

Long-Term Care Tracker Informs National Report that Shows Prioritizing COVID-19 Vaccinations in Canada's Long-Term Care Homes Saved Lives

TORONTO, December 9, 2021 — The tragic loss of life that occurred in Canada's long-term care (LTC) homes during the COVID-19 pandemic—LTC residents accounted for 3% of all COVID-19 cases and a staggering 43% of COVID-19 deaths—led to a concerted early national effort to vaccinate residents and workers in this sector first. In a report released today, called [Impact of COVID-19 on Canada's Health Care Systems](#), the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) shows that this proactive vaccination program was highly effective.

Using data from the first three waves of the pandemic, including [the National Institute on Ageing's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Tracker](#), the report states that between March 1, 2020, and August 15, 2021, more than 56,000 residents and 22,000 staff were infected with COVID-19, resulting in more than 14,000 deaths.

"COVID-19 devastated Canada's LTC and retirement homes," says Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Health Policy Research at the NIA [in the report](#). "As soon as it was understood that residents and staff were at a higher risk of death, they were prioritized to be among the first Canadians to receive vaccines."

By March, 2021, 95% of residents in most parts of Canada had received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, which reduced infections and deaths by more than 90%, according to the report.

"Although earlier access to vaccines would have allowed these settings to have a greater level of protection during Canada's second wave, thousands of residents and staff survived the third and fourth waves because they were vaccinated," says Dr. Sinha.

Earlier this year, the NIA compiled lessons learned and best practices from COVID-19 vaccine rollouts for older adults in Canada and internationally. [A Cautionary Tale: Canada's COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout for Older Canadians](#) shows that well-planned, comprehensive vaccine rollout plans save lives. It also provides actionable policy recommendations to improve future vaccine rollouts and better protect older adults and other vulnerable populations.

"While we can all be proud of where Canada is today in terms of COVID-19 vaccination, we also have an important opportunity right now to learn from the best practices that have emerged internationally and to implement these changes here at home," says Dr. Sinha. "As demonstrated in CIHI's new

report, COVID-19 vaccines saved lives in long-term homes—of residents and of workers—while simultaneously contributing to the health and well-being of all Canadians.”

CIHI’s report uses health systems data from the first three waves of the pandemic (March 2020 to June 2021) to track the effects of COVID-19 on Canada’s health care systems in five key areas, including long-term care.

- [Read CIHI’s report.](#)
- [Visit the NIA’s Long-Term Care COVID-19 Tracker.](#)

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The National Institute on Ageing is a Ryerson University think tank focused on the realities of Canada’s ageing population. Follow us on Twitter [@RyersonNIA](#) and support our call for a National Seniors Strategy [@NSS Now](#).