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Four in ten (37%) Believe Long Term Care Should be a Priority if the Government were to Expand Access to Health Services

Public Release Date: August 20, 2007 9:00am EST



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Ottawa, ON – As the Canadian population continues to age, more and more Canadians will be approaching the age where they, and their families, will need to make decisions about how best to care for themselves in the latter years of their lives. However, a new Ipsos Reid poll finds that only 55% of Canadians are ‘confident’ that they will have enough savings when they are older to cover the expenses of long-term care, such as a nursing home, should they require these services. More specifically, just two in ten (18%) are ‘very confident’ that they will have enough funds, while just over one third (36%) are ‘somewhat confident’ that they will have enough savings for long-term care, should they require it.

On the other hand, nearly one half (43%) of Canadians are either ‘not very’ (23%) or ‘not at all’ (21%) confident that they will have enough savings when they are older to cover the expenses of long-term care, should they require it.

Along with an ageing population comes the likelihood of the expansion of medical services. Perhaps as a result of many Canadians not being confident that they will have enough savings to pay for long-term care when they become older, four in ten (37%) believe that, if

the government were to expand access to health services, long-term care should be considered the top priority. Further, one quarter (26%) believe that home care should be the top priority, two in ten (18%) believe prescription drugs should be the top priority, and one in ten (11%) believe dental care should be the top priority. Rounding out the list is vision care (5%).

Focusing specifically on prescription drugs, it is estimated that some three-and-a-half million Canadians are either under-insured or uninsured for high prescription drug costs. In an effort to assist those who cannot afford high prescription costs, four in ten (40%) believe that 'the government should cover catastrophic prescription drug expenses that exceed a certain amount of an individuals' annual income—a policy which would entail a minimal increase in public spending.' The same proportion (40%) believe that 'the government should cover 70% of all Canadians' prescription drug expenses—a policy which would entail a modest increase in public spending.' Further, 16% believe that 'the government should cover 100% of Canadians' prescription drug expenses—a policy which would entail a significant increase in public spending.'

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association from June 19 to Aug 2, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1002 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone/online. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.



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