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## Special Edition: CIHI Report on Palliative Care\*

The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) report on access to palliative care in Canada was just released. It shows an increase in the number of people receiving palliative care, as well as the number of those receiving the support they need to die at home.

While this is good news, the report also shows that there is still much work to be done. Many are receiving palliative care later than is optimal. Many others, particularly those from underserved populations, still have inadequate access to palliative care.

Read the highlights of the data gleaned from provinces and territories below.

### Access to care

#### Access to palliative care has improved.

- More people are receiving some form of palliative care compared with 5 years ago (58% vs. 52%).
- More people who die at home are doing so supported by palliative home care compared with 5 years ago (13% vs. 7%).
- Three times as many residents who died in long term care received palliative care in their last year of life compared with 5 years ago (19% versus 6%).

### Barriers to access

#### Some people experience greater barriers to accessing palliative care based on:

- **Diagnosis:** Cancer patients are the most likely to be identified as having palliative care needs in their last year of life (77%), while those with dementia are the least likely (39%).

- **Age:** Younger seniors — age 65 to 84 at time of death — are most likely to receive palliative care, followed by those age 19 to 64. Canadians 85 and older are least likely to receive palliative care.
- **Demographics and culture:**
  - People of colour, recent immigrants, and people experiencing homelessness or who are precariously housed have poorer access to palliative care.
  - Many Indigenous Peoples often face leaving their community to receive palliative care and as a result are separated from the integral social, cultural and spiritual support available at home.

## Quality of care

**Improvements have occurred in the last 5 years but there are still challenges:**

- Many people are still receiving palliative care later than is optimal – often shortly before death, rather than when they are diagnosed with a life-limiting illness.
  - Half of people die within 22 days of being identified as having palliative care needs.
- There are not enough at-home supports for palliative care.
- Only 40% of primary care physicians reported feeling prepared to care for patients with palliative care needs.
- People are dying in hospital waiting for palliative care in the community.

\* This special edition paraphrases highlights of the original report: Canadian Institute for Health Information. *Access to Palliative Care in Canada, 2023*. Ottawa, ON: CIHI; 2023.

[Read full report](#)

What do you think of the report? Does it reflect palliative care in your community? Join the conversation and have your say on [Facebook](#).

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