

**CARP Home Care Poll Report
April 24, 2015**

Key Findings

One half of members receive home care or know someone who does, and those who do rate the quality of the care received as somewhere just between “good” and “fair” on a four point scale. On average, recipients waited 31 days for an initial assessment, a further 20 days for home care to start and all this despite an expectation that home care should begin with 10 days, on average, from the initial assessment and that this should be the subject of firm guidelines.

While few have an opinion, those who do assume home care has gotten worse in Canada, not improved, in the past decade, and most say it is difficult getting information on availability and qualifying criteria, items most are not familiar with.

The vast majority want home care administered by providers, not administrators, they agree the family doctor or a local social agency take the lead in directing it and it should be provided by a Personal Care Worker or a nurse practitioner. There is unanimous agreement palliative care must be included in home care.

The largest barriers to the provision of comprehensive, effective home care are seen to be a lack of political will and a lack of funding. Some say a genuine effort is being made but that progress is incremental and difficult to discern. Many also see providers as being out of touch with patient needs, and the fact that administrative functions are taking up valuable operational funds.

There is wide agreement that recent funding for home care is more about electioneering than trying to solve a genuine problem, that it is a service all Canadians should expect to rely on, but can't at present, that this situation demonstrates the failings and incompetence of governments and that current wait times are completely unacceptable.

Members recall more Conservative advertising aimed at seniors than from other parties, but they agree the NDP features the best platform for seniors.

The Liberals continue to lead in member voting preference, trailed by the Conservatives. The NDP is in third place. Despite this, members are more likely to expect the Conservatives to win the next election than they are the Liberals, although the gap between the two leading parties is beginning to narrow.

Detailed Findings

One half of members are acquainted with someone who receives home care (53%), although this is unlikely to be the member or a spouse (5% each).

Do you or does anyone you know receives home based care, whether it's chronic care, rehabilitation or primary care?

YES	53%
Me	5%
Spouse	5%
Family member	15%
Someone I know	28%
NO	47%

Most who receive care or know someone who does say this care is “good” (41%) rather than ‘excellent” (14%). One quarter find it “fair” (28%) while few find it “poor” (7%).

How would you rate the quality of care you or this person receives?

Excellent	14%
Good	41%
Fair	28%
Poor	7%
DON'T KNOW	9%

On average, those receiving care waited 31 days for their initial assessment, and a further 20 days, on average, between the assessment and the first visit. The acceptable time for this is seen to be half this period, or about 10 days on average.

How long did you or this person wait for the initial assessment to determine if home care was needed/How long after the assessment was complete did you or this person wait for home care to start/What is an acceptable maximum time one should wait between the initial assessment and receiving home care?

	Assessment	Home Care	Acceptable
A day or two	6%	8%	15%
Less than a week	13%	24%	38%
A week to less than a month	27%	28%	35%
A month or two	17%	11%	4%
Longer than this	12%	6%	*
AVG LENGTH OF TIME	31 days	20 days	10 days
DON'T KNOW	25%	23%	9%

Virtually all members agree with firm deadlines for initial assessment and care to begin (92%), and more than half agree strongly (56%).

Do you agree or disagree there should be firm guidelines for how long a patient must wait for an assessment, and how long they must wait for home care to begin?

AGREE	92%
Agree strongly	56%
Agree	36%
DISAGREE	5%
Disagree	3%
Disagree strongly	2%
DON'T KNOW	4%

Twice as many see home care as having gotten worse in Canada (29%) as see it having improved (14%). Most don't know the answer to this (42%).

As far as you know, has there been a change in quality of the home care available in Canada in the past ten years?

Improved	14%
Become worse	29%
No change	15%
DON'T KNOW	42%

The strong majority agrees it is difficult to access information about home care in their province (70%).

How difficult is it to get information about qualifying for and receiving home care in your province?

DIFFICULT	70%
Very difficult	15%
Somewhat difficult	55%
NOT DIFFICULT	30%
Not very difficult	24%
Not at all difficult	6%

Few are aware of the types of home care available and the criteria for qualifying (31%) and even fewer are "very" familiar (6%).

How familiar are you with which types of home care are publicly covered and what the criteria for eligibility are?

