



**PRESS KIT: AS THE HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCE CRISIS  
INTENSIFIES, LONG-TERM CARE OPERATORS SEEK ACTION  
ON NURSING AGENCY PRACTICES**

**Prepared by the BC Care Providers Association**

**May 28, 2023**

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**EMBARGOED (May 30, 2023, 1:00 p.m.)  
MEDIA RELEASE**

**AS HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCE CRISIS INTENSIFIES, LONG-TERM CARE OPERATORS  
SEEK ACTION ON NURSING AGENCY PRACTICES**

**Victoria, B.C. (May 30, 2023):** As the health human resource crisis continues to intensify across the province, BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA) is calling on the provincial government and private nursing agencies to collaborate further with the sector to control the impacts of the use of temporary nursing agencies in long-term care.

Association CEO and former BC Health Minister, Terry Lake says the agencies' practices are resulting in unstable staffing, and negatively affecting residents' quality of care. Agencies traditionally have been effective in providing short term help to fill vacancies due to vacation and illness but now supply large swaths of the workforce in healthcare.

"Many temporary agencies are promising wages which care homes simply cannot compete with, and earning large margins doing it. Workers will leave their employer and work for several care homes on an ad-hoc basis, or a care home will be forced to hire that same worker back at a much higher rate out of desperation," says Lake, who indicates that the practice has impacts comparable to "contract flipping."

"For residents, particularly those living with dementia, having familiar staff who know you is critical to quality care. When staffing is unstable, that has very real impacts on the people who live in long-term care," he continues. It also can have negative impacts on regular staff who work alongside agency staff for lower wages and often have to provide support to those unfamiliar with the home's procedures.

Lake indicates that upward of 50-75% of long-term care nursing lines in areas like the Interior are being filled by temporary agency nurses, putting the sector at a near breaking point. In more than one home, agency staff comprise one hundred percent of the positions. Lake predicts that the issue will get worse as summer nears and staff take well deserved vacation time.

"In addition to the impacts on residents, our members are telling us that these exorbitant and unexpected costs are financially destabilizing the sector. Unless there is immediate action this could result in bed closures and serious disruptions to care," says Lake.

BCCPA acknowledges the Government of B.C.'s progress on health human resources challenges in the province, and that policy is being developed on this issue. Given the urgency of this matter, the Association is looking to the Ministry of Health, and temporary nursing agencies, to partner with the Association to address these concerns further. In Quebec, legislation has been passed to essentially ban the use of agencies but Lake says finding a consensual solution is the preferred approach.



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## **MEDIA BACKGROUNDER: LONG-TERM CARE OPERATORS WANT ACTION ON DETRIMENTAL NURSE AGENCY PRACTICES**

### **Key Concerns**

Members of BCCPA and EngAge BC have raised several concerns regarding the present state of temporary nursing agencies in the health sector, including:

1. The continuous turnover of care staff negatively affects the consistency and **continuity of care**, which has impacts comparable to "contract flipping." This creates anxiety for residents and their families.
2. The **uncontrollable costs** associated with the use of nursing agencies financially destabilizing the sector, resulting in bed closures and disruptions to care. This affects both government run and affiliate care homes as well as acute care leaving taxpayers with a higher bill.

### **About BCCPA & EngAge BC:**

Established in 1977, BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA) is the leading voice for B.C.'s continuing care sector. Our growing membership base includes over 450 long-term care, assisted living, and commercial members from across British Columbia. Through its operating arm EngAge BC, the organization represents independent living and private-pay home health operators.

BCCPA and EngAge BC members support more than 19,000 seniors annually in long-term care and assisted living settings and 6,500 independent living residents. Additionally, our members deliver almost 2.5 million hours of home care and home support services each year.



## SPOKESPEOPLE – CONTACT LIST

**Terry Lake**, CEO, BCCPA & EngAge BC

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Terry is the CEO of the BC Care Providers Association and EngAge BC, which represents the majority of contracted providers of long term care and assisted living in British Columbia and private providers of independent living and home health services. Terry trained and practiced as a veterinarian and taught animal health technology before entering public life as an elected representative. He served as Councillor and then Mayor of the City of Kamloops and then was elected Member of the Legislature for the riding of Kamloops North Thompson in 2009. Terry served as Minister of the Environment from 2011-2013 and Minister of Health from 2013-2017. He was awarded the Canadian Public Health Association Public Health Hero Award in 2017 for his groundbreaking work on the opioid overdose crisis. He is a recipient of the University of Saskatchewan Alumni Achievement Award and the British Columbia Veterinary Medical Association Award of Merit. Terry was Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility for Hexo Corporation, one of Canada's largest cannabis producers from 2017-2019. He ran as a candidate in the 2019 federal election prior to taking up his current position. Terry and his spouse Lisa have three grown daughters and live in Kamloops, British Columbia.

**Melanie Reinhardt**, Senior Director, Long-Term Care and Assisted Living, Optima Living

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With over ten years working in the seniors' living sector, Melanie brings experience in public and private healthcare delivery. She has previously served in an executive leadership capacity in the retirement living sector and has experience in leadership of procurement and contract management with a BC Regional Health Authority. In addition, Melanie is well-respected in the BC Seniors Care industry, having previously served on the BC Care Board and as Chair of EngageBC.

Melanie's goal as a skilled communicator and strategist is to enable her teams to achieve their highest potential. A lifelong learner, Melanie has benefited from many areas of study, including communications, conflict resolution, government procurement, and contract management. She lives in the Okanagan and spends as much time as possible enjoying her kids, grandkids, and the great outdoors.

**Salimah Walji-Shivji**, COO and General Council, AgeCare

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Salimah Walji-Shivji is Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel at AgeCare, Communities of Care and Wellness.

Previously, she was with the former Calgary Health Region (joining in 2003) and Alberta Health Services. Her roles included Articling Student, Legal Counsel, Associate General Counsel and General Counsel. She is also a registered social worker and enjoys her role as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Calgary, where she teaches a course she wrote: Social Work & The Law.

In November 2015, Salimah joined AgeCare, Communities of Care and Wellness as their Vice President, Corporate Services & General Counsel. In 2020, Salimah took on the role of AgeCare's Chief Operating Officer overseeing Care Services, Support Services, Communications, Corporate & Legal Services.

Salimah has received numerous accolades, including Avenue Magazine's Top 40 under 40 Award, the Women in Law Leadership Award and the Canadian Corporate Counsel Community Builder Award. She is Past Chair of the Canadian Bar Association National Health Law Section and was appointed to the Mount Royal University Board of Governors in September 2020. She was recently appointed to the Alberta Human Rights Commission and currently sits on the Board of Directors for the BC Care Providers Association.

In 2022, she received her ICD.D. designation through the Institute of Corporate Directors. In April 2022, Salimah was granted her King's Counsel designation in recognition of her contribution to the legal profession.

When Salimah is not wearing her AgeCare hat, she can be found volunteering in the Ismaili Muslim (Aga Khan) community. Over the years, she has devoted numerous hours to charities she is passionate about, holding seats with the FOCUS Canada Humanitarian Assistance Board, the South Calgary Primary Care Network, the United Way, and the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter.