



Strategies to Reduce the Impact of a Second Wave of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities

Disclaimer:

This *Quick Response Report* was published on June 17, 2020. Given the rapidly changing nature of the coronavirus pandemic, some of the references included in this report may quickly become out-of-date. We further caution readers that researchers at the Newfoundland & Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research are not experts on infectious diseases and are relaying work produced by others. This report has been produced quickly and it is not exhaustive, nor have the included studies been critically appraised.

Readers will note that some text below has been highlighted for emphasis.

Original Request

What strategies have been proposed that could help reduce the impact of a possible second wave of COVID-19 on long-term care facilities in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Summary of Findings

- Long-term care facilities need integrated infection prevention and control programs to both identify and effectively respond to COVID-19 outbreaks.
- Lessons learned from the first wave of COVID-19 must be implemented in operational practices and policies, including: better supports for residents, managing and supporting healthcare workers, and managing both visitation and facilities.
- Only a few of the articles included in this review speak directly to reducing the impact of a second wave of COVID-19 on long-term care facilities; they include: Estabrooks et al. (2020), Duncan (2020), and Vogel (2020). These articles are highlighted below, under Expert Opinion.

Guidance

Kluge. **Invest in the overlooked and unsung: build sustainable people-centred long-term care in the wake of COVID-19.** WHO, April 23, 2020 [LINK](#) (1)

- Statement by WHO Regional Director for Europe on necessary steps for long-term care facilities to prepare for a second wave, focusing on: 1) empowering care workers; 2) changing how long-term care facilities operate; and 3) building systems that prioritize people's needs.
- Statement urges health systems to take advantage of the lull in new cases to prepare for an inevitable second wave of COVID-19.

Lester et al. **Policy Recommendations regarding Skilled Nursing Facility Management of COVID-19: Lessons from New York State.** Journal of the American Medical Directors Association, May 28, 2020 (Journal Pre-Proof) [LINK](#) (2)

- “The resulting document provides recommendations on screening and protection of staff, screening of residents, management of COVID-19-positive and presumed-positive cases, communication during an outbreak, management of admissions and readmissions, and providing emotional support for staff.”
- “These consensus guidelines have been endorsed by the Executive Board of the New York Medical Directors Association and the Board of the Metropolitan Area Geriatrics Society.”

Related Article:

- Berger. **Nursing home doctors recommend ways to reduce COVID-19 deaths as prospect of ‘second wave’ looms.** McKnight’s Long-Term Care News, June 8, 2020 [LINK](#) (3)

Public Health Agency of Canada. **Infection prevention and control for COVID-19: Interim guidance for long-term care homes.** PHAC, May 12, 2020 [LINK](#) (4)

- Does not address COVID-19 second wave issues directly, but includes extensive guidance on LTC operations, in general:
 - [Infection prevention and control preparedness](#)
 - [Screening](#)
 - [Visitors \(including volunteers and contractors\)](#)
 - [Resident care and infection control measures](#)
 - [Resident placement and accommodation](#)
 - [Resident activity](#)
 - [Outbreak management](#)
 - [Discontinuing additional precautions](#)
 - [Handling of deceased bodies](#)
 - [Handling lab specimens](#)
 - [Handling resident care equipment](#)
 - [Environmental cleaning and disinfection](#)
 - [Linen, dishes and cutlery](#)
 - [Waste management](#)

World Health Organization. **Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Long-Term Care Facilities in the Context of COVID-19.** WHO, March 21, 2020 [LINK](#) (5)

- Does not address COVID-19 second wave issues directly, but includes guidance on LTC operations, in general.
- Provides basic recommendations in following areas: infection prevention and control, physical distancing, visitors, early recognition, source control, PPE, cleaning and laundry, restrictions on movement, health care worker and caregiver support, and reporting.

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (ON). **COVID-19 Guidance for the Health Sector: Long-Term Care Home / Retirement Home Resources.** MOHLTC, June 13, 2020 [LINK](#) (6)

- Does not address COVID-19 second wave issues directly, but includes extensive guidance on LTC operations, in general:
 - [Guidance for Long-Term Care Homes](#) (April 15, 2020)
 - [Screening Tool for Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes](#) (May 6, 2020)

- [Outbreak Guidance for Long-Term Care Homes \(LTCH\)](#) (April 15, 2020)
- [Guidance for mask use in long-term care homes and retirement homes](#) (April 15, 2020)
- [Reopening Retirement Homes](#) (June 12, 2020)
- [Resuming Visits in Long-Term Care Homes](#) (June 11, 2020)

Centers for Disease Control (US). **Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes**. CDC, May 19, 2020 [LINK](#) (7)

