



Tackling the aging crisis

A plan for Canada heading into the 2019 election



Canadian Association
for Long Term Care

June, 2019

Long-term care homes provide housing – along with physical, medical, social, spiritual and emotional support – to more than 150,000 seniors across Canada. By living longer and living at home longer, seniors are arriving at care homes at a later stage in their condition with more complex health issues and more physically frail than ever before.

The prevalence of chronic conditions and cognitive impairment among residents has increased dramatically over the last decade. In 2016/17, 62% of residents were living with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia, with a third severely affected. Furthermore, most residents are living with multiple chronic conditions such as heart disease, arthritis, diabetes and hypertension.

Canada’s long-term care homes support people at this stage of their life, which can include extensive or complete support with everyday activities such as getting dressed, getting in and out of bed, eating and going to the bathroom.

Unfortunately, to date, long-term care continues to be ignored by federal policy makers. While the Federal Government has undertaken a number of initiatives to support seniors, none of these initiatives support seniors living in long-term care.

With this in mind, the Canadian Association for Long Term Care (CALTC) is pleased to put forward two key recommendations to address the aging crisis:

- 1. Address the seniors’ care labour crisis** by developing a federal health human resource strategy, better supporting international students in finding employment in long-term care, and investing in data and innovation.
- 2. Invest in seniors’ housing where care is provided** by expanding federal infrastructure funding to include long-term care and commit to funding new long-term care residences.

CALTC and its provincial association members across the country look forward to working with all federal parties to make seniors in long-term care a priority this Fall.

Sincerely,



Daniel Fontaine
Chair, Canadian Association for Long Term Care

Why is Canada not prepared to handle our rapidly aging population?



According to Statistics Canada, the number of Canadians age 65 and older will rise by 25% by 2036, and the number of seniors 80 years old and over will double between 2011 and 2036.¹ Furthermore, for the first time in Canadian history, seniors outnumber those under the age of 14.²

So why are seniors living in care homes not on the federal agenda?



The 2017 Federal Budget included a historic \$6 billion over 10 years for home and community care. **Long-term care was not included in this investment.**



The recently announced Home Support Worker Pilot for foreign caregivers **does not include employment in long-term care.**



For many seniors, long-term care is their home. However, the scope of the National Housing Strategy **does not include long-term care.**



While providing a number of supports for seniors, the 2019 Federal Budget **does not include investments in long-term care.**

To date, policy makers have missed a number of key opportunities to make seniors living in long-term care a priority for federal focus. With the aging crisis upon us, it's time to act.

On October 21st, Canadians will elect a new government. It is critical that all parties make seniors in long-term care a top priority.

The Canadian Association for Long-Term Care is calling on all parties in the upcoming election to make health human resources in seniors' care and long-term care infrastructure, a priority in their election platforms.

Canada is facing a serious shortage of seniors' care workers.

Changes to existing federal policies and program needed to address the critical shortage of front-line workers.

Canada lacks a health human resources strategy

In order to provide high quality care for Canada's seniors, we require the capacity to provide that care. Attracting and retaining individuals in careers that care for Canada's seniors has become increasingly challenging, especially when faced with the influx of seniors we know will require care for multiple and complex conditions.

A health human resources strategy for the long-term care sector would focus on the right number, mix, and geographic distribution of providers, as well as the appropriate setting for providers to deliver services. Furthermore, specifically supporting HCA/CCA/PSWs (from here on in referred to as "HCA")³ involves structured education and continuing training to support these individuals in providing the highest quality of care, and structured governance models to affirm HCA credentials, conduct and competence.

International students can be part of the solution

CALTC also believes that internationally recruited HCA students offer an opportunity to address — in part — the current supply crisis for trained staff in Canada.



The Federal Government has a clear role to play in helping resolve our health human resources crisis. We need to get them to the table in order to address this critical issue today.

Daniel Fontaine
Chair, Canadian Association for Long Term Care

However, to do so, we need support and changes made by the Federal Government to address current policy to help solve any chronic labour shortages.

Students that wish to utilize a Post Graduate Workers Permit (PGWP) can only do so by participating in eligible programs from designated learning institutions. Public or private post-secondary education institutions will apply to become a designated learning institution in their respective province or territory, and eligible programs must offer a program that is at least 900 hours in total length, equivalent to 8 months, according to federal requirements.⁴

There are a number of institutions that are not classified as eligible programs under federal requirements. This is concerning for two reasons.