FAMILIAR	31%
Very familiar	6%
Somewhat familiar	25%
NOT FAMILIAR	59%
Not very familiar	32%
Not at all familiar	27%
DON'T KNOW	7%

The vast majority agrees it is important that home care programs are managed by providers and administrative clutter kept to a minimum (93%), and 4-in-10 find this “extremely important” (40%).

In some provinces, there are multiple layers of administration for home care assessments and provision. How important is it that home care programs are streamlined and managed by actual providers?

IMPORTANT	93%
Extremely important	40%
Very important	36%
Important	17%
NOT IMPORTANT	3%
Not very important	2%
Not at all important	1%
DON'T KNOW	5%

There is agreement home care should be directed by the family doctor (23%) or a local social services agency (12%) or by a combination of providers (37%).

Who should take the lead in directing home care services for the care recipient?

Family doctor	23%
Local social services agency	12%
A central office	9%
Care recipient's family	7%
Local hospital or clinic	5%
Care recipient	3%
More than one of these	37%
DON'T KNOW	5%

There is wide agreement home care should be provided by a personal care worker (43%), and this is followed by those who think a nurse practitioner is appropriate (25%). A nurse is also considered (14%).

Who should the home care provider be?

Personal care worker	43%
Nurse practitioner	25%
Nurse	14%
Doctor making house calls	3%
Social worker	2%
Someone else	2%
DON'T KNOW	4%

There is virtually unanimous agreement palliative care must be a part of home care (94%) and one half says this is “extremely important” (49%).

How important is it to integrate palliative care and home care?

IMPORTANT	94%
Extremely important	49%
Very important	30%
Important	15%
NOT IMPORTANT	1%
Not very important	1%
Not at all important	*
DON'T KNOW	3%

The three main reasons members see for little action on home care is a lack of political will (26%), a critical lack of funds (20%) and the perception care providers are out of touch with patient needs (16%).

Why do you think government and health care providers are so slow to provide timely, affordable, effective home care?

No political will to supply funding	26%
Costs too great	20%
Providers out of touch with patient needs	16%
Inability to see past status quo	9%
More concerned with hospital/acute care	7%
Don't accept good care available outside homes	5%
Vested interests (hospitals/insurers) object	5%
No risk in inaction on this file	2%
Providers have good care/don't see need for others	1%
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	10%

Many members blame overhead and administrative costs for eating at home care availability (30%), while others just blame poor administration (19%) and a lack of political will for change (21%) as reasons home care access hasn't improved, despite increased spending.

Many governments are now increasing spending on home care in Canada, yet access does not improve. Why is this?

Funds spent on administration/overhead	30%
No political will to reform child care	21%
Poor administration	19%
More funding needed than being provided	7%
Funds spent are symbolic	6%
Vested interests won't lead needed change	5%
Time required for improvements to show	3%
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	9%

The wide majority is four times more likely to agree the current sums spent on home care are election year handouts (61%) rather than genuine attempts to improve service (15%).

Are the sums being spent on home care a real attempt to improve service or are they just election-year handouts?

Election year hand outs	61%
Real attempt to improve service	15%
Someone else	8%
DON'T KNOW	16%

The vast majority says the current wait times in Ontario for home care are unacceptable (80%) and two thirds describe it as completely unacceptable (63%).

In Ontario, an audit of home care service provision showed the wait for an assessment was as long as 15 months, and the wait for home care was as long as 9 months. Is this acceptable or unacceptable?

ACCEPTABLE	17%
Completely acceptable	16%
Acceptable	1%
UNACCEPTABLE	80%
Unacceptable	17%
Completely unacceptable	63%
DON'T KNOW	3%

The vast majority say home care is a health care service all Canadians have a right to (93%) but very few say this is the case in their province (9%).

Should home care be a health care service all Canadians can expect to receive as soon as they need it?

	Ideal	Your Province
Yes	93%	9%
No	3%	59%
DON'T KNOW	4%	32%

Reasons members give for lack of action on home care include the fact governments are failing their duty to citizens (23%), that they are incompetent and ineffective (16%), that progress *is* being made but is hard to discern (15%), that reforming home care is a genuinely difficult task (14%), that governments have never intended to provide home care (13%) or that they have already failed their citizens (11%).

Home care has been shown to improve health outcomes and save money, and is repeatedly mentioned as a top priority by members. Provincial governments admit this is the case and say they support home care. Yet home care remains difficult to access. How would you describe this situation?

