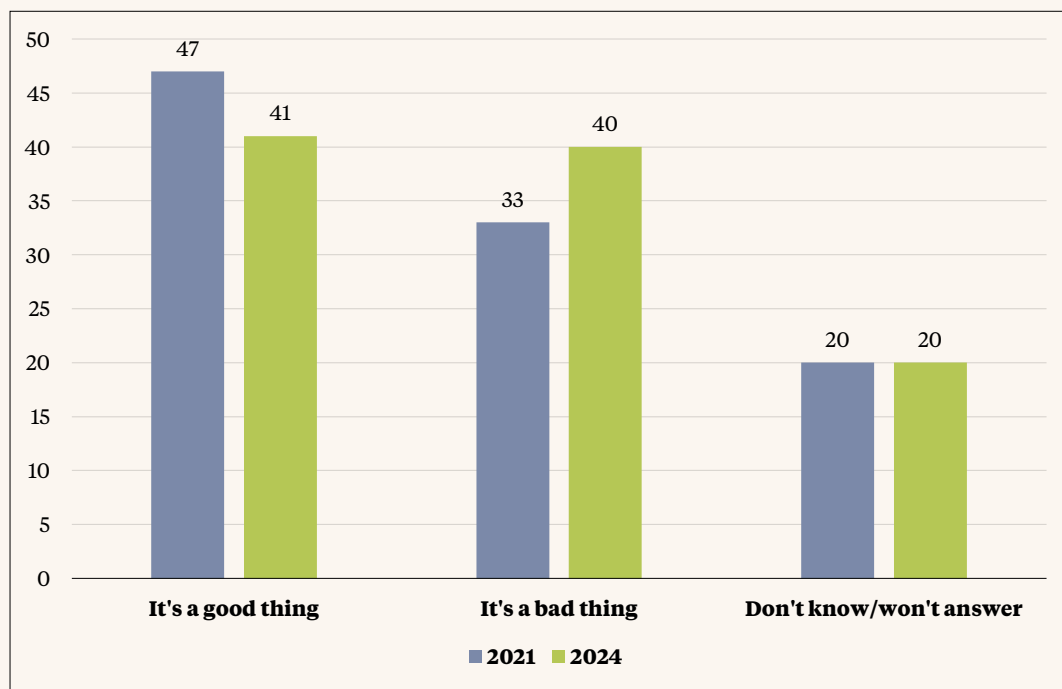
Graph 3: Agreement on various factors related to Santé Québec



WHAT ABOUT THE PRIVATE SECTOR?

The survey shows another factor that strikes us as highly relevant. Between 2021 and 2024, the number of people who had a positive view of the private sector declined, whereas the number of those who had a negative view increased. We’re not satisfied yet, but clearly our efforts to convince the public of the harm caused by the private sector in health are getting results.

Graph 4: Opinion about the private sector (as a %)



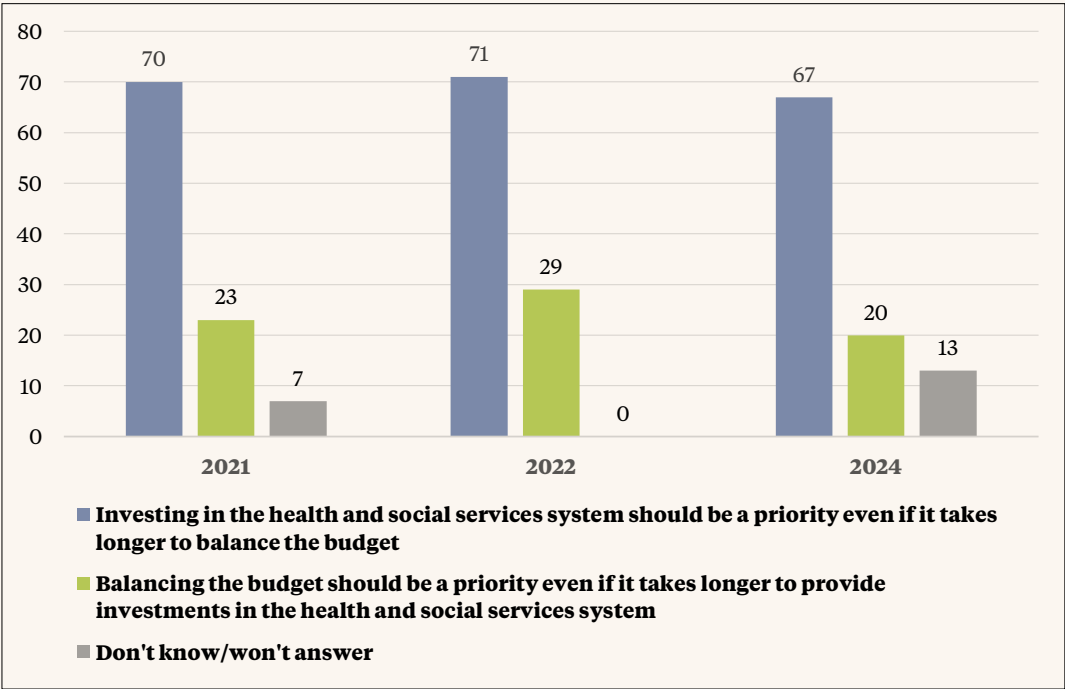
The proportion of people surveyed who think that the private sector increases access to health care also dropped by 7% in the last year. More importantly, 73% of respondents believe that expanding the role of the private sector in health and social services amounts to creating one system for the rich and one for the poor.

REJECTING AUSTERITY IN HEALTH CARE

We wanted to confirm whether our decision to prioritize the fight against austerity was correct. A number of indicators suggest it is. First off, 88% of Quebecers still support maintaining a free, universal health and social services system. 56% of these would even be willing to renounce the tax cuts enacted by the government as we emerged from the pandemic if that would help better fund health care!

Over two thirds of respondents believe that investments in health and social services should be prioritized over a return to a balanced budget. While this result wasn't surprising as we emerged from the pandemic, this ongoing strong public support despite media coverage that casts the state of public finances in a negative light shows that Quebecers understand the importance of protecting the health and social services system.

Graph 5: Opinion about the return to a balanced budget



CONCLUSION

Feel free to share this data. It’s important to ensure your friends, family and colleagues understand that Quebecers support APTS demands. When we call for better funding for the health and social services system, and when we demand a budgetary shield to avoid a return to austerity, we’re speaking for the majority!



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