

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





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

1. Seniors Care is a Booming Industry -

Senior's care is one of the fastest growing industries in British Columbia, with employment forecasted to increase by **4.2%** annually and **create 32,600 total job openings** over the next ten years.ⁱ

2. Health Care Assistants are a Priority Profession -

In addition to the **38,000 active HCAs** working in the province,ⁱⁱ BC is seeking to recruit and train an additional 3,000 care aides to meet the needs of our aging population.ⁱⁱⁱ **18,650 jobs** will be created for HCAs from now until 2031 and will be used to educate individuals for this position.ⁱ

3. Chronic Worker Shortages -

There are more than **1,600** vacant positions for Health Care Assistants across the province, including full-time and part-time positions. Approximately **86%** of care homes reported experiencing at least one staffing-related challenge.^{iv} Shortages are most acute outside of Metro Vancouver, and among home support agencies.

4. Barriers for Internationally Trained Workers -

Internationally trained health care workers face many barriers, since the current process takes many steps in order to receive certification. Moreover, individuals need to spend at least **\$2,000** in assessment fees to take the exam.^{iv} While there is a bursary that is available, individuals still need to pay charges up front, creating barriers to employment for internationally trained workers.

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 **45%** of HCAs are **50 or older**.^{vi}

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. The average weekly overtime hours among professional occupations in nursing and other health care occupations was **8.3 hours in April 2019** and **9.4 in April 2020**.^{vii}

7. Worker Injuries Challenge Retention -

Seniors care has one the highest injury rates of any sector in British Columbia. **90,020 workdays** are lost every year, or the equivalent of **392 FTEs**.^{viii}

8. Competitive Wages and Benefits -

HCA's earn competitive wages and benefits—the average wage for an HCA is **\$22 per hour** or approximately **\$47,447 annually**.^{ix} This is consistent with a living wage in many communities across B.C.

9. Myths and Misconceptions 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.^x

10. 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.^x

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- [i] WorkBC. 2021. British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2021 Edition. Victoria: Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training.
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<https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/crncc/knowledge/infocus/factsheets/InFocus-Ontario%20PSWs%20in%20Home%20and%20Community%20Care.pdf>
- [vi] "Personal Support Worker - Home Support in Canada: Job Prospects." Personal Support Worker - Home Support in Canada | Job prospects - Job Bank. Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada, April 8, 2022. <https://www.on.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/outlook-occupation/24584/ca>.
- [vii] Carrière, Gisèle, Jungwee Park, Zechuan Deng, and Dafna Kohen. Overtime work among professional nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, September 1, 2020. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00074-eng.htm>.
- [viii] "Injury Trends Long Term Care." Safecare BC, May 24, 2022. [2020-Injury-Trends-Long-term-Care.pdf \(safecarebc.ca\)](https://www.safecarebc.ca/2020-Injury-Trends-Long-term-Care.pdf)
- [ix] "Nurse Aides, Orderlies and Patient Service Associates (NOC 3413)." WorkBC. Accessed June 28, 2022. <https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/3413#earnings-and-outlook>.
- [x] BC Care Providers Association. 2018. Health Care Worker Recruitment Survey Results. Burnaby: BCCPA.