- Does not address COVID-19 second wave issues directly, but includes extensive guidance on LTC operations, in general:
 - [Performing Facility-Wide SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Nursing Homes](#)
 - [Considerations for Memory Care Units in Long-Term Care Facilities](#)
 - [Preparing for Covid-19 in Nursing Homes](#)
 - [Responding to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in Nursing Homes](#)
 - [Testing for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in Nursing Homes](#)
 - [Infection Prevention and Control Assessment Tool for Nursing Homes Preparing for COVID-19](#)

ECDC Public Health Emergency Team. **High impact of COVID-19 in long-term care facilities, suggestion for monitoring in the EU/EEA, May 2020**. Eurosurveillance, June 4, 2020 [LINK](#) (8)

- Does not address COVID-19 second wave issues directly, but includes extensive guidance on LTC operations, in general:
 - Proposed surveillance objectives for long-term care facilities
 - Suggested indicators for the identification of a possible COVID-19 case in a long-term care facility

Systematic Reviews

- No systematic reviews were found at this time.

Other Reviews

Health Information and Quality Authority (IE). **Rapid review of public health guidance for infection prevention and control measures in residential care facilities in the context of COVID-19**. HIQA, June 12, 2020 [LINK](#) (9)

- Does not address COVID-19 second wave issues directly, but includes extensive guidance on LTC operations, in general. Summarizes guidance from 17 separate organizations.
- “Many similarities exist between guidance documents, including recommendations to screen people entering facilities, to monitor staff and residents for new symptoms, to restrict visitation except on compassionate grounds, to isolate suspected and confirmed cases, to cohort symptomatic residents, to regularly clean frequently-touched surfaces and to develop outbreak management plans.”
- “There were some areas of guidance that differed between guidance documents, including criteria for testing, recommended length of isolation, recommendations for the use of facemasks by staff and residents, immunisation requirements, use of nebulisers and guidance on caring for the recently deceased.”

Rios et al. **Guidelines for preventing respiratory illness in older adults aged 60 years and above living in long-term care: A rapid review of clinical practice guidelines**. MedRxiv, May 27, 2020 [LINK](#) (10)

- This article is a preprint and has not been peer-reviewed. It reports new medical research that has yet to be evaluated and so should not be used to guide clinical practice.

- Does not address COVID-19 second wave issues directly.
- “The recommendations from current guidelines overall seem to support environmental measures for infection prevention and antiviral chemoprophylaxis for infection management as the most appropriate first-line response to viral respiratory illness in long-term care.”

Related Article:

- Whitehorn. **Commentary on Older Adults (Long-Term Care): Guideline evidence for Prevention of Respiratory Illness: A rapid overview of clinical practice guidelines.** JBI, April 8, 2020 [LINK](#) (11)

Rios et al. **Preventing respiratory illness in older adults aged 60 years and above living in long-term care.** Ka Shing Knowledge Institute, St. Michael’s Hospital, March 16, 2020 [LINK](#) (12)

- Rapid overview of reviews, prepared for Infection Prevention & Control, World Health Organization, Health Emergency Programme
- Does not address COVID-19 second wave issues directly
- “The current evidence suggests that with antiviral chemoprophylaxis with adamantane is effective in managing respiratory illness in residents of long-term care facilities. The rest of the strategies can be used in long-term care facilities, yet have limited evidence supporting their use from systematic reviews.”

Related Article:

- Whitehorn. **Commentary on Older Adults (Long-Term Care): Systematic Reviews on Prevention of Respiratory Illness: A rapid overview of reviews.** JBI, April 7, 2020 [LINK](#) (13)

Expert Opinion

Estabrooks et al. **We must act now to prevent a second wave of long-term care deaths.** Globe and Mail, June 10, 2020 [LINK](#) (14)

- Royal Society of Canada article published in the Globe and Mail describing lessons learned from first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the impact on long-term care and strategies for mitigating the impacts of a second wave.
- Includes seven specific recommendations that are “non-negotiable”:
 1. Implement infection prevention and control plan for each LTC facility.
 2. Inspect LTC facilities regularly, in-person, by relevant public health unit.
 3. Implement provincial government procurement of infection control resources, e.g., PPE, education, testing and tracing.
 4. Support LTC workers with equitable pay and benefits, including mental health supports.
 5. Implement single worksite policies for LTC workers.
 6. Implement LTC capacity to segregate infected residents / staff with appropriate resources, or have alternative plans to relocate.
 7. Implement communication technologies and other strategies to connect residents to family and friends to prevent social isolation.

Duncan. **Ontario’s Long-Term Care Homes Urge Federal Government to Protect Seniors, Prioritize Long-Term Care with Second Wave of COVID-19.** Ontario Long Term Care Association, June 3, 2020 [LINK](#) (15)

- OLTC is calling on federal government support for PPE and testing, support for additional human resources, and capital investments for new long term care facilities better designed for COVID-19.

