



Large Majority of Canadians Open to Discussing End-of-Life Care

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For Immediate Release

Markham, ON -- More than 80 per cent of Canadians say they're comfortable talking about end-of-life care issues, according to an Environics Research survey commissioned by Saint Elizabeth, a national non-profit charitable health care provider.

The survey shows 34 per cent of respondents say they're "very comfortable" discussing these issues, while a further 47 per cent are "somewhat comfortable". Only three per cent say they're not at all comfortable.

"We assume that Canadians do not want to talk about their final days, but these results challenge that conventional wisdom," said Shirlee Sharkey, President and CEO of Saint Elizabeth. "This level of readiness will help us have these important conversations with individuals and their families."

The survey shows only one quarter of Canadians over the age of 30 have made end-of-life care plans, and just 40% over the age of 70 have done so. Other findings include:

- 51% of respondents would prefer to receive end-of-life care at home, but most believe it's offered only in nursing homes, hospitals, hospices and retirement homes. Only 11% see their own homes as an option.
- 70% of respondents say it is their own responsibility to make decisions related to end-of-life care, though 87% would trust family members to make decisions on their behalf.
- Just 10% say it is their doctor's decision on what care is appropriate, but 57% would ask their doctor for information and advice.
- There is confusion about who pays for end-of-life care. One quarter believe it is funded by government, but 70% worry they won't have enough money to pay for their own care.

"The study also told us that a majority of people want to die at home in a comfortable environment, surrounded by family, friends and memories," added Sharkey. "However, there is also tremendous anxiety about how a home death might burden their families, how their medical treatment would be administered, and even who would pay for it."

"This study shows that Canadians are ready to start the conversation," said Sharon Baxter, Executive Director of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association. "A minority of Canadians -- only 16-30 per cent -- currently have access to specialist hospice palliative care services. We need to take the time to educate people on what is included in hospice palliative care and what the palliative approach to care can do. Only then can Canadians advocate for change."

The web-based survey was conducted by Environics Research between August 7 and 12, 2013, with a sample of 1,049 Canadians aged 30 and over, recruited from an online panel. The sample was representative of the



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general population based on age, gender, income and geography. As the survey was conducted online, no margin of error could be calculated.

About Saint Elizabeth Health Care

Saint Elizabeth (www.saintelizabeth.com) has been a trusted name in Canadian health care for more than a century and is a leader in responding to client, family and system needs. As an award-winning national not-for-profit and charitable organization, Saint Elizabeth is known for its track record of social innovation and breakthrough clinical practices. Our team of more than 7,000 nurses, rehab therapists, personal support workers and crisis intervention staff deliver over six million health care visits annually.

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