

The NIA's Recommended 'Titanium Ring' for Protecting Older Canadians in Long-Term Care and Congregate Living Settings



National Institute on Ageing Guidance Document

Suggested Citation:

National Institute on Ageing. (2021). The NIA's Recommended 'Titanium Ring' for Protecting Older Canadians in Long-Term Care and Congregate Living Settings. Toronto, ON: National Institute on Ageing Guidance Document.

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About the National Institute on Ageing

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) is a public policy and research centre based at Ryerson University in Toronto. The NIA is dedicated to enhancing successful ageing across the life course. It is unique in its mandate to consider ageing issues from a broad range of perspectives, including those of financial, physical, psychological, and social well-being.

The NIA is focused on leading cross-disciplinary, evidence-based, and actionable research to provide a blueprint for better public policy and practices needed to address the multiple challenges and opportunities presented by Canada's ageing population. The NIA is committed to providing national leadership and public education to productively and collaboratively work with all levels of government, private and public sector partners, academic institutions, ageing-related organizations, and Canadians.

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Background and Context

Older Canadians are more likely to die from COVID-19. Their advanced ages and higher likelihood of living with multiple chronic conditions, including dementia, frailty and weaker immune systems, all contribute to their greater risk of death.

There are close to 500,000 Canadians¹ who live in Long-Term Care (LTC) homes, retirement homes and other congregate living LTC settings,² with 85% aged 65 years and older.³ While 0.9% of Canadians live in LTC and congregate living settings, 7%, 32% and 67% of Canadians over 65, 85 and 100 years of age also call these settings home.⁴

The presence of inherent systemic vulnerabilities in Canadian LTC settings, such as living together in close proximity to others and chronic underfunding and staffing issues, creates further risks for those living in these settings. As the NIA has previously noted in its 2019 [Enabling the Future of Long-Term Care in Canada](#) report,⁵ Canada currently spends 30% less of its GDP on the provision of publicly-funded long-term care (home, community, and residential care services) when compared with other OECD countries.⁶

Many older Canadian homes do not have the space or ability to enforce proper physical distancing measures, especially when they may still be offering three and four-bedded rooms and shared washroom

accommodations. Activities are often communal, and many residents receive care from providers who traditionally have been employed on a part-time basis across multiple LTC homes and other settings, further increasing their ability to spread infections like COVID-19 across settings. Furthermore, the inability to maintain strong Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) measures in these settings can only encourage the transmission of COVID-19 into and throughout a home.

It has become well-understood that COVID-19 can have both early asymptomatic and atypical presentations, and is most likely to enter a home via visitors and care providers infected in the community or by transmitting the virus from one care setting to another. A CDC-led study comprehensively examining the first COVID-19 outbreak in a US LTC home in early 2020 reported a hospitalization rate of 55% and a case fatality rate of 34% amongst its residents, demonstrating early how deadly COVID-19 can be in these settings.⁷ An early Ontario, Canada study further demonstrated that LTC home residents 70 years of age and older were 13 times more likely to die of COVID-19 than people in the same age group living elsewhere in Ontario.⁸ In June 2020, CIHI in partnership with the NIA demonstrated that 81% of Canada's first wave deaths from COVID-19 occurred in LTC and congregate settings, nearly twice the international OECD average

of 38%.⁹ Furthermore the NIA Long-Term Care COVID-19 Tracker Open Data Working Group has shown that Canada's COVID-19 Case Fatality Rate amongst residents in these settings was 38% in July 2020, where the risk of dying from COVID-19 is 74 times greater than amongst older community-dwelling Canadians 65 years of age and older.¹⁰ While Canada's COVID-19 Case Fatality Rate amongst residents in these settings has now come down to 26% in February 2021, deaths in these settings still represent 70% of Canada's more than 20,000 COVID-19 deaths.

The term 'Iron Ring' became popularized in Ontario during the first wave of COVID-19 infections to indicate the collective actions that the province would take to protect residents of LTC and retirement homes. Through the leadership of Dr. Samir Sinha, the NIA's Director of Health Policy Research, the NIA has been keeping abreast of rapidly emerging international evidence on how best to prevent and manage the introduction and spread of COVID-19 amongst residents, care providers and family caregivers in these settings. This effort positioned the NIA to quickly provide governments, LTC providers, and the public evidence-based recommendations and advice that could be swiftly and effectively implemented to better inform policies and strategies to address COVID-19. The NIA's overall "Iron Ring" guidance is being continually updated as the evidence-base around

COVID-19 evolves to further inform expert interpretations. Furthermore, the NIA will continually provide updates on how Canada's provincial, territorial and federal governments and their respective agencies like the Public Health Agency of Canada remain aligned with the NIA's recommended best practices for the duration of this pandemic.

In late March 2020, the NIA released its first edition of its 'Iron Ring' Guidance for Protecting Older Canadians in Long-Term Care and Congregate Living Settings. This guidance synthesized rapidly emerging international evidence at that time on how to prevent and manage the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in LTC and retirement settings.

The NIA originally recommended five evidence-based measures to prevent and manage COVID-19 in these settings; a) Restricting all Non-Essential Visitors, b) Limiting Care Providers from Working in Multiple Care Settings, c) All Care Providers Should Wear Appropriate Protective Equipment, d) Strong Infection Prevention and Control Procedures for Staff and Residents, e) Flexible Admission and Discharge Policies. The NIA has continually monitored the uptake of its recommended 'Iron Ring' guidance for LTC and congregate living settings across Canada. A second edition of the NIA's updated 'Iron Ring' guidance was published in July 2020 as evidence around the management

of COVID-19 in these settings evolved towards the conclusion of Canada's first wave of COVID-19 infections.

This February 2021 update marks the third edition of the NIA's 'Iron Ring' guidance around the peak of Canada's current second wave of COVID-19 infections. This third iteration has been greatly expanded and to distinguish its stronger and more fulsome guidance from that of its previous editions, we have decided to rename it our "Titanium Ring" guidance for the duration of this pandemic. In response to the rapidly evolving evidence and policy landscape across Canada, the NIA has identified a number of additional evidence-based measures to better manage COVID-19 within LTC settings. These additional measures include implementing:

- a. Enhanced Staffing Policies
- b. Designated Onsite IPAC Support
- c. De-Crowding Policies.

Furthermore, in alignment with the NIA's *Finding the Right Balance: An Evidence-Informed Guidance Document to Support the Re-Opening of the Canadian LTC Homes to Family Caregivers During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, this 'Titanium Ring' update includes an analysis of the evolving provincial and territorial guidance related to enabling the presence of Family Caregivers and General Visitors in LTC settings.

Finally, in anticipation of the arrival of its first approved COVID-19 vaccines in December 2020, Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) issued guidance emphasizing the need to prioritize vaccinating Canada's LTC and Congregate Setting Residents and Staff.

This document helps to outline the prioritization of LTC residents, staff, and family caregivers in Canada's provincial and territorial COVID-19 vaccination strategies.

NIA Current Guidance Recommendations as of February 2021

1. Enable Family Presence in a Safe and Effective Way While Restricting all Non-Essential Visits

Given the growing prevalence and likely persistence of community transmission in Canada, a key early way to prevent the entry of COVID-19 into LTC settings was to prohibit non-essential visitors from entering a home. While it is arguable that most if not all visits from family and friends are important to the overall health and well-being of residents, as community transmission was rising quickly, the risk that these visitors could inadvertently introduce the virus into a home became greater as well.

Between March and April 2020 when outbreaks and deaths intensified in Canadian LTC homes, homes across the country began to impose strict “no visitor” policies as part of their IPAC strategies.^{11,12} These policies still did allow visitors for residents but only when deemed to be “essential”, which, in addition to paid care providers, could often include a family member visiting under only exceptional circumstances, such as to visit a loved one who is receiving end-of-life care or needed other specific forms of care and support. Any care provider or other visitor being allowed to enter a home should be

actively screened for signs, symptoms or for potentially being at high-risk of exposure. Anyone who does not pass this level of screening should not be permitted to enter the home. While this early recommendation was seen as critical to help stop the early spread of COVID-19, staff and family members of residents were being encouraged to look for safe ways of engaging with residents to prevent undue social isolation that could result from a lack of on-site family presences and visitors. Technology, such as tablets, can be used to communicate to residents. Homes and families quickly became creative in finding ways to visit residents such as through the use of window-visits. However, it was soon realized that lack of in-person contact was having unintended consequences on the health and well-being of residents due to increased loneliness and isolation.

