

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget

By: Canadian Association for Long Term Care



Canadian Association
for Long Term Care



Association canadienne
des soins de longue durée

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **That the federal government invest directly in long-term care infrastructure to support both the retrofit of existing homes up to current design standards, as well as the creation of new homes.**
- **That the federal government expand the National Housing Strategy to include financial support for long-term care infrastructure.**
- **That the federal government support the recruitment and retention of essential unregulated care aides by providing provinces/territories with \$65 million to hire one additional care aide in every home.**
- **That the federal government support Canadian and international students by including private designated learning institutions that offer recognized and equivalent training programs for health care aides as eligible programs under the Post Graduate Work Permit and in the upcoming micro-credentials pilot program through Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).**
- **That the federal government modernize the Canada Health Transfer (CHT) by providing provinces/territories with a demographic “top up” to account for changes in the ageing population and the impacts to the province’s/territory’s health care costs.**
- **That the federal government implement standardized management information systems (MIS) in all long-term care homes by providing CALTC with \$19.5 million to administer the upgrade in all homes across the country.**

BACKGROUND ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The number of seniors in Canada is growing rapidly. According to Statistics Canada, the number of Canadians aged 65 and older will increase to 25% by 2036, and the number of seniors 80 years of age 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

The pressures caused by a growing senior population is compounded by the fact that seniors are living longer. Despite a desire to age at home, many of today's seniors are living with multiple illnesses that require 24/7 care. When families can no longer manage the care needed for their loved ones at home, long-term care becomes home for Canada's seniors.

Long-term care homes provide housing – along with physical, medical, social, spiritual, and emotional support – to more than 150,000 seniors across Canada. Because we are living longer and living at home longer, seniors arrive at care homes in a more vulnerable condition, with more complex health issues, and more physically frail than ever before. The prevalence of chronic conditions and cognitive impairment among residents has also increased dramatically over the last decade. In 2016/2017, 62% of residents were living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, with a third of those individuals severely affected.³ Furthermore, many residents are living with multiple chronic conditions such as heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, and/or 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.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of the systemic challenges that we have been trying to bring attention towards for the past number of years – namely the outdated infrastructure and the health human resource (HHR) crisis. These problems are directly tied to the issues that the sector has experienced over the past few months, and we hope that the federal government will provide the support that we are requesting.

With this in mind, the Canadian Association for Long Term Care (CALTC) presents our 2021 Federal Pre-Budget Submission in support of Canada's seniors. CALTC and its provincial association members across the country look forward to working with the government to make seniors living in long-term care a priority in Budget 2021/2022.

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 Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). CCRS Continuing Care Reporting System: Profile on Residents in Continuing Care Facilities 2016-2017. CIHI.

INFRASTRUCTURE

1) Invest directly in long-term care infrastructure.

CALTC calls on the federal government to invest directly and immediately 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 2025.

- Based on costing by the city of Toronto's Long-Term Care Homes & Service Capital Renewal plan from 2015, the approximate cost of redevelopment is \$83.8M per home. The approximate total cost to redevelop 400 homes would therefore be \$33.12B (or \$8.28B per year up to 2025).
- Federal funding could be leveraged with provincial and/or municipal investments. A 1/3 federal commitment with a 2/3 commitment by provincial and/or municipal governments would bring the federal total contribution to approximately \$11.04B for the renovation of 400 long-term care homes.

CALTC further calls on the federal government to help meet current and future demand for long-term care, by committing to funding an additional 42,000 new long-term care resident beds across the country by 2025.

- Based on costing by the Conference Board of Canada, it costs approximately \$320,000 to build a new resident bed. At 10,500 beds per year, an investment of \$3.36B is needed per year until 2025. The total cost to add 42,000 resident beds by 2025 would be \$13.4B.
- Federal funding could be leveraged with provincial and/or municipal investments. A 1/3 federal commitment with a 2/3 commitment by provincial and/or municipal governments would bring the federal total contribution to approximately \$4.48B for the addition of 42,000 new resident beds by 2025.

2) Expand the National Housing Strategy to include long-term care.

CALTC calls on the federal government to address Canada's aging long-term care infrastructure by expanding the scope of National Housing Strategy to include seniors living in long-term care homes. This expansion would provide provinces and operators with funds to support renovation and retrofit projects to ensure all homes are up to date with current design standards and are better equipped to manage and respond to crisis situations such as COVID-19 as well as seasonal influenza outbreaks that commonly occur every year.

HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES (HHR)

1) Support the recruitment and retention of essential unregulated care aides.

CALTC calls on the federal government to provide \$65 million to provinces to support the recruitment and retention of unregulated care aides. Approximately 90% of direct resident care in nursing homes are provided by care aides. Due to the chronic staff shortages in long-term care, it is incumbent on the federal government to provide funding to be used to hire one additional care aide for each long-term care home, regardless of size, to improve quality of care.

2) Support Canadian and international students.

CALTC calls on the federal government to include private designated learning institutions that offer recognized and equivalent training programs for health care aides as eligible programs under the Post Graduate Work Permit and in the upcoming micro-credentials program through Employment and Skills Development Canada (ESDC). This will provide all types of prospective students with the skills they need to be successful and will provide a path toward citizenship and employment in Canada's long-term care sector.

QUALITY SENIORS' CARE

1) Modernize the Canada Health Transfer.

CALTC calls on the federal government to address the increased health-related costs provinces and territories are struggling with due to an ageing population by providing a dedicated "demographic top up" through the Canada Health Transfer. The absence of demographic considerations in the CHT contributes to health inequality based on age and region and has not been addressed in over 10 years.

CALTC further calls on the federal government to cover its share of the costs incurred by provinces and territories due to an ageing population. The overall cost associated with current demographic changes is projected to be \$93B over the next decade and the federal share is 22% or \$21.1B over the next 10 years.

2) Implement standardized Management Information Systems (MIS).

CALTC calls on the federal government mandate a standardized system for collecting residential and financial information performance data in long-term care homes as part of the Canada Health Accord agreements signed with each of the provinces and territories.

CALTC also calls on the federal government to provide CALTC with \$19.5 million to ensure the full implementation of standardized MIS in homes across Canada.

CALTC calls on the federal government, in collaboration with its provincial and territorial partners, to support residential homes purchasing and implementing the standardized system to improve the quality of life and the quality of care for residents.

ABOUT CALTC

The Canadian Association for Long Term Care (CALTC) is committed to ensuring quality long-term care for all. CALTC members deliver publicly-funded health care services to seniors when they can no longer live at home. As the leading voice for quality long-term care in Canada, CALTC advocates on behalf of seniors at the federal level and shares knowledge, insights, and best practices to ensure seniors can live and age with dignity.