



PRESS RELEASE | British Columbia

#### **Methodology:**

Results are based on an online study conducted from September 22 to September 24, 2020, among 800 adults in British Columbia. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region in British Columbia. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is +/- 3.5 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty.

**We would like to ask you some questions about long-term care homes—also known as nursing homes for the elderly, seniors' care homes, or residential care homes. How closely do you follow issues related to long-term care in British Columbia?**

Very closely – 17%  
Moderately closely – 48%  
Not too closely – 27%  
Not closely at all – 8%

**As you may know, British Columbia will hold a provincial election on October 24. How important will the issue of long-term care be to you when you decide which party or candidate to vote for?**

Very important – 32%  
Somewhat important – 47%  
Not very important – 16%  
Not at all important – 5%

#### **British Columbians Support Phasing Out For-Profit Long-Term Care**

*The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the deficiencies of for-profit seniors' care and this issue will be top of mind for voters.*

Burnaby, BC [September 29, 2020] – A new Research Co. poll has found that a significant majority of British Columbians are concerned about for-profit corporations in the province's long-term care sector and would prefer not-for-profit operators to be awarded new contracts for delivery of these services. The survey of a representative provincial sample was conducted on behalf of the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU), a lead union in long-term care representing more than 5,000 members in the sector.

"The pandemic shone a light on what BCGEU members and others on the front lines of the long-term care sector have been saying since the early 2000s when the rules were changed to allow increased privatization: for-profit long-term care is a bad deal for workers and for seniors," said BCGEU president Stephanie Smith.

The poll's results include the following:

- 73 per cent of British Columbians with opinions on the issue would prefer to see for-profit operators reduced, and 71 per cent would prefer not-for-profit operators to be in charge of new long-term care bed contracts;
- 79 per cent said the issue of long-term care will be important (32% very important, 47% moderately important) in determining their vote on October 24<sup>th</sup>; and
- 65 per cent of respondents confirmed they have been following issues related to long-term care.

"This poll shows that British Columbians not only understand what's going on in the long-term care sector, they know what needs to be done about it," said Smith. "The bottom line is British Columbians agree with what our union has been saying for years: we need to shift away from the for-profit delivery of seniors' care. Now that we have an election coming up, I'm challenging all political parties to be clear about their plan to tackle the ongoing crisis in long-term care."

A report from B.C.'s seniors advocate tabled in February, just before the pandemic took hold of the province, revealed that for-profit seniors' care operators failed to deliver 207,000 care hours which they were funded to deliver. The Research Co. poll addressed that report's findings and found that 91 per cent of British Columbians believe the provincial government should



monitor whether long-term care homes are delivering the care hours they are funded to provide and 86 per cent believe that those who fail to do so should face penalties.

"As we've seen during the pandemic, for-profit seniors' care operators pad their bottom line by suppressing wages, allowing working conditions to deteriorate and cutting corners on care," Smith continued. "While companies increase their profit margins, frontline staff and the seniors they care for pay the price. It's been going on too long and it's unacceptable."

"British Columbians who have a personal connection to long-term care are more likely to call for a reduction on the participation of the for-profit sector in the future," says Mario Canseco, President of Research Co. "Significantly fewer residents of the province believe expanding the role of for-profit corporations in long-term care is the right course of action."

In April 2020, the BCGEU launched a campaign calling on the provincial government to end for-profit long-term care in B.C. The campaign has garnered nearly 15,000 signatures to date. The union also supports national calls for a federal framework for the public delivery of seniors' care.

==30==

**About BCGEU**

The BCGEU is one of the largest and most diverse unions in British Columbia. We represent over 80,000 members in 550 bargaining units in the private sector and public services.

We trace our beginnings back to the early 1900s when provincial government employees formed an association to address their working conditions. Since then, your union has organized thousands of workers outside the government service. We're continuing to grow.

About a third of the BCGEU's membership works in the direct government service. Their jobs include protecting children, providing financial assistance to the poor, protecting the environment and managing our natural resources, caring for the mentally ill in institutions, staffing provincial correctional facilities, fighting forest fires and providing the government's technical and clerical services.

Your union is also proud to represent thousands of members in health care, community social services, education, highways



mario.canseco  
@researchco.ca



mario\_canseco



778.929.0490



Mario Canseco



maintenance, casinos, credit unions, municipalities, regional districts and other employers.

**About Research Co.**

Simply put, we are curious about what people think and the decisions they will make. Some call it public opinion, others call it polling or public affairs. We never compromise facts for profit. Our agenda is the truth.

We have a global network of partners in the qualitative, data collection and data visualization specialities.

==30==

**Media contacts:**

Bronwen Barnett, BCGEU Communications  
[c] 604.719.4713  
[e] bronwen.barnett@bcgeu.ca

Mario Canseco, President, Research Co.  
[c] 778.929.0490  
[e] mario.canseco@researchco.ca

==30==



mario.canseco  
@researchco.ca



mario\_canseco



778.929.0490



Mario Canseco