During the summer of 2020, as the community prevalence of COVID-19 continued to decrease in Canada, and regions across the country progress with phased re-openings, experts and advocates grew increasingly concerned that visitation policies and family caregiver access to long-term care settings remained overly restrictive and may be causing harm to residents.¹³ Thus, provinces and territories tried to develop

and implement risk-mitigated guidance to support the re-opening of Canadian long-term care and retirement homes to essential family caregivers and visitors.¹⁴

The importance of implementing family presence policies into LTC homes for the health and well-being of residents cannot be overstated. Incorporating family presence is recognized as a risk-based approach, and when implemented in a safe context where the necessary protections such as strong IPAC, staff and visitor testing, and mandatory masking are in place, it can positively impact LTC home residents. Many provinces and territories have been enabling family caregivers and visitors to provide much needed contact, support, and care to residents in order to maintain their health and wellbeing as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed. This February 2021 edition of the 'Titanium Ring' tracks provincial and territorial guidelines pertaining to family presence *and* general visitors in LTC homes. The family presence guidelines include the number of designated caregivers allowed per resident, while the general visitor guidelines aim to capture the evolution of them over from the first wave (March to August 31st) and the second wave (September 1st onwards).

In late spring and early summer 2020, provinces and territories began to loosen general visitor restrictions across LTC settings. Provinces and territories allowing normal general visitors during this time included Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia,

Quebec and the Northwest Territories. Additionally, four provinces; New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan allowed general visits to take place outdoors only. While two territories, Nunavut and the Yukon did not permit general visitors during this period.

During summer 2020, provinces and territories began providing guidance pertaining to family and essential caregivers for residents. Differences arose in the *number* of designated family or essential caregivers allowed per resident. Provinces and territories allowing one family or essential caregiver per resident included Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Northwest Territories, and Ontario. While Alberta, New Brunswick, Quebec, Saskatchewan, the Yukon, and Manitoba allowed more than one per resident.

Entering the late summer and fall, many provinces and territories reintroduced general visitor restrictions and limitations. Provinces and territories including Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and the Yukon allow a limited number of visitors depending on the COVID-19 risk level. Specifically, Ontario, Manitoba, and Quebec impose more restrictive general visitor policies depending on the current COVID-19 risk level specified in the LTC home jurisdiction. During the same time period, Prince Edward Island and the Yukon had no visitor restrictions to LTC homes.

As COVID-19 cases across Canada rapidly increased during the late fall and winter, general visitor bans to LTC homes began to be implemented across Canada. Provinces

and territories implementing general visitor restrictions during this time include the Yukon, Saskatchewan, Quebec (risk dependent), Ontario (risk dependent), Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Manitoba (risk dependent), and Alberta. However, while general visitors were prohibited, visits would still be supported under extenuating circumstances such as end of life or change in health status. Moreover, the NIA defines jurisdictions as having general visitor bans that are 'risk dependent' if the extent to which these measures apply varies depending on pre-established criteria that determine the severity of public health restrictions for COVID-19 in general. For example, Ontario uses its COVID-19 Response Framework, designating five zones of public health measures: prevent; project; restrict; control; and lockdown. On the other hand, guidelines for British Columbia allow for one general visitor per resident, while Prince Edward Island allows for two.

In addition to greater visitor restrictions across Canada in the late fall and winter months, some provinces and territories changed the number of family and essential visitors designated per resident. Nova Scotia and the Northwest Territories *increased* the number of designated family and essential visitors during this time period. While Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon *decreased* the number of designated family and essential visitors from two to one per LTC resident.

2. Ensure Sufficient and Safe Staffing in Care Settings to Enable Care Providers from Working in Multiple Care Settings

Staff working in more than one care setting (i.e. another LTC or retirement home) should be identified and efforts should be made to limit its occurrence. Limiting staff to only working in one home can effectively limit the spread of COVID-19 between care settings. Implementing this recommendation, however, is easier said than done. Many care providers working in these settings have not traditionally been offered full-time roles with comprehensive benefits such as sufficient paid sick leave. This incentivizes care providers to work multiple jobs across multiple homes (including through staffing agencies), in order to piece together a full-time wage. This sector has traditionally paid its care providers significantly lower wages compared to their counterparts in hospital settings. These are some of the reasons why there is high staffing turnover in this sector and why the majority of care settings in this sector have struggled with chronic staffing shortages pre-dating the pandemic. Thus, effectively enabling staff from working in multiple settings means that several issues must be simultaneously addressed, including top-ups on pay for staff who would otherwise suffer a decline in their income if they were limited to working in one home that could not offer them full-time employment.

In response to the PHAC guidelines suggesting that staff be limited to working in a single care home, the NIA has tracked evolving provincial policies and efforts to strengthen existing LTC workforces and staffing supports. This includes, but is not limited to, provincial and territorial policies aimed at recruiting more LTC staff, and increasing the wages and benefits for current and future LTC staff.

In alignment with PHAC's April 8th Guidelines, all Canadian provinces and territories except for Nunavut and the Yukon have issued an order to restrict staff from working across multiple LTC homes. However, this recommendation came with many external implications, as many LTC care providers have traditionally relied on staff working across multiple homes on a part-time basis to piece together a full-time salary but with limited overall benefits such as ample paid sick days. The NIA has thus further examined provincial and territorial policy responses aimed at better addressing these issues.

The NIA found three provinces; British Columbia, Quebec, and Ontario, have introduced specific staffing recruitment initiatives and pay increases aimed at countering the issues caused by restricting staff to work at a single LTC home as well as chronic understaffing issues that were only exacerbated during the first wave of the pandemic.

British Columbia took the boldest step in announcing in March 2020 that all LTC care workers would be paid the same wage

rates and benefits such as paid sick leave as those in collective agreements with the Public Health Authority. Furthermore, all care providers would be offered full-time employment with their accompanying benefits as well. Additionally, in September, British Columbia announced it would be hiring an additional 7,000 personal care workers to better staff its LTC homes.

In June 2020, Quebec announced a plan to hire 10,000 LTC care assistants by the end of the fall. The plan offered successful applicants a 12-week training program, with a \$760 scholarship, and guaranteed a minimum salary of \$49,000 per year. As of October 2020, Quebec successfully trained and hired 7,100 new care assistants for its LTC homes.¹⁵

In the Spring 2020, Ontario announced a \$4 per hour pandemic pay wage enhancement for all of its frontline LTC workers that would last until July 2020. In September 2020, Ontario released a plan to recruit, retain, and support additional Personal Support Workers (PSWs). Its plan included a \$5,000 reimbursement for new PSW's training costs in return for a six-month working commitment. It remains unclear how many new PSWs have been recruited through this mechanism. Ontario followed this up with a \$3 per hour temporary wage increase for PSWs in October 2020 that would last until March 2021. Finally, in December 2020, Ontario announced that it would spend up to \$1.9B a year to help raise the direct hours of care

being provided to residents in long-term care homes from 2 hours and 45 minutes to 4 hours by 2024-25 by eventually hiring an additional 27,000 frontline LTC workers, although they only anticipated that they would be able to increase the amount of care being provided per resident per day by 15 minutes by 2022.

3. Ensure All Care Providers and Visitors Have Access to and Are Wearing Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment

It is recommended that all care providers and visitors in a LTC settings wear surgical masks and other appropriate protective equipment, given the high rates of community transmission, the early asymptomatic spread that can occur with COVID-19 between individuals, and a lower likelihood that older residents will display the typical signs and symptoms of a COVID-19 infection. Wearing a mask can particularly help to prevent or limit the early transmission of the virus from care providers to residents or to other care providers.

The majority of provinces and territories introduced mandatory masking for LTC residents, staff and visitors in the Spring 2020. Both Saskatchewan and the North West Territories introduced mandatory masking policies in December and September 2020 respectively. Meanwhile, Nunavut and the Yukon have not specified masking requirements for its staff.

4. Ensure Strong Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Policies and On-Site Practices, including Screening and Testing Procedures that are Inclusive of Residents and Staff that May be Asymptomatic or Have Atypical Presentations.

