

Care **Guarantee**

New Democratic Party of Canada



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Message from Jagmeet

The pandemic has been difficult for all of us. And it has shown the cost of government inaction and neglect. We've seen devastating losses of loved ones in long-term care centres across the country.

Our parents and grandparents built this country. And as they age, they deserve to live in comfort and safety. And we deserve to know that our parents and grandparents are safe. People living with a disability living in long-term care have also been put at risk, and also deserve to live in comfort and safety.

Yet because of decades of cuts, under-funding and privatization, COVID-19 has claimed the lives of thousands of Canadians in long-term care homes.

Before he was Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau made a promise to long-term care workers, residents, and their families to better fund long-term care and seniors care. Instead, he has failed them by underfunding health care and by protecting the profits of big corporations and their wealthy shareholders.

In the next few pages, you'll see the beginning of our plan for continuing care.

Nobody should be profiting off the neglect of our loved ones. We need to do better for them, for their families, and for the workers that care for them.

Our loved ones need to know that they will have safe, dignified care – both at home and in care homes – available to them as they age. Families need to know that their loved ones are safe in long-term care facilities, and that they're getting the very best care possible. And workers who care for them need to know that they will get a living wage, benefits, and the safe and secure jobs that they deserve.

The Liberals and the Conservatives prefer to protect shareholder profits and do as little as possible to fix the system. They choose profits for big corporations and more privatization.

New Democrats choose you and your family.

We are going to fix Canada's broken long-term care system. We will fight for seniors and people living with a disability, their families, and frontline health care workers – not wealthy investors.

With this commitment, you can count on us to keep fighting for you and your family.

Your friend,



Jagmeet Singh

Leader of Canada's NDP





Canada's Broken System

Our parents and grandparents built this country. As they age, they deserve to live in comfort, dignity and safety. As do people living with a disability. Yet because of decades of cuts, under-funding and privatization, our continuing care system is broken.

Covid-19 has claimed the lives of thousands of Canadians in long-term care homes. During the first wave, 82% of COVID deaths happened in long-term care facilities – the highest proportion in the OECD.¹ Nationally, out of over 16,000 deaths from COVID-19, over 12,200 have been residents and workers in long-term care homes.

The situation was so devastating that the government had to send the army to many long-term care centres. The reports that emerged were shocking: some residents were “found dehydrated, starving, and left lying in their own feces and urine – residents on the floor who had fallen out of bed or who had passed away in their beds without anyone noticing.”²

Those are not just numbers; they are smiles, stories and people missing at the family kitchen table.

Our system failed long-term care residents, front-line workers and their families, with tragic consequences.

COVID-19 doesn't choose who it infects. But for-profit homes have experienced much higher infection rates than non-profit and publicly owned homes.³

A recent report showed that Ontario's for-profit nursing homes have 78% more COVID-19 deaths than non-profit homes and showed that chain private ownership is one of the main risk factors for serious outbreaks.⁴

While COVID-19 has made these failings clearer – they are not new.

Pre-pandemic research repeatedly revealed that for-profit homes have serious and ongoing quality of care problems. One report concluded that for-profit homes “tend to have lower staffing levels, more verified complaints, and more transfers to hospitals, as well as higher rates for both ulcers and morbidity.

¹ Canadian Institute, for Health Information, “Pandemic Experience in the Long-Term Care Sector: How Does Canada Compare With Other Countries?,” June 2020, 1.

² Canadian Labour Congress, “Lessons from a Pandemic: Union Recommendations for Transforming Long-Term Care in Canada,” May 2020, 4.

³ Marco Chown Oved, Brendan Kennedy, Kenyon Wallace, Ed Tubb and Andrew Bailey, Toronto Star, “For-profit nursing homes have four times as many COVID-19 deaths as city-run homes, Star analysis finds,” May 8, 2020, [thestar.com/business/2020/05/08/for-profit-nursing-homes-have-four-times-as-many-covid-19-deaths-as-city-run-homes-star-analysis-finds.html](https://www.thestar.com/business/2020/05/08/for-profit-nursing-homes-have-four-times-as-many-covid-19-deaths-as-city-run-homes-star-analysis-finds.html)

