

# Long-Term Care Homes During the Pandemic:

## Lessons Learned and Re-thinking the Future

On February 24, 2022, CBRCanada members participated in a live discussion to dialogue about the importance of long-term care design, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Facilitators Chantal Trudel and Soo Wong co-led conversation, as a follow-up from their February 17 webinar. This summary highlights participants' reflections during the live discussion.



## Shortcomings in Long-Term Care

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted significant gaps in the long-term care (LTC) system. Without proper infrastructure design and staffing, LTC homes have struggled to provide comfortable, safe and supportive home environments for residents. This has resulted in many shortcomings, impacting residents' quality of life, and staff working conditions. The following challenges were discussed by live discussion participants.



### Urgent need for trained providers

More trained registered practical nurses and personal support workers are needed to properly care for residents. During the pandemic, many residents did not receive enough personalized and attentive care (e.g., support workers unable to carry out routine assisted hygiene care with residents).



### Insufficient services and programs

More programs and services are needed to support residents. The pandemic amplified the gaps in service provision, as resource constraints and physical distancing regulations restricted access to the outdoors, and limited recreational and social programming.

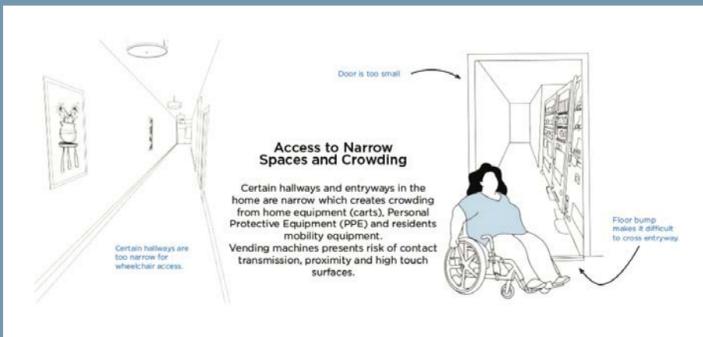
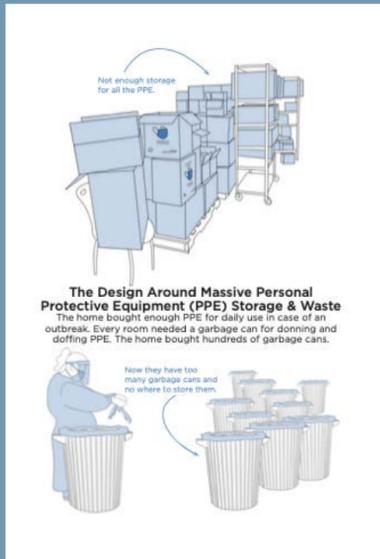


### Uninviting environments

LTC homes should be designed with community in mind. LTC facilities are people's homes, where visitors may gather. Homes must be designed to be structurally conducive to socializing. Uninviting environments (e.g., poor design layout, outdated sitting rooms, lack of children's programming, and limited spaces to socialize) may discourage visits from residents' family and friends.

## Current Design Challenges

The following images share select findings from the study, *COVID-19 – Design of Long-Term Care Homes: Learning for the Future*, shared during the the webinar, "Long-Term Care Homes During the Pandemic" with presenters Chantal Trudel and Soo Wong.



## Designing for Dignity

Long-term care homes need to be redesigned in order to better support the health and dignity of residents, visitors and healthcare workers. Participants shared the following design recommendations during the live discussion:



More communal spaces for residents to encourage and support socialization.



Wider doorways equipped with sliding doors, to promote easier access for those in wheelchairs.



Individualized lighting in each room to accommodate residents unique vision needs.



Remove carpeting to improve access for those who use wheelchairs or walkers.



Shorter and wider hallways, as well as clearer exit routes.



Build more in-room showers and bidet toilets (reduces risk of UTIs).



Round tables, as opposed to rectangle-shaped tables to better accommodate wheelchairs.



House residents in smaller private units to accommodate unique needs.

## Take Action!

- Reach out and initiate conversation with your MPP about long-term care homes in your community.
- Consider taking part in the public consultation of the Canadian Standards Association's new standard: *Operations and infection prevention and control of long-term care homes*. This draft is available for public review until April 11, 2022.
- Check out the *Seniors for Social Action* initiative, run by an organization of older adults from across Ontario. This organization's mission is to find age-friendly and respectful non-profit community-based residential alternatives to long term care institutions. Visit their "[how you can help](#)" page, to discover ways that you can get involved.

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