Strong Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) policies are necessary to protect residents and staff in Canada's LTC and congregate settings. Screening and testing guidance for LTC needs to properly reflect the emerging evidence of asymptomatic presentation of COVID-19, with a focus on the complications that arise with dementia. The CDC reports rates of asymptomatic presentations in upwards of 50% to 75% of residents who test positive for COVID-19 in these settings,^{16,17,18} along with similar rates of dementia that could further limit the ability of many residents to identify and report symptoms.¹⁹ As COVID-19 vaccination efforts are still underway, and a growing number of cases and outbreaks are being linked to new more contagious COVID-19 variants, there needs to be a lower threshold than a typical symptomatic presentation to require testing for a possible index case, or in the immediate testing of potential contacts related to an index case. Moreover, as care providers might enter a home being asymptomatic, they should continuously self-monitor for any symptoms, while LTC home residents should be screened twice daily.

Also, standard hygiene practices should continue, including regular hand washing and physical distancing, where possible.

Since the NIA's July 2020 'Iron Ring' Guidance, a number of provinces have either introduced or updated their IPAC policies to better prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 in LTC and other congregate settings. Every jurisdiction other than the Yukon now provides detailed guidance on IPAC policies for LTC settings. In addition, more than half of Canada's provinces (B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Ontario) now require testing for atypical or mild presentations of COVID-19.

Overall, however, there remain significant deficiencies in the provision of IPAC expertise and accountability for maintaining IPAC standards across LTC settings. Adherence to evidence-based IPAC measures depends on there being sufficient support for effective training and compliance monitoring. Yet, currently, inadequate time and resources are often devoted to IPAC measures in LTC homes. The NIA found only two provinces - Ontario and Quebec - with requirements for having designated IPAC staff in LTC settings. Moreover, Quebec appears to be the only province that has taken additional steps after the first wave to ensure homes are both proactively implementing IPAC measures and continuously monitoring their compliance with proper protocols. In Ontario, all LTC homes are required by provincial legislation to have an IPAC lead

and team responsible for coordinating and implementing an IPAC program. However, there is no requirement for the IPAC lead or staff to hold a full-time position dedicated to performing IPAC duties, to be on-site every day, or to have formal IPAC training. Thus, despite calls for providing enhanced IPAC staffing from several Ontario LTC associations as well as Ontario's own Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission,²⁰ dedicated home-based IPAC specialists and teams who can provide continuous training and compliance support remain not as readily available across the province's LTC homes.

On the other hand, in Quebec, every CHSLD is now required to have an IPAC manager and trained IPAC staff on site who are responsible for ensuring IPAC best practices are complied with at all times. Quebec's Ministry of Health and Social Services released a directive outlining these guidelines in October 2020.²¹ Retirement homes in Quebec are also subject to new IPAC guidelines, albeit ones that are less strict. Every RPA in Quebec must have employees identified for IPAC purposes, but the guidelines only specify that there must be either an IPAC Manager or IPAC staff, rather than both like in the case of its CHSLDs, and there is no mention of a requirement that they must be on-site. Quebec's IPAC guidelines for retirement homes were also issued later than those for its LTC homes, with the Ministry releasing its directive in December 2020.²²

5. Develop Supportive and Flexible Admission and Discharge Policies for LTC Settings

In some regions, traditional admission and discharge policies penalize residents and families who decline a placement offer or seek to return to a former care setting after a prolonged absence. Residents and families should be given the flexibility to defer a placement offer, or leave and return quickly to their care setting if they feel that would be the best to support their overall health and well-being. As the COVID-19 pandemic required that in-person visits be prohibited for at least four months in some cases at the outset of the pandemic, and with some families at home now more able to provide for the care needs of their loved one, and the growing concern that living in these care settings confers a higher risk of contracting COVID-19, more flexible admission and discharge policies should be implemented. Researchers at the NIA, the Ottawa Hospital, and the University of Ottawa created guides for families to use to help determine if they can safely remove a loved one from a home, and what they need to consider in order to provide care at home. The guides are accessible [here](#).

6. Consider Frequent LTC Staff and Visitor Testing to Reduce the Risk of COVID-19 Exposure Amongst LTC Residents

Sufficient and frequent testing for COVID-19 is one of the most effective strategies for mitigating and controlling risk in LTC homes. Ensuring that individuals who frequently come into contact with LTC home residents, both LTC staff and designated essential family caregivers are required to regularly test for COVID-19 greatly reduces the probability of transmission of COVID-19 into LTC facilities. This not only helps to ensure the safety of care provided to residents, but also enables improved resident well-being and health by ensuring continuous care and family presence in LTC homes.

Quebec has explicitly prohibited its LTC and retirement homes from imposing requirements for presenting a negative COVID-19 test as a precondition for essential family caregivers to visit residents in these homes.

Ontario is the only province or territory specifying staff, visitor and family caregiver asymptomatic testing requirements. In June 2020, Ontario announced that it would introduce (non-mandatory) twice-monthly asymptomatic testing for all LTC staff. Essential workers, agency staff and LTC inspectors were exempted from this requirement.

Furthermore, all visitors and family caregivers would need to present a negative COVID-19 test result from within the preceding 14 days upon entry to an LTC home. In July, general visitors no longer needed to present negative COVID-19 tests. However, mandatory testing was continued for all staff and residents, and is currently still in place but on a weekly basis in orange, red and grey (lockdown) regions. In January 2021, to enhance its overall testing capacity, Ontario announced that it plans to implement three times weekly antigen testing for its LTC staff and family caregivers beginning in February 2021.²³ This method aligns with recent federal government expert guidance suggesting that more frequent antigen testing in these settings may be a better way to identify possible infections early among staff.²⁴ Many LTC homes are raising concerns about the feasibility for them to implement this new testing method when many indicate that it will require even more frontline staffing resources that they currently do not have to lead this level of on-site testing.

While other provinces are considering asymptomatic testing strategies in their LTC settings, the NIA remains of the view that essential family caregivers should not face more stringent testing requirements than staff.

7. Mandate De-Crowding Policies in LTC Setting to Limit the Number of Residents Per Room and Minimize the Exposure and Spread of COVID-19

The de-crowding of LTC homes has also been recommended as a potential mechanism to reduce the transmission between LTC home residents, staff, and essential caregivers. In May 2020, the Science Advisory Table for COVID-19 in Ontario recommended that LTC homes be *de-crowded* by disallowing three and four person rooms, and only allowing two residents in a shared room at a time. This strategy would significantly reduce contact among LTC residents, staff, caregivers, and visitors, reducing the potential for COVID-19 infection and spread. Ontario adopted this recommendation, in June 2020, stating “at any time, there should not be more than two (2) residents placed per room, including 3 or 4 bed ward rooms”.²⁵ So far Ontario is the only province or territory that has formally adopted this recommendation.

8. Prioritize LTC Residents, Staff, and Essential Caregivers for Immunization Against COVID-19 Will Greatly Reduce Virus-Related Deaths. COVID-19 Immunization will greatly reduce the transmission and deaths from the virus.

The federal government has approved COVID-19 vaccines and negotiated agreements to secure vaccine doses for Canadians. The provincial and territorial governments are responsible for deciding who gets vaccinated and when. As of January 2021, each province and territory has released a vaccine implementation strategy. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) released COVID-19 vaccination prioritization guidelines as early as November 2020 which outlined its suggested priority populations for vaccination. The guidelines include both LTC residents and staff, but do not specifically include family caregivers. The majority of provinces and territories have adopted the NACI recommendations, thus not including essential and family caregivers of LTC residents in their 'priority populations'. However, five provinces; British Columbia, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Prince Edward Island *do* include essential/family caregivers in their priority vaccination populations. All provinces/territories are trying to vaccinate their defined long-term care populations by February 2021.

The NIA agrees that residents and staff in LTC and retirement homes should undoubtedly be prioritized for early vaccination. COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on Canada's LTC and retirement homes, accounting for over 14,000 of Canada's deaths reported since the onset of the pandemic.

Residents in LTC and Retirement homes settings should be receiving initial vaccine doses as soon as they become available given that they are more susceptible to serious infection once exposed to COVID-19, and the congregate nature of these settings facilitates rapid spread of the virus.

Staff should also be prioritized to potentially lower their risk of inadvertently introducing COVID-19 into LTC homes and minimize the disproportionate burden faced by LTC staff who have become sick and died from COVID-19 during the pandemic.