⁴ www.thestar.com/politics/provincial/2021/01/20/ontarios-for-profit-nursing-homes-have-78-more-covid-19-deaths-than-non-profits-report-finds.html

Managerial practices taken from the business sector are designed for just enough labour and for making a profit, rather than for providing good care. These include paying the lowest wages possible, and hiring part-time, casual and those defined as self-employed in order to avoid paying benefits or providing other protections.”⁵

Working conditions in long-term care facilities are often appalling; front-line workers often need jobs in more than one facility to make a living, and low pay, staffing shortages, high overtime, regular workplace violence and injury, and equipment shortages are common.⁶

The reality is bad working conditions at long-term care homes put everyone at risk: an Ottawa shelter outbreak was started by homeless long-term care workers who could no longer afford rent, mainly because their salaries and working conditions were so poor.⁷

Canadians were also shocked to learn recently that several for-profit homes offered millions of dollars in dividends to their shareholders in the midst of the pandemic, even when there were significant outbreaks in their facilities – and when some had received emergency government funding.⁸

The evidence is overwhelming – profit has no place in the care of our loved ones.

“ Two for-profit operators in Ontario, Extencicare and Sienna Senior Living, have paid out \$74 million – respectively \$30.5 million and \$43.6 million – in dividends in 2020. They both received public money through the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy, as well as sector-specific pandemic response emergency funding.

More than 480 residents and staff members have died at facilities owned by the two companies in Ontario alone. ”



⁵ CCPA, Pat Armstrong, Hugh Armstrong, Jacqueline Choiniere, Ruth Lowndes, James Struthers, “Re-imagining Long-term Residential Care in the COVID-19 Crisis,” April 2020, 6.

⁶ Canadian Labour Congress, “Lessons from a Pandemic: Union Recommendations for Transforming Long-Term Care in Canada,” May 2020. 7-12.

⁷ tcccommission-commissionsld.ca/transcripts/pdf/Dr._Turnbull_Transcript_December_16_2020.pdf, page 26

⁸ See, e.g., Kenyon Wallace, Ed Tubb and Marco Chown Oved, Toronto Star, “Big for-profit long-term care companies paid out more than \$170 million to investors through Ontario’s deadly first wave,” December 26, 2020, [thestar.com/news/gta/2020/12/26/big-for-profit-long-term-care-companies-paid-out-more-than-170-million-to-investors-through-ontarios-deadly-first-wave.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/12/26/big-for-profit-long-term-care-companies-paid-out-more-than-170-million-to-investors-through-ontarios-deadly-first-wave.html)

“ Across the country, Chartwell had 281 resident deaths in their centres. They also paid \$98.3 million to shareholders while also receiving government help through the CEWS.⁹ ”

There is another way. For-profit homes make up just over a quarter of Canada’s long-term care homes and are the majority only in Ontario. We can take action to put an end to profit in long-term care now.¹⁰

Canadians are ready for it.

The overwhelming majority of Canadians – 86 % – are in favour of bringing long-term care facilities under the Canada Health Act; and 81 % of Canadians want to see the government invest whatever money and resources are needed to rebuild health care and other public services.¹¹

