

March 3rd, 2021

**HealthPartners poll on the impact of COVID-19 on health charities' work raises the alarm
- Canada is in the Silent Wave of a chronic disease shadow pandemic.**

OTTAWA, ON – March 1, 2021 – A national poll conducted in January 2021 found 66% of those with chronic disease and major illness have faced some level of difficulty in accessing care and treatment for their illness since the beginning of the pandemic. While diagnostic, screening and treatment delays are worsening Canadians' physical health outcomes with chronic disease, data suggest that it is also deteriorating their mental health and that of their caregivers.

As a result, one in three (34%) have turned to support programs and services (outside the healthcare system) that they did not use prior to the pandemic and are relying more on intermediate services, like those offered by health charities as they await treatment. 64% said they are likely to access more health charities services even after the pandemic is over.

In response to the findings, Eileen Dooley, CEO of HealthPartners, says, "We know that 87% of Canadians are likely to be affected by one or more chronic diseases or major illnesses throughout their lifetime. The impact of COVID-19 on these Canadians – and their families and caregivers – cannot be understated. The threat of the virus itself, coupled with difficulties in accessing services, diagnoses, and supports – at the same time that health charities have seen major losses in funding – is contributing to significant challenges to Canadians living with chronic disease and their caregivers."

"Canadians overwhelmingly see health charities as an ideal partner for a collaborative solution," said David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data. "Ninety-one per-cent of Canadians want to see the federal government work with health charities to help navigate and solve the immediate strains on the healthcare system caused by delays to treatments and services."

HealthPartners and its member charities are calling on the government of Canada to ensure that Canadians living with chronic disease – and their caregivers – have the support they need during the crisis and beyond. The organisation is also calling upon Canadians to support those they love by supporting their #HealthChampionsCan initiative.

More information on the findings of the report, and the #HealthChampionsCan campaign and the public opinion research can be found online at: www.healthchampionscan.ca

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About

HealthPartners | Building a healthier Canada

HealthPartners is your connection to Canada's most respected and well-known health charities, which represent some of the most devastating chronic diseases and serious illnesses faced by Canadians. Through a unique partnership with these charities, we engage and connect with employers and employees in the national, provincial and municipal public sectors and in private-sector workplaces across the country.

To learn more, visit: www.healthpartnerscan.ca

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