Finally, while residents and staff in LTC homes have been identified as a priority in most provinces and territories, vaccination efforts could have been quicker in jurisdictions such as Ontario given the slow speed of their vaccine rollouts thus far. In other provinces, retirement home populations have not been given the same level of priority and will have to wait until the general population is invited to be vaccinated.

In addition to LTC and retirement home residents and staff, the NIA strongly supports that essential family caregivers are included as a priority population for COVID-19 vaccination. Family and essential caregivers provide critical support to residents of LTC homes, playing an important role in their overall health and well-being. Vaccinating essential family caregivers will not only help better balance resident safety and well-being, but may also reduce the enormous burden placed on LTC staff during the remainder pandemic.



First Wave vs. Second Wave: Where are We Now?

Throughout the pandemic, the NIA has been tracking the spread of COVID-19 in long-term homes across Canada. Our data as presented in Table 1 below, show that during the first wave between March 2020 and August 2020, we saw 1,236 (21%) of Canada's 6,029 LTC and retirement homes experience outbreaks. We are now in the second wave, which is proving to be even deadlier than the first. As of February 15, 2021, 2,607 (43%) of Canada's 6,029 LTC and retirement homes have experienced outbreaks. This represents 1,371 (23%) new homes experiencing outbreaks during the second wave between September 2020 to February 15, 2021. While Table 1 shows the first Wave vs second Wave data, Table 2 presents the cumulative data on COVID-19 outbreaks, cases and deaths amongst residents and staff in LTC and retirement homes across Canada as of February 15, 2021. The increase in LTC home related COVID-19 outbreaks, cases and deaths during Canada's second wave further emphasizes the importance of comprehensively implementing the NIA's 'Titanium Ring' guidance.

During the first wave between March and August 2020, there were a total of 7,323 resident deaths, with a resident case fatality rate of approximately 35%. As of February 15, 2021 there have been a total of 14,548 resident deaths, with a resident case fatality rate of around 27%.

This represents 7,225 deaths being added during the second wave thus far.

Certain provinces dealt with a relatively minor number of outbreaks during the first wave, including Manitoba and Saskatchewan, due to their low rates of community transmission. From March to August 2020, 6 Manitoba and 4 Saskatchewan LTC and retirement homes had experienced COVID-19 outbreaks, respectively. As of February 15, 2021, 86 Manitoba and 100 Saskatchewan LTC and retirement homes have now experienced outbreaks, representing a large increase in the number of outbreaks occurring in these provinces during their second wave.

On the other hand, 588 Quebec homes experienced outbreaks during the first wave from March to August 2020. But during its second wave, it fared better relative to the first wave with 451 additional outbreaks as of February 15, 2021 and fewer deaths overall. Overall, Quebec, which had the worst performance of any province during the first wave, has done far better than provinces like Alberta, BC, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan whose LTC and retirement homes experienced much worse outcomes during their second waves. In provinces such as Ontario, Alberta and BC, which were hit hard during the first wave, the second wave of COVID-19 has again had a devastating impact on its LTC and

retirement homes. From March to August 2020, 479 Ontario, 96 Alberta, and 46 BC LTC and retirement homes experienced outbreaks. As of February 15, 2021, an additional 408 Ontario, 215 Alberta and 110 BC LTC and retirement homes have faced new COVID-19 outbreaks, where total deaths due to COVID-19 have also been higher in these jurisdictions than during their first waves.

Finally, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and PEI have stood out as provinces that have not experienced a single LTC outbreak during the second wave, especially Nova Scotia which had a devastating first wave that affected 13 of its LTC and retirement homes and led to 57 total resident deaths and 88% of that province's deaths to date.

Table 1. The NIA's Long-Term COVID-19 Tracker First Wave and Second Wave Data on LTC and Retirement Home Outbreaks as of February 15, 2021

Canadian Jurisdiction	Total Number of Homes	Total Number of Homes Affected		Total Number of Residents Deaths (Resident Case Fatality Rate %)		Total Number of Resident Cases		Total Number of Staff Cases		Total Number of Staff Deaths	
		First Wave	Second Wave*	First Wave	Second Wave*	First Wave	Second Wave*	First Wave	Second Wave*	First Wave	Second Wave*
QC	2,215	588	451	4,902 (38%)**	2,814 (26%)	13,012***	13,535****	7,850*****	Unknown*****	8	4
ON	1,396	479	408	2,072 (31%)	2,225 (21%)	6,716	10,380	3,445	7,925	8	3
AB	578	96	215	165 (27%)	1,057 (21%)	603	4,983	500	3,685	0	5
BC	392	46	110	120 (34%)	567 (28%)	357	2,041	226	1,259	0	0
NS	134	13	0	57 (22%)	0	259	0	133	0	0	0
SK	402	4	96	2 (50%)	84 (21%)	4	402	4	230	0	0
MB	261	6	80	3 (50%)	465 (28%)	6	1,653	8	805	0	0
NL	125	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
NB	468	2	11	2 (13%)	13 (12%)	16	109	10	73	0	0
PEI	39	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
YT	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NWT	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NU	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CANADA	6,029	1,236	1,371	7,323 (35%)	7,225 (22%)	20,974	33,103	10,406*****	15,749*****	16	12

Disclaimer: This table was generated with raw data that has not undergone cleaning at this point. Any future analysis with this data may result in different conclusions or results. Alberta data has been updated and any numbers in previous reports should be disregarded.

* Second Wave began September 1, 2020 and was not concluded as of February 15, 2021

** The case-fatality rate is likely an overestimation as the number of resident cases included are up to July 27, 2020, while the resident deaths included are up to August 31, 2020.

*** This number is likely an underestimation as it comes from a recent report²⁷ that included data from March 1 to July 27, 2020.

**** This number is likely an underestimation and will be updated when formal numbers become available.

***** Quebec's staff case numbers are not readily reported and therefore what is presented are likely significant underestimates of their actual staff case counts. First wave counts are estimated based on a recent report from INSPQ²⁶ and second wave counts are currently unavailable.

Table 2. The NIA's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Tracker Data* on LTC and Retirement Home Outbreaks as of February 15, 2021

Canadian Jurisdiction	Total Number of Cases	Total Number of Deaths	Total Number of LTC and Retirement Homes	Total Number of Homes Affected	% of Homes Affected	Total Number of Resident Cases	Total Number of Staff Cases	% Staff + Resident Cases out of Total Cases	Total Number of Resident Deaths	Total Number of Staff Deaths	% Staff + Resident Deaths out of Total Deaths	Resident Case Fatality Rate %
QC	278,187	10,246	2,215	1,039	47%	26,547	7,850**	12%	7,716	12	75%	29%
ON	290,965	6,679	1,396	887	64%	17,096	11,370	10%	4,297	11	65%	25%
AB	129,197	1,862	578	311	54%	5,586	4,185	8%	1,222	5	66%	22%
BC	72,750	1,288	392	156	40%	2,398	1,485	5%	687	0	53%	29%
NS	1,594	65	134	13	10%	259	133	25%	57	0	88%	22%
SK	26,693	354	402	100	25%	406	234	2%	86	0	24%	21%
MB	30,766	872	261	86	33%	1,659	813	8%	468	0	54%	28%
NL	704	4	125	1	1%	1	0	<1%	0	0	0	N/A
NB	1,401	23	468	13	3%	125	83	15%	15	0	65%	18%
PEI	114	0	39	1	3%	0	1	1%	0	0	0	N/A
YT	72	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
NWT	43	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
NU	318	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
CANADA	832,817	21,396	6,029	2,607	43%	54,077	26,155**	10%	14,548	28	68%	27%

*Up to date NIA LTC COVID-19 Tracker Data is available at <https://ltc-covid19-tracker.ca>.

**Quebec's staff case numbers are not readily reported and therefore what is presented are likely significant underestimates of their actual staff case counts. First wave counts are estimated based on a recent report from INSPQ²⁶ and second wave counts are currently unavailable.

Disclaimer: Alberta data has been updated and any numbers in previous reports should be disregarded.

