



Good morning and thank you to the Select Standing Committee for allowing me to present today.

My name is Daniel Fontaine and I'm the CEO of BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA) as well as Chair of the Canadian Association for Long Term Care. I also sit on the Federal Minister of Health's Advisory Board on Dementia and was involved in the development of the recently released National Dementia Strategy.

BCCPA is headquartered in Burnaby and has over 350 members from across the province. We're the leading voice for BC's continuing care sector with members providing publicly-funded long-term care, assisted living and home support services.

Through our new operating arm, EngAge BC we also represent members who provide private pay independent living, assisted living and home support services.

Notwithstanding what you may have read or heard, I'm here to advise you there will be no "silver tsunami" hitting the B.C. coast.

Rather, our aging population is better described as a rising tide. A body of water that we've forecasted for decades would begin rising and it is.

In fact, our society will continue to rapidly age straight through to the year 2041 before the tide finally begins to recede.

While I wish I could advise you we have the luxury of time to conduct more studies, do more reviews, hold more public hearings, unfortunately, I can't. That time was 20 years ago.

Collectively, we are in the midst of a very serious situation when it comes to our aging population and being able to meet their housing and care needs. This is due in part to B.C. being a popular destination for Canadian and international retirees.

The statistics are startling. Since 2011, the number of people over the age of 80 has doubled. In a recent report we released, it was determined our province needs construct at least 45,000 net new beds in the next 20 years to meet growing demand.

As it stands, there are already over 1,400 people waiting to access a long-term care bed in this province. Meanwhile, in the last two years only 150 new beds have been announced.

I'm here today to speak on behalf of the countless number of seniors who can no longer speak for themselves – a majority of whom have advanced dementia and are left to rely on our Association and others like us to advocate on their behalf.

In our 2020 budget submission released today, we make a number of recommendations including:

- Construct 5,000 new long-term care beds over the next three years. This would require an investment of approximately \$1.6 billion.
- Construct 1,000 new assisted living suites which translates into a public investment of \$320 million over three years.

BCCPA is also calling upon the government to immediately update a dated report which catalogues the physical condition of aging care homes that are in desperate need of repair or a rebuild. This will facilitate the replacement and renewal of older care homes that were never designed to meet the needs of a population with advanced dementia.

In addition, BCCPA is requesting a three-year extension of the Seniors Safety and Quality Improvement Program which we operate on behalf of the Ministry of Health. This \$10 million program has been pivotal in ensuring care homes across B.C. have access to the necessary equipment they need to keep seniors safe and improve their quality of life.

The program is set to expire next March and we'd like to see it expanded to also incorporate publicly-funded assisted living sites which will soon face increased operational challenges due to the implementation of Bill 16.

We're also experiencing a well-documented shortage of care workers in B.C. and across the country. In fact, our Association took the unprecedented move of having to declare a health human resources emergency in the B.C. interior.

As a result, we think government should be investing in a number of key initiatives including:

- Allocating \$30 million over three years to significantly expand high school dual credit programs. As it stands, the dual credit program focuses too heavily on male-dominated occupations such as welding and carpentry and not enough on the social sciences and health care – and it doesn't do enough to support our First Nations youth.
- We're calling upon government to invest \$4 million per year to open up 450 new training spots for health care assistants.
- To facilitate the hiring of out-of-province trained care aides, we're also asking that \$500,000 in funding be set aside to eliminate costly and unnecessary testing fees which are both a "cash cow" for government and a significant barrier for care aides.
- Furthermore, we would like \$1 million allocated to ensure that satellite health care aide testing centers can be opened which would eliminate the need for out-of-province workers to travel to Vancouver as a condition of them being hired to work in places like the Okanagan.

In closing, I want to leave you with this. The system we build today, will be the system you may be using tomorrow.



Let's build it to ensure it provides the dignity, respect and care our seniors – many of whom are frail and elderly and are counting upon us to deliver on their behalf. I thank you for your time and look forward to reading your recommendations to the Minister of Finance.