



Public Summary

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The Commonwealth Fund is a private U.S. foundation that aims to promote a high-performing health care system. The 2014 International Health Policy Survey focuses on people age 55 and older from 11 countries: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. In Canada, additional funding for an expanded Canadian sample was provided by CIHI, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Health Quality Council of Alberta, the Commissaire à la santé et au bien-être du Québec and Health Quality Ontario.

Additional Resources

The following companion products are available on [CIHI's website](#):

- Report
- Infographics
- Data tables
- Media release

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End-of-life planning is more common among older Canadians

How Canada Compares: Results From The Commonwealth Fund 2014 International Health Policy Survey of Older Adults

Death is an inevitable part of life, but the dying process can be extremely taxing for patients, their families and the health system. All countries are struggling to understand the best models of care at the end of life, and how to provide comfort and dignity in a way that is sustainable.

By choice, or sometimes by necessity, it is often friends and family members who become the main caregivers of people at the end of their lives or of those who have chronic health problems associated with age, such as dementia. According to Statistics Canada, there are 2 million informal caregivers in Canada over the age of 55.

Older Canadians were considerably more likely than older people in other countries to be planning for end-of-life care or at least discussing it with their loved ones.

Key findings

- Older Canadians were more likely than older people in other countries to have discussions about end-of-life care or to make written plans (third among 11 surveyed countries, behind Germany and the United States).
 - While all provinces were above The Commonwealth Fund average (44%), the percentage of older Canadians who have had end-of-life care discussions varied from 47% to 64%.
- More than half of older Canadians have had discussions about treatments they do or do not want at the end of their life.
- About 1 in 5 older Canadians is an informal caregiver—similar to the international average.
- 47% of older Canadian caregivers spend 10 hours or more per week looking after a loved one (fourth among surveyed countries, behind the U.S., Australia and New Zealand).