Monitoring the Uptake of the NIA's 'Titanium Ring' Guidance for LTC and Congregate Care Settings Across Canada

First Issued March 27, 2020 and Updated as of February 1, 2021

Legend: ✓ = Implemented R = Recommended

Province/Territory	Family and Designated Caregiver Policies	General Visitor Policies	Policies to Enable Care Providers from Working in Multiple Care Settings	Universal Masking Policies	Appropriate Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Policies On-Site Designated IPAC Staff	LTC Staff/ Visitor Testing Policies	Supportive and Flexible Admission and Discharge Policies	Additional Measures – De-Crowding Policies Enhanced Staffing Policies	Vaccination Policies with Initial Prioritization for: 1. LTC Home Residents 2. LTC Home Staff 3. Designated/ Essential Family Caregivers	Dates and link(s) to guideline(s)/ directive(s) or source(s)
Federal Guidelines	R April 8, 2020	Not Specified	R April 8, 2020	R April 8, 2020	R April 8, 2020	R January 27, 2021	Not Specified	Not Specified	R November 3, 2020	<p>April 8, 2020: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevent-control-covid-19-long-term-care-homes.html#a</p> <p>January 27, 2021: https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/medical-devices/testing-screening-advisory-panel/reports-summaries/priority-strategies.html</p>

