



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Older Canadians Fiercely Independent**

*– Most want to avoid nursing homes, but many don't admit to needing help –*

**Mississauga, Ontario, June 1, 2009** – A new survey released for Seniors Month shows that seniors want to live independently for as long as possible. The study reveals that the majority of people aged 65 to 85 will do whatever it takes to avoid moving into a nursing home or extended care facility.

In its second annual *Living for Today – Ready for Tomorrow* survey conducted by Ipsos-Reid, Bayshore Home Health talked to older Canadians aged 65-85 as well as people aged 40-64 who have at least one parent living. The study shows a strong desire for independence amongst older Canadians – more than eight out of ten would do everything they can to avoid moving to an extended care facility or nursing home and 97% say they are trying to be pro-active about their health.

However, despite these assertions, there are areas in which elderly Canadians are not being pro-active in achieving their goals of independence. Less than half (46%) have researched ways to live independently at home and just four out of ten have made modifications to their home to ensure it's a safe environment. A mere three per cent say they are on a waiting list for an assisted living facility.

“Although the study revealed a strong desire for independence, it also showed that many seniors will not admit to needing any assistance,” says Holly Quinn, chief nursing officer at Bayshore Home Health, the sponsor of the study. “Close to three-quarters of older Canadians claim they don't need any help at all around their home.”

According to Quinn, these attitudes could be detrimental in the long run and reduce an individual's chances of remaining independent. She suggests that families should take a number of steps to plan for a future of independent living:

1. Talk openly with family, friends and health care professionals about future needs and possible living arrangements. Discuss the alternatives available (including home health

care, relying on family and moving to a senior's home or long-term care facility). Allow everyone an opportunity to provide input on the best approach.

2. Evaluate current living arrangements. If an individual has a large house to maintain or they need to use the stairs frequently, a move to a smaller home might make sense.
3. Consider modifications to the home to increase independent living options. Simple changes like making sure windows are easy to open or door locks are simple to operate can make a big difference in someone's enjoyment of their home. A variety of resources are available from the Public Health Agency of Canada ([www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines)) or the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ([www.chmc.ca](http://www.chmc.ca)).
4. Since most falls occur at home, especially in the kitchen, on the stairs or in the bathroom, take some time to review any potential hazards. For example, make sure stairs are well-lit, eliminate throw rugs and use a non-skid bath mat.
5. A little bit of help can go a long way to maintaining an independent lifestyle. Consider hiring help for housekeeping, grocery shopping, traveling to medical appointments or even companionship.
6. If there's a health issue or an individual has recently been released from a hospital stay, additional care may be needed. Investigate the possibility of having a nurse visit to help with on-going care or recovery.
7. Take care by eating properly and remaining active.

### **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 home care offices, 20 community care clinics and 8,000 employees. Its core services are in-home nursing, personal care and home support – which can be purchased directly by individuals and also accessed through government care programs, personal and group insurance plans and workplace safety insurance. Its caregivers deliver more than 5.2 million hours of home care annually to over 57,000 clients. It also provides nurse/caregiver staffing services, health education programs and treatments in its dialysis centres. Its subsidiary, Bayshore Specialty Rx, offers infusion pharmacy, infusion clinic and pharmaceutical support services to a variety of health care and pharmaceutical organizations.

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\* These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for Bayshore Home Health from February 10 to February 17, 2009. The poll was conducted via telephone among 1,000 adult Canadians between the ages of 65 and 85 inclusive and 1,001 adult Canadians between the ages of 40 and 64 inclusive. For each sample group the margin of error is  $\pm 3.1\%$ , 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults aged 40 to 64 and 65 to 85 in Canada been interviewed.