



# NEWS RELEASE

## 96% of television news coverage of Ottawa’s child care, dental care and pharma care programs failed to report on costs

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For immediate release

**VANCOUVER**—Roughly four per cent of CBC (3.7 per cent) and CTV’s (4.1 per cent) coverage of the federal government’s child care, pharma care and dental care programs reported the costs to taxpayers, finds a new study published today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“The federal government has launched three large, and very costly social programs in recent years, but Canadians—many of whom rely on television news for their information—have not been given adequate information about the costs or how they will be paid for,” said Lydia Miljan, senior fellow with the Fraser Institute and author of *Media Coverage of Federal Spending Announcements on Child Care, Pharma Care, and Dental Care*.

The study, a content analysis of CTV and CBC television news coverage from 2021 to 2024, finds that of all the coverage that focused on the three new government programs, just 4.1 per cent of CTV coverage, and just 3.7 per cent of CBC television coverage reported the specific costs of the programs.

In addition, there were only five mentions on CBC and two mentions on CTV that these new programs created new permanent spending, which contradicts the Finance Minister’s mandate letter, that she “avoid creating new permanent spending.”

Government press releases were also included in the analysis, with only 0.6 per cent of government communications related to these programs reported the costs.

“Examining the phrases associated with stories on the new programs illustrates how effective the government was in focusing media attention on the programs and their purported benefits, rather than on their costs and how to fund them,” Miljan said.

“Given that the federal government has put significant resources into these three social programs, it is not unreasonable for the public to expect that journalists critically evaluate these programs, particularly with respect to how they will be paid for by taxpayers.”

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**MEDIA CONTACT:**  
Lydia Miljan, Senior Fellow  
Fraser Institute

*To arrange media interviews or for more information, please contact:*  
Drue MacPherson, Fraser Institute  
(604) 688-0221 ext. 721  
[drue.macpherson@fraserinstitute.org](mailto:drue.macpherson@fraserinstitute.org)

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