<p>Alberta</p> 	<p>✓ March 20, 2020</p> <p>Alberta supports residents to designate an essential visitor; essential visitors also decide the other visitors permitted to visit dying residents (one per resident at a time).</p> <p>✓ April 7, 2020</p> <p>Designated essential visitors are further defined as providing care needs that would otherwise be unmet.</p> <p>✓ April 28, 2020</p> <p>Designated essential visitors are redefined as providing quality of life and/or care needs that would otherwise be unmet. Temporary replacement of designated visitors is supported.</p>	<p>✓ March 20, 2020</p> <p>Non-designated visitors are supported only when residents are dying.</p> <p>✓ April 28, 2020</p> <p>Non-designated visitors are supported for outdoor visits (as well as when a resident is dying).</p> <p>✓ July 16, 2020</p> <p>Effective July 23, 2020, up to four social visitors are supported per resident outdoors. Non-designated visitors are also supported indoors in extenuating circumstances (end of life, change in health status, pressing circumstances) or in the case of indoor social visits, if the site's risk tolerance assessment allows.</p>	<p>✓ Announced on April 10, 2020</p> <p>To be effective as of April 23, 2020</p> <p>✓ September 3, 2020</p> <p>Single site policy still in place.</p> <p>When an outbreak is confirmed, staff are limited to working at single facility.</p>	<p>✓ Announced on April 10, 2020</p> <p>To be effective as of April 23, 2020</p> <p>Staff restricted to one designated supportive living (DSL) or long-term care (LTC) site. All other licensed supportive living site staff (including group homes, private supportive living, lodges) are restricted to one site during an outbreak.</p> <p>✓ July 16, 2021</p>	<p>✓ Announced April 28, 2020</p> <p>If there is a new confirmed outbreak, all residents and staff must be tested for COVID-19</p> <p>✓ May 25, 2020</p> <p>Anyone entering the site must be screened each time they enter, including a) Temperature screening, and b) COVID-19 questionnaire</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>	<p>✓ Announced April 28, 2020</p> <p>✓ May 25, 2020</p> <p>People will continue to move into and transfer between facilities in the usual way. If the site is under investigation, the operator should consult with AHS Zone Medical Officer of Health.</p>		<p>✓ December 2, 2020</p> <p>All LTC staff and residents of LTC, regardless of age are to be vaccinated in PHASE 1A: January 2021</p> <p>Designated or Essential Family Caregivers not included in initial vaccination priority populations.</p>	<p>March 20, 2020: https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/96e5aad9-9981-4593-b015-74484f967a4e/resource/1b1f9b7b-57fa-4f9f-8256-ee223d5878fd/download/health-cmoh-record-fof-decision-cmoh-03-2020.pdf</p> <p>April 7, 2020: https://open.alberta.ca/publications/cmoh-order-09-2020-2020-covid-19-response</p> <p>April 10, 2020: https://open.alberta.ca/publications/cmoh-order-10-2020-2020-covid-19-response</p> <p>April 28, 2020: https://open.alberta.ca/publications/cmoh-order-12-2020-2020-covid-19-response</p> <p>April 28, 2020: https://open.alberta.ca/publications/cmoh-order-14-2020-2020-covid-19-response</p> <p>May 25, 2020: https://open.alberta.ca/publications/cmoh-order-23-2020-2020-covid-19-response</p> <p>July 16, 2020: https://open.alberta.ca/publications/cmoh-order-29-2020-which-rescinds-cmoh-order-14-2020-2020-covid-19-response</p> <p>October 26, 2020: https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/CMOH-letter-continuing-care-EZ-Oct26.pdf</p> <p>October 29, 2020: https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/CMOH-letter-continuing-care-CZ-Oct29.pdf</p>
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<p>Alberta</p> 	<p>✓ July 16, 2020</p> <p>Effective July 23, 2020, two designated family/support people are to be supported per resident, no matter the reason.</p>	<p>✓ October 26 & 29, 2020</p> <p>The CMOH recommends that only designated family support people and visitors in aextenuating circumstances should be supported to visit in the Edmonton Zone; three days later, the CMOH sends the same guidance to Calgary Zone.</p> <p>✓ December 8, 2020</p> <p>Province-wide orders prohibit indoor and outdoor social gatherings. Following this, only designated family/support people and visitors in extenuating circumstances are supported (in other words, social visits are not permitted).</p> <p>General Visitor Ban is re-implemented.</p> <p>✓ January 18, 2020</p> <p>Province-wide orders change to permit outdoor social gatherings; outdoor social visits are again supported in accordance with Order 29-2020.</p>								<p>November 25, 2020: https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/hi-ipc-covid19-infosht-visiting-pts-pandemic.pdf</p> <p>December 2, 2020: https://www.alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine.aspx</p>
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<p>British Columbia</p> 	<p>Essential and Family Caregivers allowances per resident are not specified in British Columbia.</p>	<p>✓ June 30, 2020</p> <p>LTC Residents may visit with one general visitor at a time.</p> <p>✓ October 5, 2020</p> <p>LTC and Assisted Living facilities advised to restrict visitors.</p> <p>Under these new guidelines, residents are allowed to visit with one family member or friend.</p>	<p>✓ March 27, 2020</p> <p>✓ Effective April 10, 2020</p>	<p>✓ March 25, 2020</p>	<p>✓ Testing if exhibiting mild and atypical symptoms</p> <p>April 10, 2020</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>	<p>✓ October 5, 2020</p>	<p>✓ April 1, 2020</p> <p>All workers will be paid the same wage as those in collective agreements with the Public Health Authority</p> <p>✓ September 9, 2020</p> <p>Announced they will hire an addition 7,000 healthcare workers for LTC homes</p>	<p>✓ December 14, 2020</p> <p>Residents, Staff, and Essential Visitors to LTC will be in the first groups to get vaccinated between December and February</p>	<p>March 17, 2020: <i>Original Source No Longer Available*</i></p> <p>March 27, 2020: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/covid-19-pho-order-movement-health-care-staff.pdf</p> <p>March 25, 2020: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19-ppe_allocation_framework_march_25_2020.pdf</p> <p>April 1, 2020: https://docs.google.com/document/d/10P1EO7TRqT5nnuo-p4AM3yQ-iMemW22lqORBImk-cr3GA/edit?usp=sharing</p> <p>April 10, 2020: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/BCCDC_PHL_Updated_nCoV_Lab_Guidance.pdf</p> <p>June 30, 2020: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19_LongTermCareAssistedLiving.pdf</p> <p>September 29, 2020: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bc-fall-pandemic-plan-1.5717466</p> <p>October 5, 2020: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/clinical-care/long-term-care-facilities-assisted-living</p> <p>December 31, 2020: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/vaccines</p>
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<p>Manitoba</p> 	<p>✓ June 22, 2020</p> <p>Residents may designate a reasonable number of friends and family for visits.</p> <p>✓ November 27, 2020</p> <p>LTC residents may have up to two designated family caregivers.</p>	<p>✓ June 22, 2020</p> <p>Up to two visitors may visit residents at a time.</p> <p>✓ November 27, 2020</p> <p>Residents may identify general visitors for social reasons.</p> <p>Visitor limitations are directly related to the presence and transmission of COVID-19 as determined by the Chief Public Health Officer</p>	<p>✓ Announced on April 26, 2020</p> <p>To be implemented beginning May 1, 2020</p>	<p>✓ Announced on April 1, 2020</p> <p>To be implemented by April 13, 2020</p>	<p>✓ Announced May 13, 2020</p> <p>✓ December 9, 2020</p> <p>Expanded testing for those exhibiting atypical symptoms</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>	<p>✓ December 9, 2020</p> <p>Asymptomatic admission/re-admissions do not require isolation after arrival in the facility</p> <p>Those admitted from community should isolate in room for 14 days upon arrival</p>	<p>Dependent on level of risk:</p> <p>Red/Orange: May visit at any time, buy only one at a time if in residents' room</p> <p>Yellow: May visit at any time, up to two in the same room if social distancing is maintained.</p>	<p>✓ December 23, 2020</p> <p>Long Term Care workers and LTC residents to be vaccinated in December and January.</p> <p>Designated or Essential Family Caregivers not included in initial vaccination priority populations.</p>	<p>March 17, 2020: https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-family-ltc.pdf</p> <p>April 26, 2020: https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-single-site-staffing-model-for-licensed-pchs.pdf</p> <p>April 1, 2020: <i>Original Source No Longer Available*</i></p> <p>Source updated May 7th, 2020: https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-provincial-ppe-requirements.pdf</p> <p>May 13, 2020: https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-updated-testing-criteria-may-13.pdf</p> <p>June 22, 2020: https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-pch-visitation-principles.pdf</p> <p>November 27, 2020: https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-pch-visitation-principles.pdf</p> <p>December 9, 2020: https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-ipc-guidance-for-pch.pdf</p> <p>December 23, 2020: https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=50101&posted=2020-12-23</p>
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<p>New Brunswick</p> 	<p>✓ August 28, 2020</p> <p>Residents may have up to two Designated Support People (DSP). DSPs have no limitations on visitation.</p>	<p>✓ June 5, 2020</p> <p>LTC facilities were closed to visitors except for DSPs and palliative situations. Outdoor visits are permitted with physical distancing if the facilities allow.</p> <p>✓ August 28, 2020</p> <p>Any visitors who are not: palliative resident visitors, designated support persons, volunteers or non-essential service providers, these visitors are subject to a maximum visitation capacity of 20% (e.g. 20% of residents can have visitation per day).</p>	<p>R</p> <p>Should avoid working in different facilities if possible</p> <p>April 14, 2020</p>	<p>✓ April 14, 2020</p>	<p>✓ May 4, 2020</p> <p>In addition to mild symptoms, are to look for atypical symptoms</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>	<p>✓ May 4, 2020</p>		<p>✓ December 8, 2020</p> <p>Stage 1 includes vaccination of all LTC residents and staff.</p> <p>Designated or Essential Family Caregivers not included in initial vaccination priority populations.</p>	<p>April 14, 2020: https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/LTCF-E.pdf</p> <p>May 4, 2020: https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/covid-19_ltcf_guidance-e.pdf</p> <p>June 4, 2020: https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2020.06.0324.html</p> <p>August 28, 2020: https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2020.08.0465.html</p> <p>December 8, 2020: https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19/vaccine.html</p>
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<p>Newfoundland and Labrador</p> 	<p>✓ June 10, 2020</p> <p>Residents may assign one designated support person.</p> <p>✓ November 25, 2020</p> <p>Residents may continue to assign one designated support person.</p>	<p>✓ June 10, 2020</p> <p>General Visitation permitted.</p> <p>✓ July 13, 2020</p> <p>Each resident can designate up to five visitors.</p> <p>✓ November 25, 2020</p> <p>Continuation of five designated visitors.</p> <p>✓ December 11, 2020</p> <p>General Visitation suspended (Alert Level 2).</p>	<p>✓ April 14, 2020</p>	<p>Refers to PHAC Guidelines</p>	<p>Refers to PHAC Guidelines</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>	<p>✓ March 23, 2020</p> <p>Residents can temporarily move in with family, but will need to continue to pay their client contribution</p>	<p>Up to two visitors can attend at the same time.</p>	<p>✓ Date Not Specified</p> <p>Phase One includes priority vaccination for all residents, staff, and essential visitors.</p>	<p>March 23, 2020: <i>Original Source No Longer Available*</i></p> <p>April 14, 2020: <i>Original Source No Longer Available*</i></p> <p>March 23, 2020: https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/Key-Messages-Personal-Care-Homes-Community-Care-Homes-and-COVID-19-03-23-2020.pdf https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/Long-Term-Care-Homes-Temporary-Discharges.pdf</p> <p>June 10, 2020: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/new-visitor-changes-mothers-birth-partners-hospital-1.5606167</p> <p>July 13, 2020: https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/guidelines-for-support-person-designated-visitors/</p> <p>November 25, 2020: https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/guidelines-for-support-person-designated-visitors/#Long-Term-Personal</p> <p>December 11, 2020: https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/guidelines-for-support-person-designated-visitors/</p>
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<p>Nova Scotia</p> 	<p>✓ June 8, 2020 Residents may designate a caregiver.</p> <p>✓ September 8, 2020 Each resident may assign two designated caregivers. Only one may visit at a time.</p>	<p>✓ March 15, 2020 General visits banned.</p> <p>✓ June 15, 2020 General outdoor visits permitted.</p> <p>✓ September 22, 2020 Residents may have offsite day visits with family in their homes.</p> <p>✓ November 26, 2020, general visits cancelled</p>	<p>R Public Health to determine whether staff from facility in outbreak can work in non-outbreak facilities</p> <p>April 17, 2020</p> <p>✓ December 21, 2020 Staff are restricted to one home if no outbreak has occurred,</p>	<p>✓ April 12, 2020</p>	<p>✓ Testing for atypical symptoms</p> <p>April 11, 2020</p> <p>Effective December 21, 2020</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>	<p>✓ Nova Scotia's normal 30-day bed holding policy is in place</p> <p>Effective December 21, 2020</p>		<p>✓ December 8, 2020</p> <p>During the first three months, Nova Scotia will focus on immunizing LTC residents, staff and essential caregivers.</p>	<p>July 3, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/health-protection-act-order-by-the-medical-officer-of-health.pdf</p> <p>March 15, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20200610004</p> <p>April 12, 2020: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/masks-now-mandatory-for-workers-at-n-s-long-term-care-homes-1.5530953</p> <p>April 11, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/health-protection-act-order-by-the-medical-officer-of-health.pdf</p> <p>April 4, 2020: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/resident-removal-long-term-care-1.5522052</p> <p>June 8th, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/documents/COVID-19-Management-in-Long-Term-Care-Facilities-Directive.pdf</p> <p>June 10, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20200610004</p> <p>June 15, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20200610004</p> <p>September 8, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/news/se/?id=20200908003#:~:text=Designated%20caregivers%20can%20be%20family.resident%20prior%20to%20COVID%2D19</p> <p>September 22, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20200922004</p> <p>December 8, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19-immunization-plan-overview-poster-en.pdf to the sources.</p> <p>December 14, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/health-protection-act-order-by-the-medical-officer-of-health.pdf</p> <p>December 21, 2020: https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/documents/COVID-19-Management-in-Long-Term-Care-Facilities-Directive.pdf</p>
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<p>Northwest Territories</p> 	<p>✓ July 6, 2020: LTC Residents may designate one essential caregiver.</p> <p>✓ (Unspecified Date) Two designated essential caregivers can be assigned per resident. Only one may visit at a time.</p>	<p>✓ June 18, 2020 Pre LTC outbreak visitations are permitted. All LTC visitation will be banned if an outbreak is declared.</p> <p>✓ July 3, 2020 increased LTC restrictions will remain for LTC until a vaccine is available. Our approach is to loosen restrictions after 2 weeks of the start of each phase of Emerging Wisely (Vaccine Rollout Strategy)</p>	<p>✓ September 16, 2020</p> <p>“Plan to restrict movement of staff between work settings”</p>	<p>✓ September 16, 2020</p>	<p>✓ September 16, 2020</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>	<p>✓ September 16, 2020</p>		<p>✓ January 5, 2021</p> <p>Priority populations, including LTC residents and staff.</p> <p>Designated or Essential Family Caregivers not included in initial vaccination priority populations.</p>	<p>March 17, 2020: https://www.nthssa.ca/en/newsroom/public-notice-march-17th-nthssa-operational-update</p> <p>June 18, 2020: https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/professionals/sites/professionals/files/resources/interim-outbreak-management-covid-19-long-term-care-facilities.pdf</p> <p>September, 16, 2020: reak-management-covid-19-long-term-care-facilities.pdf</p> <p>July 3, 2020: https://www.nthssa.ca/en/newsroom/public-notice-updates-long-term-care-services-and-elders-day-programs</p> <p>January 5, 2020: https://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19/en/questions-and-answers</p> <p>Unspecified Date: https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-updates/visitor-restrictions-and-processes-during-covid-19</p> <p>July 6, 2020: https://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19/en/services/gnwt-services/visitation</p>
<p>Nunavut</p> 	<p>Not Specified.</p>	<p>✓ June 22, 2020 No visitors allowed at LTC facilities.</p> <p>✓ November 16th, 2020</p> <p>All visits to LTC facilities are on hold.</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>		<p>Not Specified</p>		<p>Not Specified</p>	<p>✓ December 11, 2020</p> <p>Vaccination priority will be given to residents and staff of LTC facilities.</p> <p>Designated or Essential Family Caregivers not included in initial vaccination priority populations.</p>	<p>June 22, 2020: https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/news/covid-19-department-health-services-update</p> <p>November 16, 2020: https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/news/covid-19-department-health-services-update</p> <p>December 18, 2020: https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/news/covid-19-department-health-services-update</p>

