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NEWS RELEASE

## **There's No Place Like Home: Why Canada Must Prioritize Small Care Home Models in its Provision of Long-Term Care**

**TORONTO, Tuesday, January 14** — The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) launched its latest report calling for the urgent prioritization of small care home models in the future delivery of long-term care (LTC) services across Canada.

This report, [\*There's No Place Like Home\*](#), emphasizes the need for a transformative shift away from delivering care in large institutional care settings to smaller, more personalized, home-like environments that align with public preferences and improve care outcomes for residents and working conditions for staff.

Canada's LTC systems are currently grappling with multiple challenges, including chronic underfunding, staffing shortages, and the continued reliance on large institutional models that fail to meet the diverse needs of our ageing population. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed the vulnerabilities in these systems, revealing the detrimental impact of crowded living conditions and insufficient resources on both residents and staff. Furthermore, access to LTC services is not guaranteed under Canada's universal health care systems, leading to significant disparities in access and quality across provinces.

"The current state of long-term care in Canada is simply not good enough," said Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Health Policy Research of the NIA. "We know that Canadians prefer to receive their care at home whenever possible and if needed in smaller, home-like settings, yet our current system is largely designed around providing care in large, institutional settings. Our report highlights how small care homes, which house 10-12 residents, are a proven solution to enhance the quality of care, reduce the risk of infection, and improve staff and resident satisfaction."

### **The report highlighted several advantages of small care home models, including:**

- Better resident outcomes: Enhanced safety, quality of life and care.
- Improved staff conditions: Higher job satisfaction, stronger engagement, and lower turnover.
- Impact on costs: Early evidence suggests lower resident health care costs.
- Community Integration: Small homes were found to fit more naturally into residential neighbourhoods and support localized, culturally relevant care.

Although evidence supports the development of small care homes, progress by Canadian provincial and territorial governments has been inconsistent. Only seven jurisdictions, including Alberta, Quebec, and Nova Scotia, have supported the mass development of small care homes. Other provinces and territories have shown varying levels of commitment to these types of care settings. Financial constraints and outdated design standards often lead to a preference for the development of larger institutional care settings.

The NIA's report also highlights the importance of aligning long-term care infrastructure projects with public preferences. A 2021 NIA survey found that nearly 100% of older Canadians would do everything possible to avoid institutionalized LTC homes, underscoring the demand for alternatives that better reflect personal choice, dignity, and autonomy.

"Small care homes represent a key element for the future provision of long-term care in Canada," said Alyssa Brierley, Executive Director of the NIA. "By adopting and integrating this approach, we can provide more compassionate, effective, and sustainable long-term care options."

The NIA is calling on all levels of government to invest in small care homes to provide the necessary regulatory and financial support to ensure that all Canadians, regardless of where they live, have access to high-quality, home-like long-term care options.

### **About The National Institute on Ageing**

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) improves the lives of older adults and the systems that support them by convening stakeholders, conducting research, advancing policy solutions and practice innovations, sharing information and shifting attitudes. Our vision is a Canada where older adults feel valued, included, supported, and better prepared to age with confidence.

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