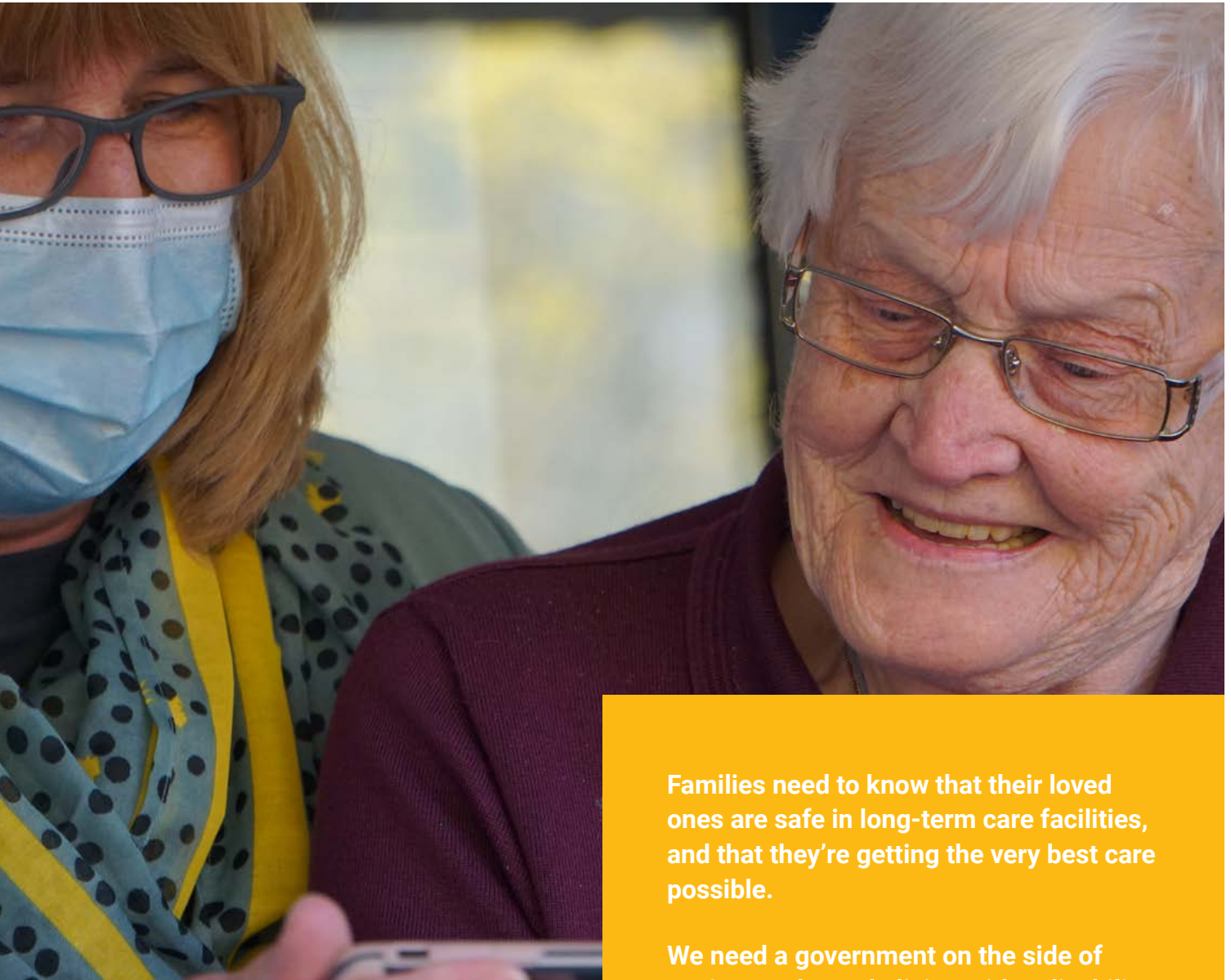
It’s time for leadership to make this a reality.



⁹ Kenyon Wallace, Ed Tubb and Marco Chown Oved, Toronto Star, “Big for-profit long-term care companies paid out more than \$170 million to investors through Ontario’s deadly first wave,” December 26, 2020, [thestar.com/news/gta/2020/12/26/big-for-profit-long-term-care-companies-paid-out-more-than-170-million-to-investors-through-ontarios-deadly-first-wave.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/12/26/big-for-profit-long-term-care-companies-paid-out-more-than-170-million-to-investors-through-ontarios-deadly-first-wave.html).

¹⁰ Canadian Institute for Health Information, “Long-term care homes in Canada: How many and who owns them?,” September 2020.

¹¹ National Union of Public and General Employees, “NUPGE poll finds almost universal support for bringing long-term care under the Canada Health Act,” May 2020, [thestar.com/news/gta/2020/11/13/residents-of-ontarios-for-profit-long-term-care-homes-experiencing-significantly-worse-covid-19-outcomes-in-cases-and-deaths.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/11/13/residents-of-ontarios-for-profit-long-term-care-homes-experiencing-significantly-worse-covid-19-outcomes-in-cases-and-deaths.html).



A Care Guarantee

Families need to know that their loved ones are safe in long-term care facilities, and that they're getting the very best care possible.

We need a government on the side of seniors and people living with a disability, their families, and frontline health care workers – instead of on the side of wealthy investors.

