

From: SPB / DGPS (HC/SC)
To: Ellis, Maddison
Subject: Long-term care
Date: Thursday, December 9, 2021 12:34:03 PM

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Dear M. Ellis,

Thank you for your correspondence of November 23, 2021, to the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Health. We appreciate you taking the time to write and notify us about the Northumberland County Council's support of the Municipality of Leamington's resolution regarding long-term care.

We read with interest the resolution you shared. We appreciate hearing from you concerning federal health care funding and efforts to protect and support long-term care residents in Canada. Your suggestions will be carefully considered as next steps are determined on these critical issues.

As you know, COVID-19 has tragically exposed long-standing issues affecting long-term care facilities across the country. While provinces and territories are primarily responsible for delivering long-term care, the federal government is working collaboratively with provinces and territories to protect vulnerable Canadians in long-term care.

To address significant challenges revealed during COVID-19, in the 2020 Fall Economic Statement, the federal government announced the creation of a new Safe Long-Term Care Fund. This fund will transfer up to \$1 billion to the provinces and territories to protect people living and working in long-term care. Provinces and territories will be able to use this money to improve infection prevention and control in facilities, including to assess infection prevention and control readiness, improve infrastructure such as ventilation, and address workforce gaps, including hiring more staff or raising wages. We are now working to reach agreements with all provinces and territories. You can find the agreements that have been signed to date and learn more about how the funding will be used under the Safe Long-Term Care Fund online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/transparency/health-agreements/shared-health-priorities.html>.

In addition, Budget 2021 announced a further \$3 billion investment, starting in 2022-23, to support provinces and territories in their efforts to ensure standards for long-term care are applied and permanent changes are made. The federal government will work collaboratively with provinces and territories to flow this funding as part of our collective efforts to make sure that seniors and others in care settings live in safe and dignified conditions.

The federal government has also responded to COVID-19 in long-term care facilities in a number of other ways:

- The Safe Restart Agreement provided provincial and territorial governments with over \$19 billion to help them restart the economy, while making Canada more resilient to future surges in cases of COVID-19. This included \$740 million in funding to support our most vulnerable populations through infection prevention and control measures to protect those in long-term care and those

receiving home care and palliative care. Additional information can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/intergovernmental-affairs/services/safe-restart-agreement.html>.

- Provided \$3 billion in emergency federal funding to provinces and territories to support increased wages of low-income essential workers, including personal support workers in long-term care facilities.
- Supported provinces and territories in fighting outbreaks in long-term care facilities by providing personal protective equipment, contact tracing, rapid testing and vaccines. The Government also deployed the Canadian Armed Forces and funded direct assistance through the Canadian Red Cross.
- Provided funding to Healthcare Excellence Canada for its LTC+ initiative, which spreads promising practices in preventing and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on long-term care and retirement homes. This initiative has expanded to support more than 1,500 facilities across Canada. For additional information, please visit the following website:
<https://www.healthcareexcellence.ca/en/what-we-do/what-we-do-together/ltc-acting-on-pandemic-learning-together/>.
- Developed guidance documents on the care of residents in long-term care facilities, and infection prevention and control for long-term care, assisted-living facilities, and home care. For more information about these documents, you may wish to visit the following links:
 - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevent-control-covid-19-long-term-care-homes.html>
 - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/infection-prevention-control-covid-19-interim-guidance-home-care-settings.html>
- Committed \$38.5 million over two years to support training up to 4,000 personal support worker interns through an accelerated 6-week online training program combined with a 4-month work placement, to address acute labour shortages in long-term care and home care.

We know that Canadians ultimately want to age at home or in their community, close to family and loved ones. That is why the federal government is also providing \$6 billion over ten years – starting in 2017 – for provinces and territories to improve access to home and community care services, including palliative care. This investment is expected to help more Canadians receive the care and services they need so that they may remain at home longer. Details of the bilateral agreements, including how the funding is being spent, can be found here:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/transparency/health-agreements/shared-health-priorities.html>.

Seniors deserve to be safe, respected and live in dignity. The federal government continues to work in collaboration with provinces and territories to take action to support seniors, and increase the resilience of long-term care facilities in order to prevent and mitigate challenges, such as COVID-19.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to us. If you have questions about the information provided in this reply, please contact Sharon Harper, Director General of the Health Care Programs and Policy Directorate, Strategic Policy Branch, at spb-dgps@hc-sc.gc.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Strategic Policy Branch
Health Canada