Related Articles:

- Connolly. **Coronavirus: Ontario long-term care head warns of ‘real urgency’ ahead of 2nd wave.** Global News, June 7, 2020 [LINK](#) (16)
- Canadian Press. **Federal aid for long-term-care homes needed ahead of second wave, advocates say.** CP24, June 3, 2020 [LINK](#) (17)

Vogel. **Is Canada ready for the second wave of COVID-19?** CMAJ, June 15, 2020 [LINK](#) (18)

- Interview with infectious disease specialists Drs. Murthy (BC Children’s Hospital and UBC), Oughton (Jewish General Hospital and McGill), and Vaisman (University Health Network)
- Deficiencies that require attention: lack in “facilities, training, and access to proper PPE”, better LTC personnel testing, management and policies, establishing permanent infection prevention and control programs (e.g., “education, protective equipment and preventive strategies”).

Primary Research

Toronto Seniors Services and Long-Term Care. **COVID-19 Pandemic in the City of Toronto Long-Term Care Homes: Response of the Seniors Services and Long-Term Care Division.** Toronto SSLTC, June 1, 2020, [LINK](#) (19)

- Report on SSLTC response to COVID-19 pandemic in long-term care facilities. Reviews key measures taken (including: infection prevention and control, PPE options, staffing, communications with families, managing residents, and other initiatives) “with a view to identify short and long-term strategies for improvement and change.”
- “Initial recommendations are outlined in this report to ensure the lessons learned from early outbreaks and the initial COVID-19 situation can be maintained.”

Related: Articles:

- Freeman. **Report recommends Toronto spend \$14.3M to prepare city-run homes for possible 2nd wave of COVID-19.** CP24, June 15, 2020 [LINK](#) (20)
- Kopun and Rider. **City estimates \$14.5M price tag to make city nursing homes safe against a second wave of COVID-19.** The Star, June 15, 2020 [LINK](#) (21)

Hota et al. **Preparing your intensive care unit for the second wave of H1N1 and future surges.** Critical Care Medicine, April 2010 [LINK](#) (22)

- Article cited by several guidance documents, provides framework for critical assessment of pandemic second waves: “In preparing for a surge response, factors to consider are staff, stuff (supplies and equipment), space, and systems necessary to respond to the event.”

News Articles

Snan. **COVID-19 could change the way long-term care facilities are designed in Nova Scotia.** The Chronicle Herald, May 20, 2020 [LINK](#) (23)

- Covers a range of built environment and coordination issues, with input from experts Dr. Kenneth Rockwood and architect Benjie Nycum.
- Takes into account the need to balance new configurations of care with maintaining familiarity for patients, especially those with cognitive/memory deficits, and family.
- Urges health system to take advantage of lull in cases to make changes before second wave of COVID-19.

Shingler & Montpetit. **Quebec finally gets a handle on COVID outbreaks in long-term care, but is it ready for a 2nd wave?** CBC News, Montreal, June 9, 2020 [LINK](#) (24)

- “Ideally, [Dr. Quoc Dinh Nguyen, a Université de Montréal geriatrician who is part of a task force advising the province] said, health-care workers would be tested for COVID-19 every few days to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus to vulnerable patients.”
- “He also said that more personnel, and ensuring they are properly trained to use personal protective equipment, will be crucial to avoid future outbreaks.”
- “There are also concerns about the safety of long-term care facilities themselves, many of which are decades old and badly in need of repairs.”

Related Article:

- Grassly et al. **Report 16: Role of testing in COVID-19 control**. Imperial College COVID-19 response team. 23 April 2020 [LINK](#) (25)

Methodology

Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research (NLCAHR) COVID-19 Quick Response reports are initiated by, and shared with, our partners in the provincial health system, including the four Regional Health Authorities, the Departments of Health and Community Services and Children, Seniors and Social Development, and public health officials.

NLCAHR staff work with topic submitters to clarify the research question. We then search for related systematic reviews, meta-analyses, other reviews, interim and other guidance statements, primary research, expert opinion and health and science reporting.

We use several search strategies, with a focus on the following databases:

- [Alberta Health Services](#)
- [CADTH](#)
- [Canadian Pharmacists Association](#)
- [Campbell Collaboration](#)
- [Cochrane Collaboration](#)
- [Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Centre for Evidence Based Medicine](#)
- [Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre](#)
- [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)
- [Health Canada](#)
- [HIQA \(Ireland\)](#)
- [Joanna Briggs Institute](#)
- [MedRxiv](#)
- [National Collaborating Centres on Methods and Tools \(NCCMT\)](#)
- [National Institutes of Health](#)
- [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#)
- [National Library of Medicine](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [Trip Database](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)

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