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COVID-19 Has Shifted Canadians' Views on Living in a Long-Term Care Setting, Survey Shows
Sixty per cent changed opinion on arranging for themselves or loved one to live in nursing or retirement home

TORONTO – Today, the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) and TELUS Health together released the findings of an online national survey gauging the perspectives of 1,571 Canadians during the pandemic on where they want to live as they age, concerns about living independently, caregiving, and social isolation.

“Given the significant number of COVID-19 deaths in Canadian nursing and retirement homes, it is not surprising that 60 per cent of Canadians, and almost 70 per cent of Canadians 65 and older, report that COVID-19 has changed their opinion on living in a nursing or retirement home,” said Dr. Samir Sinha, director of health policy research at the NIA. “Now, we are seeing Canadians of all ages planning on supporting themselves to live in their own home as long as possible.”

Nine-in-ten (90 per cent) agree that as they age, they intend to do whatever they can to stay active and maintain their optimal health and independence. Eight-in-ten (80 per cent) Canadians say they are open to receiving advice on how to live safely on their own from trusted friends and family.

COVID-19 has also shone a light on caregiving and social isolation. The survey found that most Canadians are not prepared personally or financially to become caregivers, with only 43 per cent reporting that they are prepared. Two-thirds (67 per cent) of Canadians believe that a lack of companionship and social connection with other people negatively impacts their overall health and well-being. Nearly half (47%) say they have been experiencing a lack of real companionship and regular social connections with other people, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Younger Canadians aged 55 and under, are significantly more likely to agree with statements regarding lack of companionship compared to those aged 55+.

“As an organization committed to improving health experiences for all Canadians, we are proud to partner with the NIA to raise awareness of key issues around safe and independent ageing,” says Juggy Sihota, Vice President of Consumer Health at TELUS. “It’s important for us to listen to the needs of older Canadians and provide them with the resources – from information on maintaining optimal health to wearable technology like personal emergency response systems (PERS) – so they can live life on their own terms.”

More people than ever before have become interested in doing whatever is necessary to stay active and maintain their optimal health and independence, but 30 per cent of older Canadians do not feel prepared should they be alone when a medical emergency occurs, and 79 per cent say they have not spoken to their healthcare providers about what to do if a fall occurs. The full findings of the survey can be found in the report, [Pandemic Perspectives on Ageing in Canada in light of COVID-19: Findings from a National Institute on Ageing/ TELUS Health Survey](#).

The online survey of 1517 Canadians aged 18+, was completed between July 24-27, 2020, using Leger’s online panel. With a sample of 1517 respondents, the margin of error is +/-2.5%, 19 times out of 20.



The [National Institute on Ageing](#) is a Ryerson University think tank focused on the realities of Canada's ageing population.

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