

ONTARIANS AND ACCESS TO HOME HEALTH CARE

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Two-Thirds (63%) Say Government Should Foot Some Costs of Home Health Care -- Average 56 Cents For Every Dollar Needed

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Three-Quarters (75%) Are Concerned About Becoming A Burden on Their Friends and Family When They Get Older



Complex care, Simple comforts

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Toronto, ON – The results of an Ipsos-Reid survey conducted on behalf of VHA Home Healthcare show that eight in ten (81%) Ontarians are concerned that they will not have access to home care support as they get older. Further, Ontarians (63%) say that the government should fund some of the costs of home care, saying that on average the government should contribute 56 cents for every dollar needed. For those who have living parents who do not currently have care, the issue hits close to home as 56 percent expect that they will become their parents' primary caregiver and 67 percent say they have considered having their parents live with them. Three-quarters (75%) of Ontarians say they are concerned about becoming a burden on their friends or family when they get older.



These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/VHA Home Healthcare survey conducted between February 6th and February 19th, 2001. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Ontarians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Ontario population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual adult Ontario population according to the 1996 Census data.

Eight in Ten (81%) Ontarians Concerned They Won't Have Access To Home Care Support As They Age

Eight in ten (81%) Ontarians are concerned about having access to home health care support to remain at home as they age. Four in ten (38%) indicate that they are “very concerned” over access to home care support, while 43 percent say they are “somewhat concerned”. Less than two in ten (17%) Ontarians are not concerned (13% “not very concerned” and 4% “not concerned at all”).

- Women (85%) are more likely to be concerned about having access to home care support than men (78%).

This comes as Ontarians report that, in their opinion, the quality of health care for seniors has stayed the same or worsened over the past year. One-third (33%) of Ontarians believe that the quality of health care for seniors has worsened and half (49%) believe it has stayed the same. Only 6 percent of Ontarians believe that the quality of health care for seniors has improved over the past year. In all, 15 percent of Ontarians report using home care services for assistance with tasks such as: daily chores, meal preparation, feeding, light housekeeping, bathing and dressing or in-home nursing services.



- Women (39%) are more likely to believe that health care for seniors has worsened over the past year than men (26%).
- Residents of Northern Ontario (44%) are slightly more likely to believe that the level of care for seniors has worsened than residents of Eastern (34%), Southwestern (29%) and Hamilton/Niagara (27%) regions of the province.

Two-Thirds (63%) Say Government Should Foot Some Costs of Home Health Care -- Average 56 Cents For Every Dollar Needed

When asked who should be most responsible for paying for home health care services – "individuals and families using the services" or "the government" - 74 percent of Ontarians say "the government" while one in five (22%) say individuals and the families.

- Those living outside of the GTA (77%) are more likely to believe that the provincial government should be most responsible for funding home care than those living in the GTA (69%).
- As well, women (80%) are more likely to place the responsibility for home care on the shoulders of the province than men (68%).

Six in ten (63%) Ontarians believe that the government should fund some of the costs of home care - on average, 56 cents for every dollar needed for home care services. One-third (32%) believe that home health care services should be fully funded by the province, and 3 percent believe the costs of home care are not the responsibility of the government. When asked to estimate the yearly cost to provide five hours of home care per day from an in-home personal support worker, nearly half (47%) of Ontarians estimate costs of \$36,500 per year or greater.

Ontarians are split on whether they or their parents will be able to afford home care service when the time comes. Half (48%) of Ontarians agree that when the time comes, they'll be able to afford to pay for their own home care services beyond what the government provides, while 50 percent disagree that they will have the funds. More generally, three-quarters (78%) are concerned about being able to afford home care services beyond what the government will provide (21% are not concerned).

In terms of who Ontarians think should receive access to home care services paid for by the provincial government, support is strong for all groups tested: the physically disabled (97%), the elderly or frail (96%), and the mentally ill (94%). Meanwhile, three-quarters (75%) of Ontarians support funded access to home care services for "anyone discharged from hospital".

Majority (56%) with Living Parents Expect To Become The Primary Caregiver For Their Parents and Two-Thirds (67%) Have Considered Having Parents Live With Their Family

For Ontarians with parents who are currently living without any aid of elderly care services the issue of home care hits closer. A majority (56%) Ontarians with living parents not currently receiving care say that they expect to become the primary or sole caregiver to their parents and two-thirds (67%) agree with the statement "I have considered having my parent(s) live with my family in the future in order to care for them". The same number (66%) also agree with the statement "I am concerned that I'm going to have to care for my parent(s) when they get older" and 72 percent worry about finding qualified professional in-home care for their parents when the situation arises. Ontarians with living parents not currently receiving care are also concerned that the situation may worsen as baby-boomers

age - 83 percent fear there will be a shortage of in-home care workers as the baby-boom population retires and a strong minority (44%) disagree that their parents will have enough money to purchase full-time home care if they need it.

Finally, Ontarians are divided about whether “the government of Ontario has a future strategic plan to ensure the delivery of home care service to people in need” - 48 percent agree that they do, while 45 percent disagree.

Three-Quarters (75%) are Concerned About Becoming A Burden On Their Friends and Family When They Get Older

Amid their concerns about the availability and cost of home care, three-quarters (75%) of Ontarians are concerned about becoming a burden on their friends or family when they get older. Of those, 41 percent are "very concerned" and 33 percent are "somewhat concerned". A similar number, (77%) indicate that they are concerned (39% "very concerned" and 38% "somewhat concerned") about being in a nursing home or long-term care facility when they are no longer able to care for themselves. And, two-thirds (65%) are either "very concerned" (30%) or "somewhat concerned" (35%) about being alone when they are elderly.



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-30-

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