



# From Minister of Seniors Deb Schulte

I want to share some of the highlights for seniors from the recent [Fall Economic Statement](#).

Although long-term care is regulated by provinces and territories, the federal government announced several new measures to help protect residents and staff:

- A new **\$1 billion Safe Long-term Care Fund** will help provinces and territories protect seniors in long-term care. It will support infection prevention, ventilation improvements and staffing.
- Support for [training up to 4,000 personal support worker interns](#) through an accelerated online program and four-month work placement, to help address acute labour shortages in long-term care and home care.
- To assist personal support workers, home care workers and essential workers involved in senior care, the Government will work to seek solutions to improve retention, recruitment and retirement savings options for low- and modest-income workers, particularly those without existing workplace pension coverage.
- Funding for [research to study the effectiveness of promising practices to protect long-term care homes](#) from COVID-19, led by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.
- New funding for the **Canadian Red Cross**, which has provided surge capacity to protect seniors at long-term care facilities and other vulnerable populations.
- Funding to expand the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement's **LTC+ initiative**. Through LTC+, participating long-term care facilities and seniors residences learn from each other's pandemic preparedness, and become eligible for coaching and seed funding to help address gaps.

## More supports of interest to seniors

In addition to the supports mentioned above, we propose to:

- Continue to move forward in establishing the foundational elements of **national, universal pharmacare**. The Government is working with provinces and territories on:
  - o a new Canadian Drug Agency that would negotiate drug prices on behalf of all Canadians, thereby lowering costs;
  - o a national formulary to be developed by the Canadian Drug Agency; and
  - o a national strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases, with funding of \$500 million per year, starting in 2022–23.
- Provide \$150 million to improve ventilation in public buildings to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and make them safer for workers and businesses.
- Invest \$43 million to increase support for **Wellness Together Canada**, an online portal that provides free mental health.
- Remove the **GST/HST from the purchase of face masks and face shields** to make them more affordable.

## **Update on COVID-19 vaccines**

Health Canada has approved the first COVID-19 vaccine and vaccinations have begun. Three other vaccine candidates are under review.

The federal government is making the vaccines available for free to all Canadians. We've reserved enough doses so that every Canadian who wants a vaccine will be able to get it before the end of 2021.

But our fight against COVID-19 is far from over. I know this winter will be hard, especially with the holidays fast approaching. Let's all do our part to keep ourselves and others safe.

Sincerely,

Minister Deb Schulte

### **Spread the word:**

I hope you will take a minute to ensure that this message reaches as many seniors (and the people who support them) as possible. Please share it with your networks through social media, email or your newsletter.

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