

97 Per Cent of Ontario Seniors Want Increased Home Care Funding: Poll

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Home Care Ontario →

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Research shows pandemic has made home care more important; almost all would support new tax credit

HAMILTON, ON, Oct. 8, 2021 /CNW/ - The global COVID-19 pandemic has changed the view of Ontario's seniors towards health care, according to a new study conducted by Campaign Research Inc. on behalf of Home Care Ontario. The research found that 86% of seniors believe the pandemic has made Ontario's home care system more important than ever.

"This is a sea change," says Sue VanderBent, CEO of Home Care Ontario, an association whose members employ an estimated 28,000 health care staff. "COVID-19 has clearly made home care a top priority for Ontario's seniors. And that's sad, given the government's track record on investments in our sector recently."

In the last provincial budget, the Ontario government announced billions in new funding for institutional care – including hospitals and long-term care. Over the same time, the province invested no new dollars in its home care system, despite an exodus of staff and indications many Ontarians are not getting the care they need at home.

The polling released today shows that 85% of seniors disagree with the government's decision not to allocate new funding for home care in the last budget, with a full 58% strongly disagreeing and 27% somewhat disagreeing.



At the same time, 97% of seniors polled said it was either very important (73%) or somewhat important (24%) the government increase funding to the home care system.

"Neglecting home care is wrong – and seniors know it," said VanderBent. "Home care plays such a vital role in keeping people out of hospitals and long-term care homes. On top of that, home is where seniors want to be."

Since the pandemic began, Ontario's home care system has lost 3,000 nurses, hundreds of skilled therapists and thousands more personal support workers. Home Care Ontario is calling on government to make an urgent \$600 million investment to help stabilize the system by attracting and retaining health care workers.

The polling, which interviewed 1034 Ontarians over the age of 55, revealed a deep-seated desire by Ontario seniors to age at home. Of those who have thought about where they would live in their later years, 96% of respondents plan to stay in their own home or apartment as long as possible.

The study also highlighted near-universal support, or 91%, for a new home care tax credit. The tax credit would help seniors and families who fund additional home care services for themselves or their loved ones.

"People are being pushed to the brink," said VanderBent. "Affordability is one of the biggest issues on people's minds these days after COVID-19 and Ontario seniors are looking to the government to provide tax relief so they can stay healthy and safe at home."

More Key Findings:

- If seniors were destined to move into a long-term care facility but additional supports could be provided to keep them at home or living with a family member, 91% of seniors would prefer to stay at home. Only 2% would prefer to move into long-term care, while 7% responded they did not know.
- 67% of Ontario seniors believe that professional caregivers, such as personal support workers and skilled therapists, should be paid at the same rates regardless of whether they work in home care, long-term care or in hospital, while 19% believe they should be paid differently based on their workplace setting and 14% were unsure.
- If seniors had an operation and were able to recover safely at home faster with the help of increased home care, 87% would prefer to recover at home as soon as possible, while 9% would prefer to stay in the hospital and 4% were unsure.
- A full 87% of seniors are either very concerned (43%) or somewhat concerned (44%) that the home care system says it needs \$600 million to recover from the effects of the pandemic, to attract and retain staff back into the home care sector.

Methodology:

The study was conducted between September 24th and 29th, 2021 by Campaign Research among a sample of 1,034 respondents who are residents of Ontario and are 55 years of age or older and part of Maru/Blue's research panel. A probability sample of a similar size would have a margin of error of plus or minus 3% 19 times out of 20.

About Home Care Ontario:

Home Care Ontario, The Voice of Home Care in Ontario™, is a member-based organization with a mandate to promote growth and development of the home care sector through advocacy, knowledge transfer, and member service. Home Care Ontario members include those engaged in and/or supportive of home-based health care. In Ontario, service provider organizations are responsible for providing nursing care, home support services, personal care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, infusion pharmacy, social work, dietetics, speech language therapy and medical equipment and supplies in the home to individuals of all ages.

Original Data:

To view the full research study, please visit: <https://www.choosehomecare.ca/news>



SOURCE Home Care Ontario

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