

COVID-19 and the extended care crisis: two-thirds support government takeovers of long-term care facilities

Past Liberal, NDP and Bloc voters overwhelmingly favour nationalization, past CPC voters divided

May 25, 2020 – The horror and sorrow arising from the disproportionate number of deaths in long-term care facilities as a direct or indirect result of the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed grim realities about the conditions in which Canadian seniors (and others who cannot care for themselves) live.

Recent estimates are that 82 per cent of all deaths in the country have occurred in these places.

Now, the latest study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds two-thirds of Canadians (66%) say government should take over – or nationalize - LTCFs in order to increase the health and safety outcomes for people requiring long-term care. One-third (34%) disagree.

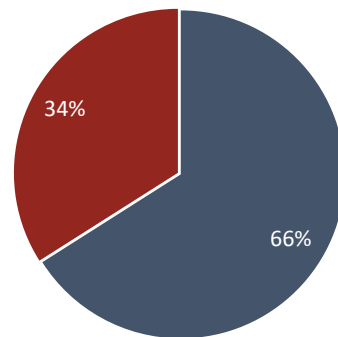
Opinions on this issue diverge primarily by political affiliation. Those who voted for the Conservative Party in last year's federal election are a group divided, with 47 per cent favouring nationalization and 53 per cent opposing it. Among past supporters of the other major federal parties, at least three-quarters favour government control of privately owned LTCFs.

Currently, long-term care falls under provincial jurisdiction and is not subject to national standards under the Canada Health Act. The National Union of Public and General Employees has requested that the federal government extend the law to LTCFs in order to ensure consistent standards. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has stated that this will be a consideration after a post-pandemic review takes place.

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Which statement is closer to your own point of view, even if you don't completely agree?



- Long term/extended care facilities should be nationalized
- Long term/extended care facilities should NOT be nationalized

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from May 18 – 19, 2020 among a representative randomized sample of 1,777 Canadian adults who are members of Angus Reid Forum. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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Most Canadians support nationalization of long-term care

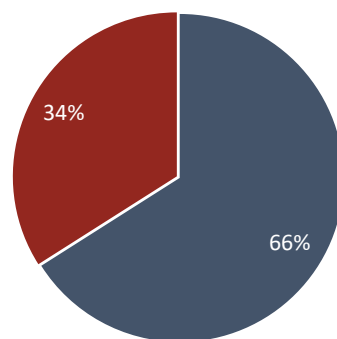
Canada is not the only country whose elderly have been exposed to devastating rates of death and endured terrible circumstances in long-term care facilities. According to the World Health Organization approximately half of the deaths attributed to COVID-19 in Europe and close to 40 per cent in the United States have occurred in LTCFs.

The hardest hit provinces in Canada have been the most populous ones; Ontario and Quebec. In Ontario, more than 280 facilities have reported an outbreak, leading to nearly 1,500 deaths. In Quebec, more than 270 facilities were infected and more than 2,000 residents have died.

While there are months of debate forthcoming about what went wrong, who is to blame and how to prevent it from ever happening again, there are already strong calls to overhaul long-term care. One of the most prominent suggestions for how to approach this, made by health officials and NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, among others, is to nationalize long-term care and extend it under the auspices of the Canada Health Act.

While politicians debate the merits of such a change, it appears that most Canadians would welcome it as a start. Two-thirds (66%) say that they would support such a shift in policy while one-third (34%) say nationalization would be the wrong direction to pursue:

Which statement is closer to your own point of view, even if you don't completely agree?



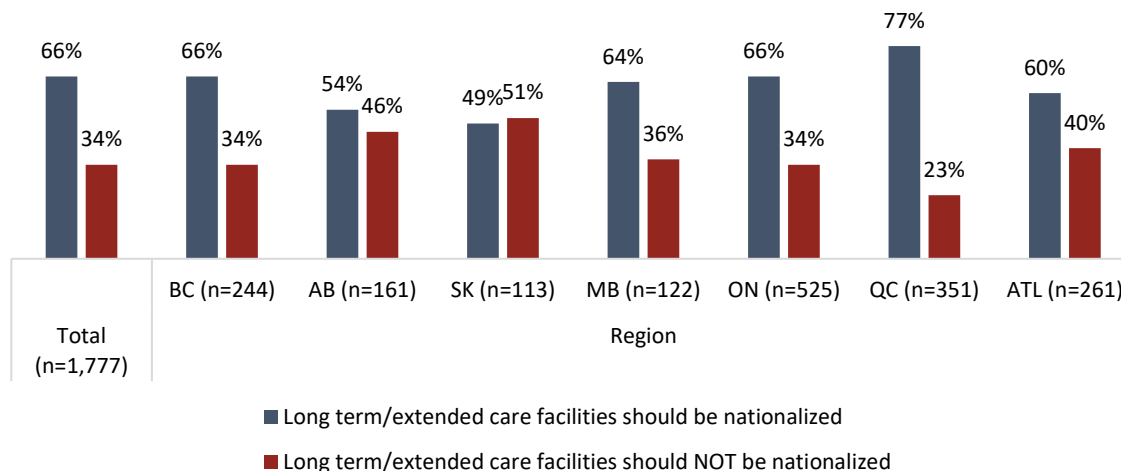
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Quebec Premier Francois Legault recently stated that there is "no reason" for the federal government to take control of the industry, but his constituents are most likely to feel it would be the right move if they did. Nearly four-in-five (77%) Quebec residents support nationalization, as do to two-thirds of Ontarians (66%) and British Columbians (66%):

