

**10 FACTS  
YOU NEED TO KNOW  
ABOUT THE HCA  
SHORTAGE IN B.C.**

British Columbia is currently facing a crisis in the seniors' care sector. The province does not have enough trained health care workers to meet the needs of our aging population. Here are 10 facts you need to know about this important issue.

## **1. Seniors' care is a booming industry**

Seniors' care is one of the fastest growing industries in British Columbia, with employment forecasted to increase by **4.2%** annually and create 36,200 jobs over the next ten years. <sup>[i]</sup>

## **2. Health care assistants are a priority profession.**

In addition to the 32,000 active HCAs working in the province, B.C. will need an additional **2,833 HCA FTEs** over the next five years to meet growing demand. <sup>[ii]</sup>  
**18,650 jobs** will be created for HCAs from now until 2027. <sup>[ii]</sup>

## **3. Worker shortages are chronic.**

**95%** of care homes and home support agencies in the province report experiencing staffing shortages. Shortages are most acute outside of Metro Vancouver, and among home support agencies. <sup>[iii]</sup>

## **4. There is an insufficient supply of new HCAs.**

Despite strong demand for HCAs, many post-secondary institutions report that their educational seats are below capacity—**514 fewer HCAs** graduated in 2017 than in 2014. Stricter English language standards and credential assessment processes means fewer skilled immigrants are eligible to work in B.C.'s health care sector. <sup>[iv]</sup>

## **5. The seniors' care workforce is aging.**

With an aging workforce, many experienced HCAs will be retiring over the next ten years. The median age of the HCA workforce is **46 years**, and 26.4% of HCAs are **55** or older. <sup>[v]</sup>

## 6. Overtime hours contribute to burnout.

With fewer workers to provide care, many workers are required to work overtime, which can contribute to worker stress and burnout. Overtime hours among non-government care providers exceeded **\$6.7 million** in 2016. <sup>[vi]</sup>

## 7. Worker injuries challenge retention.

Seniors' care has one the highest injury rates of any sector in British Columbia. 86,089 workdays are lost every year, or the equivalent of **345 FTEs**. <sup>[vii]</sup>

## 8. Wages and benefits are competitive.

HCA's earn competitive wages and benefits—the average wage for an HCA is **\$21 per hour** or **\$45,000** annually. <sup>[iii]</sup>

## 9. Myths and misconceptions are abound.

Despite being valuable members of the care team and providing up to 80% of care to vulnerable seniors, only **26%** of HCA's feel that their occupation is well-understood. <sup>[viii]</sup>

## 10. It's an honourable and rewarding career.

**94%** of HCA's report that that working in seniors' care is honourable and rewarding. **86%** of workers report that they would be willing to recommend their occupation to a friend or family member. <sup>[viii]</sup>

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[i] WorkBC. 2018. *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition*. Victoria: Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training.

[ii] Dix, Adrian. "Care Aides" *Edited Hansard*. British Columbia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly. 41st Parl., 3rd Sess. Thursday May 10, 2018, Afternoon Sitting at 1550.

[iii] SafeCare BC. 2016. "SafeCare BC HR Survey Identifies Shortages of Workers." Burnaby, November 22.

[iv] BC Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry. 2018. Registry Report - HCA Education Standards Committee. Burnaby : CACHWR.

[v] Ministry of Health, 2018. *British Columbia Provincial Health Workforce Strategy 2018/19 – 2020/21*. Victoria: Government of B.C.

[vi] HISCUS. 2017. *Data Report for BCCPA*. Burnaby: HEABC.

[vii] WorkSafeBC. 2018. Industry Safety Information Centre. September 1. Accessed October 1, 2018.

[viii] BC Care Providers Association. 2018. Health Care Worker Recruitment Survey Results. Burnaby: BCCPA.