First, the curriculums themselves being provided by these institutions are approved and recognized by the province or territory in which it is provided. And second, that same institution may also be a designated learning institution — a requirement to provide a PGWP program by the Federal Government. With both a provincially approved institution and a provincially approved curriculum — and yet not be an eligible program for PGWP students — it is incumbent on the Federal Government to address a gap in the PGWP program eligibility.

To address this growing concern — especially in an sector where there is a shortage of health care workers — the Canadian Association for Long-Term Care calls on all political parties to commit to establishing a limited pilot program that allows for provincially approved and certified programs at designated learning institutions — that may be shorter than 900 hours in length — participate as an approved Post Graduate Workers Permit Program. At the conclusion of the pilot program, consideration should be given to the impact of the change that may warrant a change in federal requirements for health care-based programs.



“The need for care of our elderly population is increasing while the availability of PSWs to provide for their care is rapidly decreasing. The issues are many and varied but they all come together to create a disaster in the making.”

Miranda Ferrier
President, Ontario Personal Support Workers Association

We understand that it is not plausible to believe that we can possibly solve the current HCA labour shortage through the recruitment of international students alone. However, we do believe that it is both cost-effective for governments, and appropriate to recruit international students that would attend Canadian educational institutions at their own cost. This would put them on a path towards employment in Canada and permanent residency that — in turn — helps fill a gap in our health care system.

Support innovation in health care with evidence-based decisions

Finally, better data and innovative reporting solutions are required in order to ensure that residents are receiving the high quality care they deserve. Providing all homes with better technology will better support the whole system, from residents to policy makers.

To achieve this, long-term care homes need to have access to the most up-to-date software system to collect and share data. While many homes do use some form of system, the majority of Canadian long-term care homes do not currently use or do not have access to the most recent system due to a lack of funding. The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) does establish common reporting guidelines, collecting and reporting on data that can support the sector as a whole. They will over the coming years move away from supporting one system, RAI-MDS 2.0, in order to standardize across Canada a more efficient system, LTCF.

Saving time and money with a system that requires less direct interventions from staff, LTCF provides more of the data that long-term care homes and policy makers need, while reducing information that may not be needed.

Governments will need to make investments in the early stages to set the health care system up for success to provide better care in the long-term.

Management Information Systems (MIS) is a framework that defines the standards of reporting financial and statistical information related to the daily operations of Canadian health service organizations.

Developed by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), these national standards were created to improve effectiveness and efficiency of Canada's long-term care and other health service organizations through better information and performance measures.

A portion of facilities across Canada report MIS financial and statistical data for most health care services to CIHI for inclusion in the Canadian MIS Database.

Currently, MIS Coordinators have been appointed in most provinces to facilitate the implementation of MIS at the provincial level. However, not all jurisdictions are using the same version of MIS which is contributing to some discrepancies in reporting and making it impossible to accurately measure and compare efficiencies and best practices across the country. Due to limited capacity and lack of available funding, we believe that approximately 40% of homes are still unable to implement this important initiative.

Recommendations

In order to address the labour shortage crisis in seniors' care, CALTC is calling on all federal parties to:

1. Develop a pan-Canadian health human resources strategy

CALTC is advocating that all parties commit to picking up where previous governments left off nearly 20 years ago by recognizing the significant challenges that the long-term care sector faces in supporting our aging population, and collaborating with the provinces and territories and the long-term care sector to immediately develop and implement a pan-Canadian health human resources strategy.

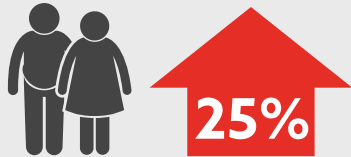
2. Support international students

CALTC is advocating that all parties commit to including provincial and territorial designated learning institutions that have provincially recognized programs as eligible programs for the Post Graduate Workers Permit in order to provide students with a pathway toward citizenship and employment within the long-term care sector.

3. Support data and evidence-based decisions

All parties should commit to mandate a standardized system for collecting residential and financial performance data in long-term care homes as part of the Canada Health Accord agreements signed with each of the provinces and territories. To support this work, CALTC is asking that all parties commit to providing it with \$19.5 million to ensure the full implementation of standardized Management Information Systems (MIS) across Canada for publicly funded care homes.