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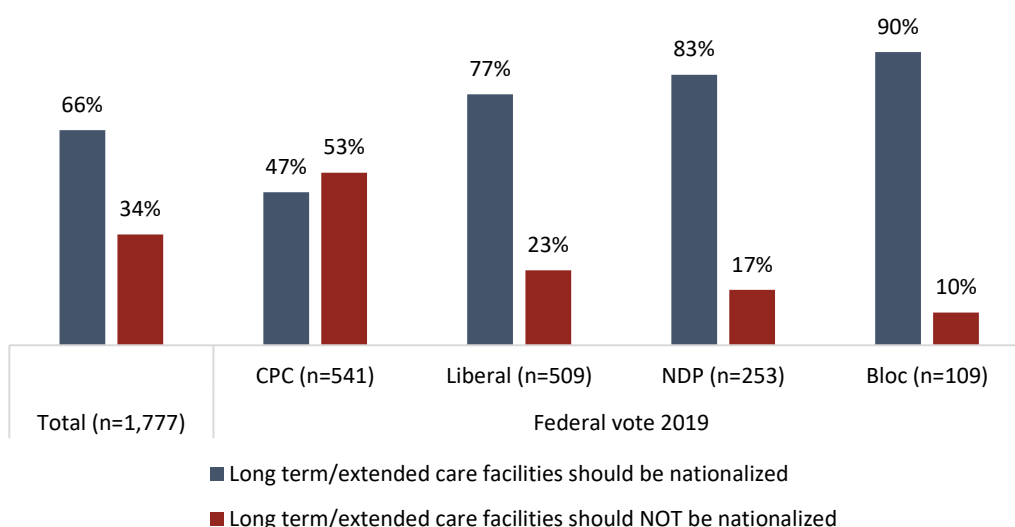
Which statement is closer to your own point of view, even if you don't completely agree?



Political and other demographic perspectives

Prime Minister Trudeau has thus far resisted commenting on any plans to move these facilities under the Canada Health Act. Past Bloc Quebecois, Liberal and NDP supporters are overwhelmingly in favour of nationalization while past Conservative voters are divided:

Which statement is closer to your own point of view, even if you don't completely agree?



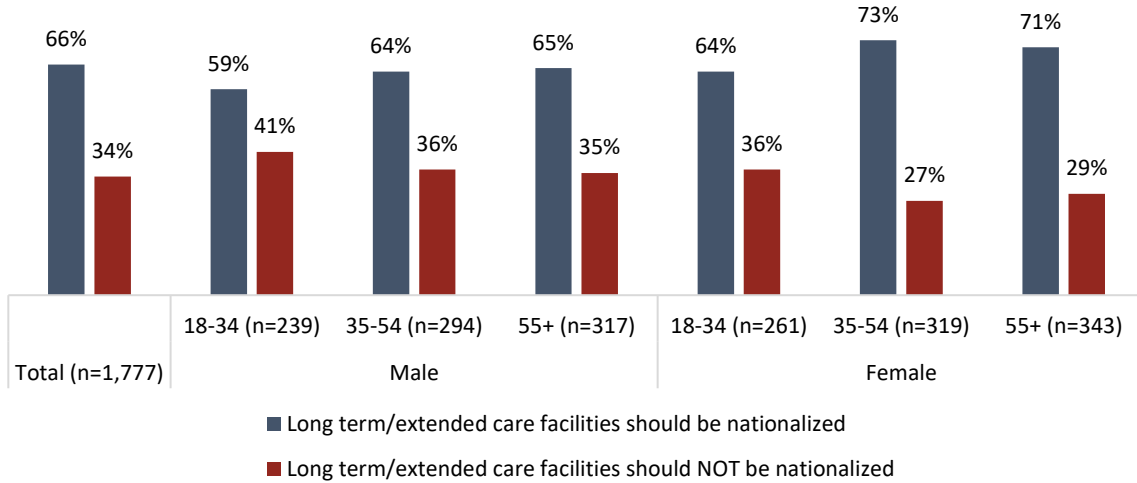
Household income plays a minimal factor in opinions on this issue, with at least 63 per cent of all levels saying LTCFs should be nationalized ([see detailed tables](#)). A majority of Canadians across each age and

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gender category lean toward this policy. This opinion is held at the highest levels by women over the age of 34:

Which statement is closer to your own point of view, even if you don't completely agree?



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).