It's time to take profit out of the care of our loved ones.



The NDP has a plan to fix this broken long-term care system and implement a Care Guarantee:

- A commitment to our loved ones that they will have safe, dignified care – both at home and in care homes – available to them as they age.
- A commitment to families that they can count on their loved ones receiving the care they deserve, with inspections, appropriate levels of care and staff ratios.
- A commitment to workers who care for our loved ones that they will get a living wage, benefits, and the safe and secure work environment that they deserve.

Our commitment to you and your loved ones is that New Democrats will:

- Take profit out of long-term care.
- Work collaboratively with residents, experts, caregivers, and provincial and territorial governments to develop national care standards for long-term care and other continuing care that will include accountability mechanisms and data collection, and that will be backed by adequate and stable dedicated federal funding.
- Regulate long-term care and home care with the same principles of the Canada Health Act: universality, accessibility, public administration, comprehensiveness, and portability.
- Improve working conditions for front-line workers in the long-term care sector, boost wages and ensure workers are provided the training and resources they need to provide the high-quality care all seniors deserve.



Our Plan to Make it Happen

New Democrats developed this plan with the help of experts, stakeholders, and workers in the field of long-term care. All agree that the for-profit model – making as much money as possible for shareholders at the expense of safe and dignified care for our loved ones – must end.

This plan will eliminate the for-profit ownership of homes and stops the contracting out of facility services.

Profit should never be the bottom line when it comes to continuing care.

Our plan will immediately bring Revera, for-profit long-term care owned by a federal agency, under public ownership. It will put in place a national task force charged with creating a plan to transition all for-profit care to not-for-profit hands by 2030. Our plan will ultimately eliminate the for-profit ownership of homes and stop the contracting out of facility services.

To achieve this, we will work with provinces and territories to place a moratorium on the licensing of any new for-profit care facilities, and make sure that measures are in place to keep all existing beds open during the transition.

This plan will make long-term care and other continuing care accessible and affordable for those who need it – creating new spaces, boosting subsidies and cutting wait lists.

These long-term changes are ambitious and achievable. But we know that we also need to make immediate changes to improve the quality of care for people living in these facilities right now.



Jagmeet Singh
NDP + NDP



To achieve that, within the first 100 days of a New Democrat government, we will bring the provinces, territories, workers and experts together to develop a national strategy on long-term and continuing care that will include national standards for care. These standards will include minimum hours and baskets of care, as well as a workforce strategy.

This strategy will be backed by an additional \$5 billion investment in long-term care systems across the country within a first mandate.

This funding will be tied to respect for the Canada Health Act principles of public provision and accessibility, and to meeting new national standards for the quality of care.

Just like pharmacare, provinces would need to opt-in in order to access funding. Quebec would maintain the right to withdraw with compensation for use in similar programs.

In addition, New Democrats will extend the targeted federal funding for home care that is set to end in April 2022 and boost it to \$1 billion from 2022-23 onwards.

To improve working conditions in long-term care, we will bring the provinces and territories together to develop a continuing care workforce strategy that boosts the wages of frontline workers to reflect the value of their work and their role in providing an essential health care service.

This will include strengthening workers' benefits, ensuring adequate paid sick days, and eliminating precarity across the sector through the creation of full time, regular jobs for workers who want them.

And finally, to ease long-term care waitlists and give our loved ones a safe place to call home, New Democrats will make the creation of new supportive housing a priority in our expanded National Housing Strategy.

Conclusion



Every Canadian, of every age, deserves to live in dignity and be treated with respect by their government and the health care system.

But Canada's long-term care system is broken – and it has tragic consequences.

The Liberals and the Conservatives prefer to protect shareholder profits and do as little as possible to fix the system.

They choose profits for big corporations and more privatization.

Jagmeet Singh and the NDP choose you and your family.

We will fight to make sure that profit is removed from the care of our loved ones.

We will make sure that all seniors have safe, dignified care – both at home and in care homes – available to them as they age.

We will make sure their families will know their loved ones will have the care they deserve with inspections, and appropriate levels of care and staff ratios.

And we will make sure that the workers who care for them will finally get a living wage, benefits, and the safe and secure jobs that they deserve.

That is our commitment to you.