<p>Prince Edward Island</p> 	<p>✓ November 19, 2020.</p> <p>Residents may assign up to three Partners in Care.</p> <p>Partners in Care have no limits on visits.</p> <p>✓ December 7, 2020</p> <p>Residents may assign up to two partners in Care during current restrictions.</p>	<p>✓ March 15, 2020 LTC restriction general visitation.</p> <p>✓ June 1, 2020 LTC Visitation reopening for outdoor visitation.</p> <p>✓ November 19, 2020</p> <p>No restrictions on the number of visitors and their frequency of visitation.</p> <p>✓ December 7, 2020</p> <p>Limited number of visitors permitted in designated areas. Two general visitors may visit at a time, limited to 30 minutes once per week.</p>	<p>R Staff from facility in outbreak should not work in non-outbreak facilities</p> <p>April 15, 2020</p> <p>✓ June 11, 2020</p> <p>December 7, 2020</p>	<p>✓ April 15, 2020</p> <p>✓ June 11, 2020</p> <p>Surgical mask for LTC staff</p> <p>✓ December 7, 2020</p>	<p>✓ April 15, 2020</p> <p>✓ June 11, 2020</p> <p>✓ December 7, 2020</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>	<p>No December 18, 229</p>	<p>✓ Partners in Care have no limits on visitation.</p>	<p>✓ December 2020</p> <p>Phase 1 (December 2020 to March 2021) to vaccinate all LTC homes residents and staff</p> <p>✓ January 11, 2020</p> <p>Essential family caregivers have been added to the priority populations.</p>	<p>March 15, 2020: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/news/new-provincial-measures-regarding-covid-19-announced</p> <p>June 1, 2020: https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2020/06/01/more-provinces-moving-to-further-loosen-covid-19-restrictions.html</p> <p>June 11, 2020: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei_guidelines_for_the_management_and_control_of_covid-19_in_ltc.pdf</p> <p>November 19, 2020: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pei/long-term-care-visitacion</p> <p>December 7, 2020: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pei/long-term-care-visitacion</p> <p>December 7, 2020: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/pei-covid-19-circuit-breaker-december-2020</p> <p>December 18, 2020: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/visitor-policy-and-protocols-health-pei-facilities</p> <p>January 12, 2021: https://www.thetelegram.com/news/canada/video-covid-19-vaccine-rollout-moves-into-nova-scotia-nursing-homes-5-new-cases-reported-539519/</p>
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<p>Ontario</p> 	<p>✓ March 13, 2020 Only essential visitors allowed.</p> <p>✓ November 20, 2020</p> <p>Residents may designate up to two essential visitors.</p> <p>Essential visitors are permitted subject to the direction of local health unit:</p> <p>Green or Yellow, two caregivers per resident</p> <p>Orange, Red, or Grey, maximum of 1 caregiver per resident may visit at a time</p> <p>If a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic, a maximum of 1 caregiver may visit that resident at a time.</p>	<p>✓ March 13, 2020 General visitation stopped.</p> <p>✓ June 11, 2020</p> <p>Reopening of general visitation for outdoor visits only.</p> <p>✓ November 20, 2020</p> <p>If home is in Green or Yellow Zone: Two general visitors may visit a home at a time Each visit length should be limited, but at least 30 minutes long. Homes should allow at least one visit per resident per week.</p> <p>If home is Orange, Red, or Grey zone, general visitation will be restricted.</p>	<p>R March 22, 2020</p> <p>To limit wherever possible those working at multiple locations</p> <p>✓ Announced on April 15, 2020</p> <p>To be effective as of April 23, 2020</p> <p>Does not enable the limitation of multiple different home care providers from entering licensed retirement homes</p> <p>✓ December 9</p> <p>Employees should with contractors to limit the number of work locations</p>	<p>✓ April 8, 2020</p>	<p>✓ April 15, 2020</p> <p>✓ Announced December 7, 2020</p> <p>✓ Effective December 9</p> <p><i>LTCHA</i> Regulations require designated program coordinator in every LTC home responsible for IPAC program mandated by provincial legislation</p>	<p>✓ June 2020 (Exact date unspecified)</p> <p>Testing for LTC Staff, HCWs, Residents and Essential Visitors.</p> <p>June 16, 2020</p> <p>General visitors must attest to having a negative test in the past two weeks.</p> <p>July 15, 2020</p> <p>Visitors no longer need to provide a negative COVID-19 test</p> <p>✓ November 23, 2020</p> <p>Weekly testing of LTC staff and essential caregivers.</p>	<p>✓ March 24th, 2020</p> <p>✓ Announced December 7, 2020</p> <p>✓ Effective December 9</p>	<p>✓ September 28, 2020</p> <p>Ontario announced investment to 'recruit, retain, and support' LTC workers</p> <p>This includes the Personal Support Worker Return of Service Program, providing up to 2000 graduates with a \$5000 in return for a six-month work commitment.</p> <p>October 5, 2020</p> <p>Ontario announces a \$3 per hour wage increase for LTC staff and PSWs.</p> <p>✓ December 7, 2020</p> <p>Individuals should be placed in a single room to complete a 14-day quarantine.</p> <p>At any time, there should not be more than two individuals placed in a room at a time.</p>	<p>✓ December 11, 2020</p> <p>Phase 1 Population included residents, employees, staff, and essential caregivers of congregate living settings that provide care for seniors.</p>	<p>April 15, 2020: https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-action-plan-long-term-care-homes</p> <p>March 13, 2020: https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-action-plan-long-term-care-homes?_ga=2.242147783.416893598.1589282775-1793468587.1583765728</p> <p>June, 2020: https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ltrh/2020/06/covid-19-prevention-management-ltrh.pdf?la=en</p> <p>June 11, 2020: https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/06/ontario-to-resume-family-visits-in-long-term-care-homes-retirement-homes-and-other-residential-care.html</p> <p>June 16, 2020: http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/ltr/directive3_faq_20200616.aspx</p> <p>July 15, 2020: https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200146</p> <p>July 15, 2020: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/covid-19-coronavirus-ontario-july-15-long-term-care-1.5650290</p> <p>September 28, 2020: https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/58580/ontario-investing-525-million-to-recruit-retain-and-support-more-health-care-workers</p> <p>October 5, 2020: https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1798416963782</p> <p>November 20, 2020: https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-long-term-care-homes-in-areas-visitor-restrictions</p> <p>November 23, 2020: https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-visiting-long-term-care-homes#section-2</p> <p>December 7, 2020: http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/LTCH_HPPA.pdf</p> <p>December 11, 2020: https://files.ontario.ca/moh-covid-19-vaccine-distribution-implementation-plan-en-2020-12-11-v3.pdf</p>	

