

Continuing Care Alliance

Key Messages and Updates: March 2023

Please note: These key messages include a summary of the presentations and conversations at Continuing Care Alliance (CCA) Meeting in March 2023 and additional updates that may be of interest to CCA members and other operators. The content presented in these meetings is under development and is subject to change.

Budget and Business Plan

- Continuing care remains a priority for the Government of Alberta in [Budget 2023](#).
- The total budget for continuing care is around \$4.3 billion dollars, an increase of 15% from last year.
 - This includes \$1B in operational funding over three years (\$264M in 2023-24) for Continuing Care Transformation.
- Additionally, \$310M in capital funding over three years will be provided to the Continuing Care Capital Program.
- Now that Budget 2023 has approved Continuing Care Transformation, Year 1 initiatives are underway.
 - Initiatives include: legislative changes, expanding home and community care, increasing the hours of care in continuing care homes, strengthening workforce capacity, improving access to community-based palliative and end-of-life care, building continuing care homes and undertaking a funding model review.
- COVID-19 funding for continuing care home (long-term care (LTC) and designated supportive living (DSL) operators has been extended for an additional three months to June 30, 2023.
 - As of July 1, the Continuing Care Transformation funding will continue some elements of COVID-19 funding, including increasing the average hours of care, maintaining the Health Care Aide (HCA) wage top ups in contracted LTC, DSL and home care agencies, and providing a pool of funds as needed for significant outbreak costs.
- The Government of Alberta invested \$25 million between 22-23 and 23-24 to support operators to receive the full 5.5% CPI increase to maximum accommodation charges from July 1, 2022.

Innovation Forum

- The Community Care Innovation Forum was hosted by Alberta Health in partnership with PwC, on January 18, 2023. This forum brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to facilitate discussion, collaboration and innovation regarding the future of home and community care.

- Participants explored the following three main topics in a World Café format: caring for people in the community, social determinants of health and technology enabled health and care.
- Overarching themes under these three topics have been gathered and organized. A public “What We Heard” report from the forum will be released in the future with more information on the themes.
- The main finding from the forum was that change is needed to increase home and community care. There are many initiatives underway to meet this goal, including legislative changes and Continuing Care Transformation, and other pieces are in early stages of development, such as the Continuing Care Workforce Strategy.

Officer of the Auditor General Report

- The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) of Alberta released a report on [COVID-19 in Continuing Care Facilities](#) in February 2023. The audit looked at activities related to the COVID-19 public health response by Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services (AHS) in AHS-owned and operated, as well as contracted, long-term care and designated supportive living facilities.
- The overall conclusion from the report is that Alberta Health and AHS had processes in place to respond to COVID-19 in continuing care facilities, but improvements can be made.
- Findings were organized in the following four topics:
 - Pre COVID-19 pandemic planning and preparedness;
 - Guidance and communication between provincial authorities and continuing care facilities;
 - Processes and key resources and supports to facilities to prevent and respond to COVID-19 outbreaks; and,
 - Systems to monitor the response.
- Eight recommendations were provided under these four topics for Alberta Health and AHS. As part of the audit process, Alberta Health and AHS must provide OAG with comprehensive action plans for how they will respond to the recommendations. Updates on these actions will be brought to the CCA as appropriate.
- The OAG also released a shorter follow-up report to another audit they completed titled [Seniors Care in Long-Term Care](#).
 - The recent report issued two new recommendations for Alberta Health and AHS to improve public reporting and ensure sufficient staffing respectfully.

Management of Hazardous Medication in Supportive Living

- Hazardous medication is defined as the medications that are therapeutic to the patient but have a known or suspected health risk to workers when exposed in the workplace. Occupational exposure may occur during the performance of job duties and may place staff at risk of adverse health effects.

- Staff in the care setting may not be aware when a client is taking hazardous medication, unless they are directly involved in medication activities. As such, Employers and Employees have shared responsibilities to identify risks and adhere to safe work practices.
- Fundamental risk mitigation practices include: performing a risk assessment, wearing appropriate PPE, adhere to a “touchless technique” when handling waste and linens, undertake proper waste disposal processes and implement and follow clean-up procedures.
- Please note that any suspected or confirmed incidents or exposures to hazardous medication should be reported through the employee’s workplace health and safety channels.
- Operators and others who have access to Continuing Care Connection can find more information about medication management here: [Medication Management | Continuing Care Connection \(albertahealthservices.ca\)](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/medication-management/)
- For additional information, you can access the AHS Infection and Prevention Control documents here: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/ipc/ipc.aspx>

InterRAI LTCF Implementation

- Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) has recently announced that it will be decommissioning the national Home Care Reporting System (HCRS) in March 2025, and the Continuing Care Reporting System (CCRS) in March 2026.
 - CIHI also announced that Canadian jurisdictions will be transitioning to the new interRAI assessments (interRAI LTCF and interRAI Home Care).
 - CIHI has introduced the new integrated interRAI Reporting System (IRRS), which will be used to capture data from the new assessments and replace the HCRS and CCRS.
- Alberta Health will be replacing the Alberta Continuing Care Information System (ACCIS) system over the next three years. Once available, Alberta Health will provide interRAI LTCF data capture and submission requirements to all LTC operators and their software vendors.
- To support the current plans and avoid issues with current and future data submissions, Alberta Health is requesting that all contracted LTC operators wait until they are officially notified by Alberta Health before proceeding with the transition to the new interRAI LTCF assessment. Implementation plans will be communicated when that notification is shared.