



# Long-Term Care: Protect the Vulnerable

## Background

The COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 exposed long-standing, negligence, inadequate care and a lack of preparation in many Canadian long-term care (LTC) residences. These deficits resulted in high rates of infection and death in LTC residents. In addition, infections of the personal care worker forced them into self-isolation and severely compromised facility-staffing levels. This policy complements and identifies decisive actions to prevent future infections and improve care in the congregate settings of LTC facilities. The global pandemic has revealed the shocking vulnerability of people living in LTC facilities. As a society, we have ignored the care of these vulnerable citizens who need assistance and depend on the shamefully undervalued work of personal support workers and LTC nurses. Good pay and working conditions coupled with ongoing education will help to attract and retain these health care workers, essential for improving the quality of life of LTC residents.

## Quick Facts

- **More than 80%** of all COVID-19 deaths in Canada were in LTC facilities, as of June 2020
- **About 1 in 5** COVID-19 cases in Canada were **among LTC residents**
- Canada has fewer health care workers (nurses & personal support workers) per 100 residents of LTC homes compared to the OECD average
- Of LTC homes that suffered a COVID-19 outbreak, the rate of COVID-19-related deaths was highest at **9.0% in for-profit homes, 5.25% in not-for-profit homes, and 3.62% in publicly-owned (municipal) homes**, according to a report by the Ontario Health Coalition
- A 2016 study of 30 nursing homes in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba found that LTC care providers lacked the necessary in-service training and education to properly meet the demanding needs of the residents
- In Ontario, among the LTC homes with high COVID-19-related mortality, not one home had undergone a comprehensive inspection in 2019

## Relevant Legislation & Canada's Obligations

- **1985 Canada Health Act:** LTC is included in the Canada Health Act as a basis for federal transfers, but not publicly insured
  - LTC is provincially administered pointing to a need to set national standards
- **1995 Gender-based Analysis Plus:** Implemented across all federal departments as an analytical process for assessing how diverse groups of women, men, and gender diverse people may experience policies and programs. Considers race, age, religion, mental or physical disability in policy development and implementation.
- **1999 National Framework on Aging:** A policy guide for federal, provincial, and territorial governments in Canada to promote the well-being and contributions of older people in all aspects of life, consistent with the United Nations principles for older persons (1991)

## Long-Term Care: Protect the Vulnerable – 2020

### Adopted at the 2020 SGM

**RESOLVED,** That the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) urge the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to establish common evidence-based standards that ensure all vulnerable Canadians can live in safety, comfort and dignity and have access to high quality, affordable long-term care (LTC);

**RESOLVED,** That CFUW urge the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to define and implement high quality LTC that is achieved by, but not limited to:

- A. ensuring that person-in-care/staff ratios are consistent with evidence based best practices and that care providers are qualified, well-paid and offered their choice full or part time positions;
- B. ensuring that all new LTC facilities are built on a non-profit model;
- C. ensuring annual, unscheduled on-site inspections;
- D. ensuring compliance of licensing standards;
- E. ensuring that needs-based education and training is provided to all LTC staff;
- F. ensuring that LTC staff have the equipment and support to properly
- G. Ensuring that all LTC facilities have a plan, equipment and the capacity to quickly implement infection control measures to protect residents and staff

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## Long-Term Care: Protect the Vulnerable

### Take Action

- Sign petitions, write letters to your local media, and write letters to your MPP or MLA and your MP. ***The number of individual letters received on an issue counts!***
- Collaborate with like-minded organizations in your community and with provincial and national organizations advocating for improvements to LTC.
- In your letters, insist that the LTC sector and provincial and federal governments work to:
  1. Develop national standards of LTC quality-of-care that are supported by adequate and designated federal funding.
  2. Mandate 4 hours per day of direct nursing and personal care per resident.
  3. Require that LTC staff work in only one LTC home to improve infection control.
  4. Mandate that LTC staff receive salaries and benefits commensurate with those enjoyed by health workers in hospitals.
  5. Ensure that LTC homes recruit and train adequate numbers of staff, improve pay and working conditions, and provide access to full-time work.
  6. Require that LTC homes provide ongoing education for staff in best practices of infection control and management of residents with dementia.
  7. Ensure comprehensive, annual, and unscheduled on-site inspections of LTC facilities.
  8. Work to end for-profit long-term care, starting by making Revera publicly owned.

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