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who Require Long-term Care**

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Care*

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## **Three in Five Canadians (63%) Aren't Prepared to Care for Family Members who Require Long-term Care**

*Nearly Nine in Ten (89%) Say The Next Prime Minister Needs to Address Senior's Health Care*

**Ottawa, ON** – Three in five Canadians (63%) say their family is not in a good position (financially or otherwise) to care for older family members if they need long term health care, and it worries them greatly. Nearly nine in ten Canadians (89%) agree that whoever wins the election this fall, the next Prime Minister needs to address the health care needs of Canada's aging population. These are among the findings of the 2015 National Report Card on Health Care, conducted by Ipsos on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association.

If the federal and provincial governments fail to collaborate to improve health care for the aging population, over four in five (83%) believe the responsibility and costs for seniors care will fall on younger family members.

The bottom line for many Canadians is that how they vote in the upcoming federal election will depend, at least in part, on who has the best plan to address seniors issues, including seniors' health care (57% agree).

Nine in ten Canadians (90%) agree that we need a national strategy on seniors' health care that addresses the need for care provided at home and in hospitals, hospices and long-term care facilities, as well as end of life care. The majority (83%) also believe that such a strategy would improve the entire health care system by finding ways to keep elderly patients living at home for longer.

If put in charge of developing a national strategy on senior's health, nine in ten (92%) Canadians say that ensuring there are enough health care professionals trained to provide health care to seniors is a priority (including 61% who say it is a very high priority). Providing long-term home care (89%), increasing access to long-term care facilities (88%) and ensuring an adequate income for older Canadians (87%) are also identified as priorities.

### **The Role of Government**

Three in four Canadians (76%) see seniors' care as a national problem requiring cooperation among governments to work closely together on a strategy to deal with it. Along with a call

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for cooperation, the majority of Canadians (67%) hold the view that the federal government has an important role to play in developing a national seniors' care strategy.

Nearly three in four Canadians (72%) support providing additional health care funding to provinces that have an older population. Support is fairly consistent regionally, with the exception of Alberta, where it drops to 61%.

### **Attitudes Towards Seniors Care**

When asked to assign a letter grade, half of Canadians (49%) assign an 'A' or 'B' grade when it comes to access to health care services for seniors in their community. Seniors themselves are much more likely to assign an 'A' or 'B' grade, with the highest grades coming from those aged 75+ (66%). The lowest grades come from those approaching old age, with just forty-four percent of those aged 45-64 giving access to seniors' health care an 'A' or 'B' grade.

Only half of Canadians give access to seniors' health care an 'A' or 'B' grade (49%), and fewer still express confidence in the capacity of the system to provide adequate seniors' health care. Only one in three (33%) are confident that hospitals in their area can handle the needs of the elderly population, while fewer still are confident that there are enough long-term care facilities (24%) or enough home care and support services to help seniors live at home for longer (24%).

As the population ages, Canadians say that governments should focus on home care and community support to help seniors live at home longer as priorities. When presented with various seniors' health care measures, nearly a third of respondents (31%) select home care and community support as most important for governments to focus on.

When told that some provincial governments are in fact promoting home care as an alternative to receiving health care in an institution, three in five (61%) say this is a step in the right direction.

### **Concerns about the Future**

Two in five (42%) Canadians say they are 'very' concerned about maintaining their health in retirement and about their financial situation in their retirement years (41%). Canadians also express high levels of concern with respect to accessing high quality acute care in retirement (35% very concerned), accessing high quality home and long term care (32%).

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About only one in five (22%) have plans in place to ensure they will be able to afford home or long-term care, if needed. Half of Canadians (51%) expect that they will need to rely on the public system should they ever require home or long-term care.

### **Canadians Grade Health Care Services in Canada**

Seven in ten (70%) Canadians give the overall quality of health care services available to them and their families an 'A' or 'B' grade. One in three assigns an 'A' grade (32%).

When it comes to accessing care in their communities, three in five Canadians grade access to a family doctor as an 'A' or 'B' (61%). About half (52%) grade access to wellness and preventative care as an 'A' or 'B'.

A higher proportion of Canadians grade access to palliative care in a hospice or hospital as an 'A' or 'B' (45%) compared to palliative care at home (38%).

About four in ten grade access to home health care services (41%) and access to mental health care services (38%) as an 'A' or 'B'.

It is interesting to note that access to each of these forms of care are much less likely to earn 'A' or 'B' grades than the system as a whole (69%).

Canadians are more likely to say that health care services have become worse in the past five years (49%), than they are to say these services have become better (37%). This is consistent with respondents giving lower grades for the health care system overall (69% graded 'A' or 'B' this year compared to 75% in 2010).

Just over one in three Canadians (35%) think that health care services in their community will get better over the next two or three years. Half of Canadians (47%) think they will get worse.



*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between July 20 and 24, 2015, on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association. For this survey, a sample of 2,008 adult Canadians was interviewed online via the Ipsos I-Say Panel. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all eligible voters been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

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