The state of seniors' care in Canada



Canadian population aged 65 and older will rise by approximately **25%** by 2036.



The number of seniors 80 and over is predicted to **double** between 2011 and 2036.



In 2016/17, **62%** of residents were living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.



CALTC believes that approximately **40%** of homes are still unable to implement Management Information Systems.



In Ontario alone, **50%** of homes are due for significant renovations or rebuild in order to meet current design standards.⁵



Approximately **40%** of homes in Canada require significant renovations or to be rebuilt, according to CALTC's provincial association members.⁶

Investing in seniors' housing where care is provided.

Seniors living in long-term care homes are excluded from major infrastructure programs.

Changes in the volume and complexity of residents living in long-term care homes has meant significant changes in the way they are cared for. Unfortunately, the physical infrastructure where these seniors live and are being cared for has not evolved with the change in demographics.

Across Canada, a significant portion of the housing for seniors in long-term care is currently outdated or nearing the end of its functional life. Many homes were built to design standards that are not suitable for today's seniors, featuring three- to four-bedroom hospital-like wards, shared washrooms and bathing areas, crowded dining rooms, small hallways and noisy nursing stations too close to residents' rooms.

In comparison, new or renovated care homes feature larger, private or semi-private residences that are more reflective of a home environment. These modifications along with multiple dining rooms, wider hallways to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers, spacious common areas and updated washrooms and bathing areas allow for more privacy and better care. Modern care homes' newly designed and increased privacy are particularly important for residents with dementia, who can become upset and aggressive when they are unable to get the personal space they need.

Despite increased availability of home care and community services, demand for long-term

care continues to surge. All jurisdictions across Canada are currently facing long-term care shortages, as existing supply of beds in care homes is not enough to meet the demands caused by the demographic shift.



“Older adults, including people living with dementia, require access to appropriate care when and where they need it. Care homes that are purpose built to be dementia friendly and as home-like as possible ensure better quality of life for their residents.”

Maria Howard
CEO, Alzheimer Society of B.C.



“Providing the best possible care for seniors is not just a desire, but a necessary objective that the residential care sector meets every single day. Only with government investments in better infrastructure and human resources planning can seniors receive the care they need now and into the future.”

Jodi Hall
Executive Director, The New Brunswick
Association of Nursing Homes

CALTC is calling on all political parties to expand federal infrastructure funding to include long-term care and commit to funding new long-term care residences:

1. Invest federal infrastructure dollars to help build new and redevelop old long-term care homes across Canada

CALTC is calling on all parties to commit to expanding eligible projects for infrastructure funding to include seniors housing, which incorporates long-term care. Specifically, CALTC recommends that the Federal Government invest in the construction, renovation and retrofit of 400 long-term care homes to meet current design standards and the needs of today's seniors, especially those living with dementia, by 2023.

2. Boost capacity to address the aging crisis by committing to fund 42,000 new long-term care beds across Canada

To meet the current and future demand for long-term care, CALTC is calling on all parties to commit to increase capacity by committing to fund the addition of 42,000 new long-term care beds by 2023.

Sources

- 1 Statistics Canada, 2015. Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories. 2015-11-27
- 2 Statistics Canada. Age and Sex Highlight Tables, 2016 Census
- 3 HCA: Health Care Assistants; CCA: Continuing Care Assistants; PSWs: Personal Support Workers
- 4 <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents/study-permits/post-graduation-work-permit-program.html>
- 5 Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA). 2018 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission: More Care. Better Care.
- 6 Canadian Association for Long Term Care (CALTC). CALTC Provincial Association Survey: LTC Infrastructure Needs Across Canada. 2018.

CALTC is a national organization comprised of provincial associations and long-term care providers that deliver publicly-funded health care services for seniors across Canada. CALTC members also represent care providers delivering home support services and care for younger disabled adults.

CALTC members represent care providers responsible for the employment of Canadians and delivering quality care to Canada's most vulnerable residents each day.

Our purpose is to share information, insights and best practices on current and emerging long-term care issues, collaborate to address issues and opportunities that impact long-term care and take common positions on issues that have broad impact on participating associations.