<p>Quebec</p> 	<p>✓ July 2020 Residents may designate more than one essential caregiver.</p> <p>✓ October 14, 2020 Green or Yellow zone: Residents may designate up to two informal caregivers at a time.</p> <p>Orange and above zone: Up to one informal caregiver may be designated.</p>	<p>✓ April 14, 2020 Visitation opens for residents of CHSLDs (long-term care homes).</p> <p>May 5th, 2020 Visitation opens for RPAs residents (retirement homes).</p> <p>✓ October 14th, 2020 Green or Yellow zone: Up to two general visitors at a time.</p> <p>Orange and above: No general visitors allowed.</p>	<p>✓ October 14, 2020 Staff mobility should be reconsidered to limit potential spread of virus into different facilities.</p>	<p>✓ April 4, 2020 All workers providing direct care</p>	<p>✓ April 8, 2020 October 14, 2020 Designated IPAC lead required on-site in every CHSLD to ensure compliance with IPAC best practices</p> <p>✓ December 15, 2020 Designated IPAC lead required in every RPA to ensure compliance with IPAC best practices</p>	<p>✓ November 5, 2020 A CHSLD does NOT require an informal caregiver to have a negative test upon entry"</p>	<p>✓ April 3, 2020</p>	<p>June 2, 2020 Quebec announced a plan to hire 10,000 odelies for CHSLD by the fall.</p> <p>Successful applications receive 12-week training program, with a \$760 scholarship, and be offered a minimum salary of \$49,000 per year.</p>	<p>✓ December 31, 2021 10 Ordered Priority Groups:</p> <p>Group 1: Vulnerable people and people with loss of autonomy who live in LTC facilities population,</p> <p>Group 2: Health care workers.</p> <p>Designated or Essential Family Caregivers not included in initial vaccination priority populations.</p>	<p>March 14, 2020: https://www.quebec.ca/en/premier/actualites/detail/le-gouvernement-du-quebec-declare-l-etat-d-urgence-sanitaire-interdit-les-visites-dans-les-centres-h/</p> <p>April 4, 2020: https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2968-port-masque-procedure-milieux-soins-transmission-communautaire-soutenue-covid-19</p> <p>April 8, 2020: https://www.quebec.ca/en/premier/actualites/detail/chsl-d-et-residences-privees-pour-personnes-aines-le-renfort-s-en-vient-dit-francois-legault/</p> <p>April 3, 2020: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/covid-19-quebec-april-3-1.5520159</p> <p>https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/answers-questions-coronavirus-covid19/questions-answers-health-services-covid-19/</p> <p>April 14, 2020: https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/covid-19-quebec-to-ease-restrictions-on-visiting-seniors-residences-premier-legault-says-1.4895261?cache=yes&clipid104062</p> <p>May 5, 2020 https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/covid-19-quebec-may-5-1.5555549</p> <p>June 2, 2020: https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/become-orderly-chsl-d/</p> <p>July 2020: https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/caregivers-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/#c60604</p> <p>July 22, 2020: https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/directives-covid/archives/dgapa-007.pdf</p> <p>September 15, 2020: https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/directives-covid/dgapa-008.pdf</p> <p>October 14, 2020: https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/answers-questions-coronavirus-covid19/questions-answers-health-services-covid-19/#c53925</p> <p>November 5, 2020: https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/caregivers-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/#c6060</p> <p>December 31, 2020: https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/progress-of-the-covid-19-vaccination/#c78786</p>
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<p>Saskatchewan</p> 	<p>✓ July 2, 2020: Two family members or support persons can be identified to support patients and residents.</p> <p>✓ November 19, 2020 Only one family member or support person can be present in the facility at a time.</p>	<p>March 17, 2020 LTC visitation restricted to immediate family only.</p> <p>✓ June 3, 2020 General visitation expanded to include more than visitor at a time (outdoors)</p> <p>✓ November 10, 2019 General visitation prohibited. The return to visitation will occur when deemed appropriate by the Chief Medical Health Officers.</p>	<p>✓ Announced on April 17, 2020 To be effective by April 28, 2020</p> <p>✓ April 17, 2020</p>	<p>✓ April 14, 2020</p> <p>✓ December 1, 2020</p> <p>Expanded masking (all staff required to wear a medical mask) and discontinuation of cloth masks</p>	<p>✓ November 16, 2020</p> <p>Updated guidelines IPAC released.</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>			<p>✓ December 9, 2020</p> <p>Targeted immunization of priority populations – including elderly residents in care homes and health care workers.</p> <p>Designated or Essential Family Caregivers not included in initial vaccination priority populations.</p>	<p>March 26, 2020: https://www.saskatchewan.ca/-/media/files/coronavirus/public-health-measures/public-health-orders/public-health-order-march-26-2020.pdf</p> <p>March 17, 2020: https://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/covid-19-sask-limits-hospital-long-term-care-home-visitors-to-immediate-family-only-1.4856817</p> <p>April 21, 2020: https://www.saskatchewan.ca/-/media/files/coronavirus/health-system-pandemic-response/sha-provincial-weekly-update-covid-19-readiness-april-21-2020.pdf</p> <p>April 14, 2020: https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2020/april/14/sha-update-on-health-system-readiness</p> <p>June 3, 2020: https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2020/june/03/visitation-and-masking-guidelines?fbclid=IwAR38H3L3LVk2HBLfy01lswyMesiX4PMrzc3wpEijyZulHmIEXkqISGaek</p> <p>July 2, 2020: https://www.saskatchewan.ca/-/media/files/coronavirus/info-for-health-care-providers/general-information-for-health-care-providers/visitorrestrictions-at-health-care-facilities/covid-19-family-presence-guidance.pdf</p> <p>November 10, 2020: https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/news/service-alerts-emergency-events/covid-19/general-info-health-providers/PublishingImages/Pages/Home/Family%20Presence%20during%20COVID-19%20Joint%20FAQs.pdf</p> <p>November 19, 2020: https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/public-health-measures/guidance-for-health-care-facilities</p> <p>April 17, 2020: https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/news/service-alerts-emergency-events/covid-19/general-info-health-providers/Pages/A-Message-for-Employees-on-Cohorting.aspx</p> <p>November 16, 2020: https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/news/service-alerts-emergency-events/covid-19/PPE-infection-prevention-control/Documents/Infection%20Prevention%20and%20Control/General/CV-19-G0061-Routine-Practices-IPAC.pdf</p> <p>December 1, 2020: https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/news/service-alerts-emergency-events/covid-19/PPE-infection-prevention-control/Documents/Personal%20Protective%20Equipment/SHA%20PPE%20Bulletin%20Updates/20-PPE-Supply-Bulletin-Dec%201%202020.pdf</p> <p>December 9, 2020: https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2020/december/09/saskatchewan-releases-covid-19-vaccine-delivery-plan</p>
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<p>Yukon</p> 	<p>✓ July 9, 2020 Can designate up to two essential family caregivers.</p> <p>✓ December 4, 2020 One essential caregiver can be designated per resident. Up to two if from the same household.</p>	<p>✓ March 16, 2020 Banned general visitation to LTC</p> <p>✓ June 12, 2020 Continuation of banned general visitation</p> <p>✓ December 4, 2020 Residents may assign up to four general visitors. In the case of an outbreak, LTC will suspend all visitation</p>	<p>Not Specified</p>		<p>✓ Date Not Specified</p> <p>Priority populations include residents and staff of LTC homes.</p> <p>Designated or Essential Family Caregivers not included in initial vaccination priority populations.</p>	<p>March 16, 2020: https://yukon.ca/en/news/chief-medical-officer-health-recommends-broad-new-measures-yukon</p> <p>June 12, 2020: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-covid19-update-june12-1.5610249</p> <p>July 9, 2020: https://yukon.ca/en/health-andwellness/covid-19-information/longterm-care-visitation-guidelines-covid-19</p> <p>December 4, 2020: https://yukon.ca/en/health-andwellness/covid-19-information/long-term-care-visitation-guidelines-covid-19</p>				
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* Due to the rapidly changing nature of this information, some of the original source links have been changed or discontinued as provincial/territorial ministries have updated their directives.

Please note that we have tried to be as accurate as possible, but given that information has been rapidly changing and formal guidelines are not always available, we acknowledge that there may be some errors. If you notice an error, please let us know and we will make corrections as needed.

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- ² The NIA defines long-term care as: A range of preventive and responsive care and supports, primarily for older adults, that may include assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) provided by either not-for-profit and for-profit providers, or unpaid caregivers in settings that are not location specific and thus include designated buildings, or in home and community-based settings.
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- ⁵ National Institute on Ageing (NIA). (2019 September). Enabling the Future Provision of Long-Term Care in Canada. Retrieved from: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c2fa7b03917eed9b5a436d8/t/5d9de15a38dca21e46009548/1570627931078/Enabling+the+Future+Provision+of+Long-Term+Care+in+Canada.pdf>
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