Governments failing their duty to citizens	23%
Governments are ineffective/incompetent	16%
Progress slowly being made/hard to see	15%
Genuinely hard/time-consuming to reorganize	14%
Governments never meant to provide home care	13%
Governments have failed their duty to citizens	11%
Time required for improvements to show	3%
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	8%

The NDP (22%) and the Liberals (18%) are seen to have the best programs for seniors in their platforms, more so than the Conservatives (14%) or especially the Green Party (2%).

Which of the leading federal parties has the best program for older Canadians in their platform?

NDP	22%
Liberals	18%
Conservatives	14%
Greens	2%
NONE OF THESE	12%
MORE THAN ONE OF THESE	3%
ALL OF THESE	1%
DON'T KNOW	28%

Members are twice as likely to recall Conservative advertising (11%) as ads for the Liberals (5%) or New Democrats (4%), and Conservative recall is mostly for television (8%), as opposed to the Liberals (3%) or NDP (2%).

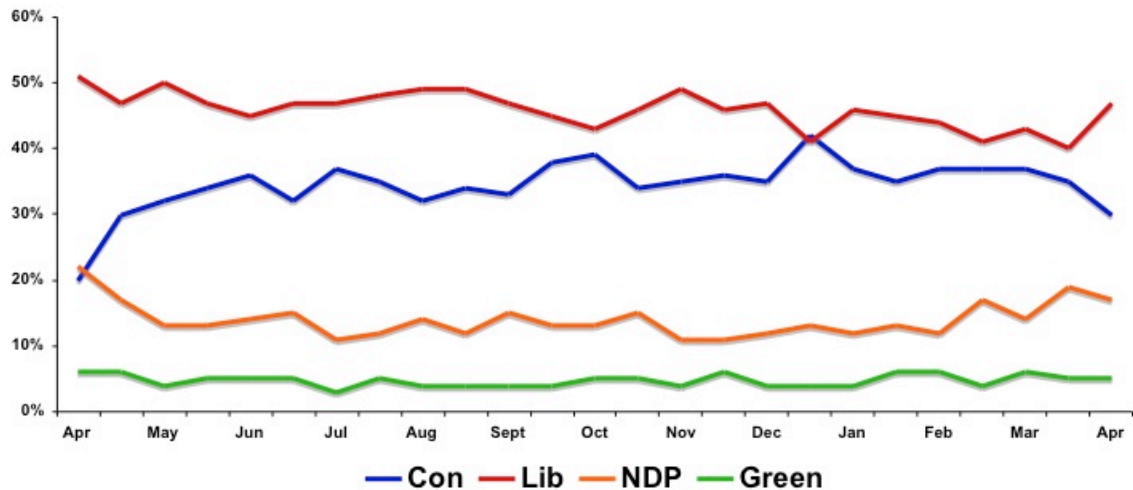
Do you recall seeing or hearing any advertising about election promises for seniors recently?

CONSERVATIVES	11%
TV ads	8%
Print ads	2%
Radio ads	1%
LIBERALS	5%
TV ads	3%
Print ads	1%
Radio ads	1%
NDP	4%
TV ads	2%
Print ads	1%
Radio ads	1%
HAVEN'T SEEN OR HEARD ADS	81%

Electoral Preference

After briefly tying the Liberals for first place, the Conservatives have returned to second place (30%) where they have been for a year or more, and their vote share has declined from 35%. The Liberal's lead (47%) has increased sharply (from 40%) and the NDP is in third (17%), with a recent increase (from 14%) at the expense of the other two parties.

Despite a member preference for the Liberals, most expect the Conservatives to win the next election (48%), and this trend is mostly NDP voters who realize their party will not win (6%), but who do not think the Liberals can (45%). Nonetheless, a sharp shift has occurred, and both the Liberals and the NDP have improved their expectations of victory at the expense of the Conservatives.



Which party do you EXPECT to win the next election?

	Jan 15	Jan 31	Feb 10	Mar 10	Mar 24	Apr 10
Liberals	47%	44%	45%	45%	40%	45%
Conservatives	50%	53%	52%	52%	54%	48%
NDP	2%	2%	2%	4%	1%	6%
Green	*	*	*	*	*	*

More than 1100 CARP Poll™ online panel members responded to this poll between April 7 and 101, 2015. The margin of error for a probability sample this size is about plus or minus 3%, 19 times out of 20