



BAYSHORE HOME HEALTH

Attention News Editors:

Older Canadians more prepared for dying than for living

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Survey says: Seniors a study in contradictions

- Majority want to avoid nursing homes, but few planning for independent living -

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TORONTO, March 5 /CNW/ - A survey designed to provide a 'snapshot' of Canadians aged 65 to 85 released today provided some surprising results to those working on the frontlines with aging Canadians.

According to the recent Living for Today - Ready for Tomorrow survey conducted by Ipsos-Reid, nine out of ten Canadians between the ages of 65 and 85 have a will, half already have a cemetery plot and 44% have a pre-arranged funeral. At the same time, much fewer are actually planning or taking the necessary steps to help ensure they're leading independent lives for as long as possible.

"The survey results show a big discrepancy between seniors' desire to remain in their homes and the plans they're making to reach this goal," says Holly Quinn, Chief Nursing Officer for Bayshore Home Health, the sponsor of the survey. "It's inevitable that the health of many people in this age group will deteriorate at some point in the future, creating a need for support, different living arrangements or both. Despite this fact, the majority of seniors have not given much thought to their future needs."

Independent living is a high priority for older Canadians between the ages of 65 and 85. Virtually all of them (97%) will attempt to live independently for as long as they are able. The majority (82%) say they will do everything they can to avoid moving into a nursing home.

While independence is a priority for older Canadians, few have planned or taken the necessary steps to ensure that independence. Less than half (47%) of older Canadians have researched ways to help themselves live independently at home. Just over half (51%) have not made any modifications to their home to ensure it's a safe environment. Fewer than five per cent are staying active and even fewer (1%) have moved into a smaller space.

"It wasn't surprising that the vast majority of seniors value independence and independent living," adds Quinn. "What did surprise us was how little planning this group had done to plan for tomorrow and ensure their independence. It's unfortunate, but likely, that at some point in the future these individuals will be attempting to access services and care during a time of stress."

Awareness of home health care is high - three-quarters of older Canadians have heard of it - but less than half understand the kind of services that home health care provides. A mere seven per cent of those surveyed receive home health care. Among those individuals who are not receiving this type of care, three-quarters have not given it any thought at all.

Over half of people who are receiving home health care do not know all their funding options and the ways financial costs can be alleviated. When pressed to identify these options, an additional 14% admitted they didn't know.

"In general, it seems that older Canadians are not seriously planning home care as an option, even though governments are investing more in this area to alleviate the burden on hospitals and nursing homes," Quinn offers.

Many older Canadians (50%) believe they can avoid a nursing home by relying on their family to care for them. Yet according to the survey,

families don't appear to be talking about the issue. Among those older Canadians who are not currently receiving home health care, 96% have not spoken to their families about it.

"The survey results indicate that seniors are really a study in contradictions," concludes Quinn. "Independence is a big priority but they are not planning for their future living arrangements or talking to their family about what their options might be."

About Bayshore Home Health

Bayshore Home Health has been enhancing the quality of life, dignity and independence of Canadians in their homes since 1966. Canadian owned and operated, it is the country's largest provider of home and community health care services, with more than 40 locations and 6,000 employees in eight provinces. Its specialties are in-home nursing, personal care and home support - offered directly to consumers and also delivered through government care programs, personal and group insurance plans, and workplace safety insurance. The company's other services include nurse and caregiver staffing, pharmaceutical support services, health education programs, infusion clinics and dialysis centres. Bayshore Home Health has been a member of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies program since 2006.

(*) These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted for Bayshore Home Health from November 12 to 20, 2007. The poll was conducted among 1,150 adult Canadians between the ages of 65 and 85. The margin of error is + 2.9%, 19 times out of 20. The sample was derived to have a robust national sample and the data was weighted to reflect Canada's regional, age and gender composition of individuals aged 65 to 85.

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