

HAZARD PAY FOR LTC WORKERS DURING COVID- 19: A MULTI-COUNTRY STUDY OF POLICY APPROACHES

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INTERNATIONAL
LONG TERM CARE
POLICY NETWORK



NORTH AMERICAN
OBSERVATORY
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BACKGROUND:

- The older adult population has suffered the **highest percentage of deaths** in comparison to any other age cohort, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (1, 2)
- Of the **214,050 deaths** recorded by WHO during the week of August 10-16 2020, **88%** of these deaths were in persons aged ≥ 65 (3)



Table 1. Impact of Covid-19 on the LTC sectors in Canada, United States and Australia*

	LTC confirmed cases	LTC deaths	Number of LTC deaths per million population	LTC cases as a percentage of all COVID-19 cases	LTC deaths as a percentage of all COVID-19 deaths
Canada	15,063	5,324	142	17.5	81.1
United States	150,000	30,000	91	9.3	31
Australia	67	28	1	0.9	27.5

*Data accurate as of May 25, 2020 (4)

PRECARITY IN LTC WORKFORCE:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has **exacerbated several system-level issues** facing the long-term care sector; notably the chronic shortage of staff (5)
- Among OECD countries, **remuneration for LTC workers is among the lowest in the healthcare sector**, even compared to other workers in the sector with similar qualifications (6)
- In Canada, **compensation for LTC workers is lower than other healthcare workers caring for older adults in other sectors**, especially acute care (5), ranging between \$12-24 per hour (7)
- Non-standard employment, such as part-time, temporary or shift work contracts, is common (6). In Canada, **up to 30% of care aides and staff were employed at more than one facility** (7)

OBJECTIVE:

- The purpose of this review was to synthesize policy measures implemented in different countries during the COVID-19 pandemic **either** in recognition of the added risk faced by LTC workers **or** with financial incentives enacted to stabilize the LTC workforce
- By doing so, we hoped to **identify both trends and gaps among policy responses** to provide policy makers with evidence that could better support the LTC workforce in future

METHODS:

- For the purposes of this review, the policy measures have been allocated into two categories: (1) *Hazard Payments* and (2) *Incentive Payments*
- We reviewed public-facing policy reports and documents on support for the LTC workforce and measures that were put in place to protect both LTC staff and residents
- Reviewing key governmental and association websites to ascertain information on dissemination of provincial pandemic pay and single-site orders. In addition, we supplemented these findings with verification from key stakeholders in the field when possible

HAZARD PAYMENTS

- On April 15, 2020 (8), as part of the '*COVID-19 Economic Response Plan*' the Canadian Government announced it would provide up to \$3 billion in support to increase the wages of low-income essential workers across the country (9)
- It was up to the various provinces and territories to determine which workers would be eligible and how much money they would receive (9)
- As expected, there was **variability in delivery** among the Provinces and Territories, in terms of announcements, eligibility and access
- Across Canada, most workers in long-term care were considered eligible for the wage top-ups

HAZARD PAYMENTS

- While some Provinces/Territories in Canada made this wage top-up exclusive to those working in health and social care services, others implemented a more general criteria inclusive of a broader range of essential workers
- **6 out of 13 Provinces and Territories** implemented wage top-ups that included a broader range of essential services beyond health and social care
 - Example: *Manitoba Risk Recognition Program (10)*
- While, **7 out of 13 Provinces and Territories** implemented wage top-ups that were exclusive to those working in health and social care services (sometimes including correctional services as well)
 - Example: *Ontario's Temporary Pandemic Pay (11)*

*For links to provincial policy documents outlining these payment schemes, please contact us

SINGLE SITE ORDERS:

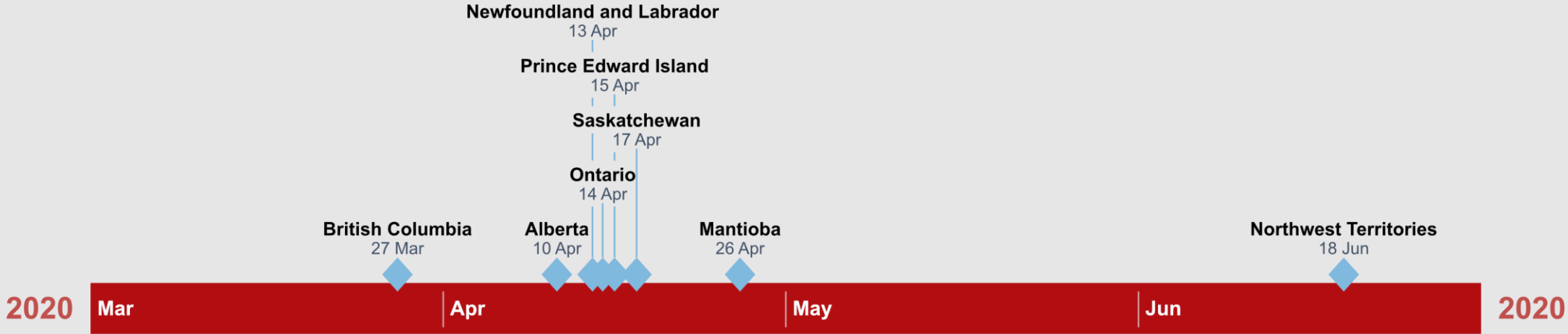


Figure 1. Timeline of Mandatory Single Site Order Announcement Dates



Figure 2. Timeline of Voluntary Single Site Order Announcement Dates

SINGLE SITE ORDERS:

Table 2. Scope of Single Site Orders

Action	Total	Provinces/Countries
State of Single Site Order		
<i>Mandatory</i>	8	NL, ON, MB, SK, AB, BC, NWT, PEI
<i>Voluntary</i>	3	NS, NB, Au
<i>No Order at Present</i>	3	YT, NU, QC
Applicability of Mandatory Single Site Order		
<i>Only LTC</i>	1	MB
<i>Some or All Care Facilities</i>	5	BC, SK, ON, AB, NWT*, PEI*
<i>Inclusive of Non-Health Employment</i>	2	NL, NWT*

*Scope of the single site order in Northwest Territories is dependent upon state of infection in the facility (12)

*Single site order extends across all healthcare settings for publicly operated LTC facilities. This, however, does not apply to privately operated facilities. (13)

SINGLE SITE ORDERS:

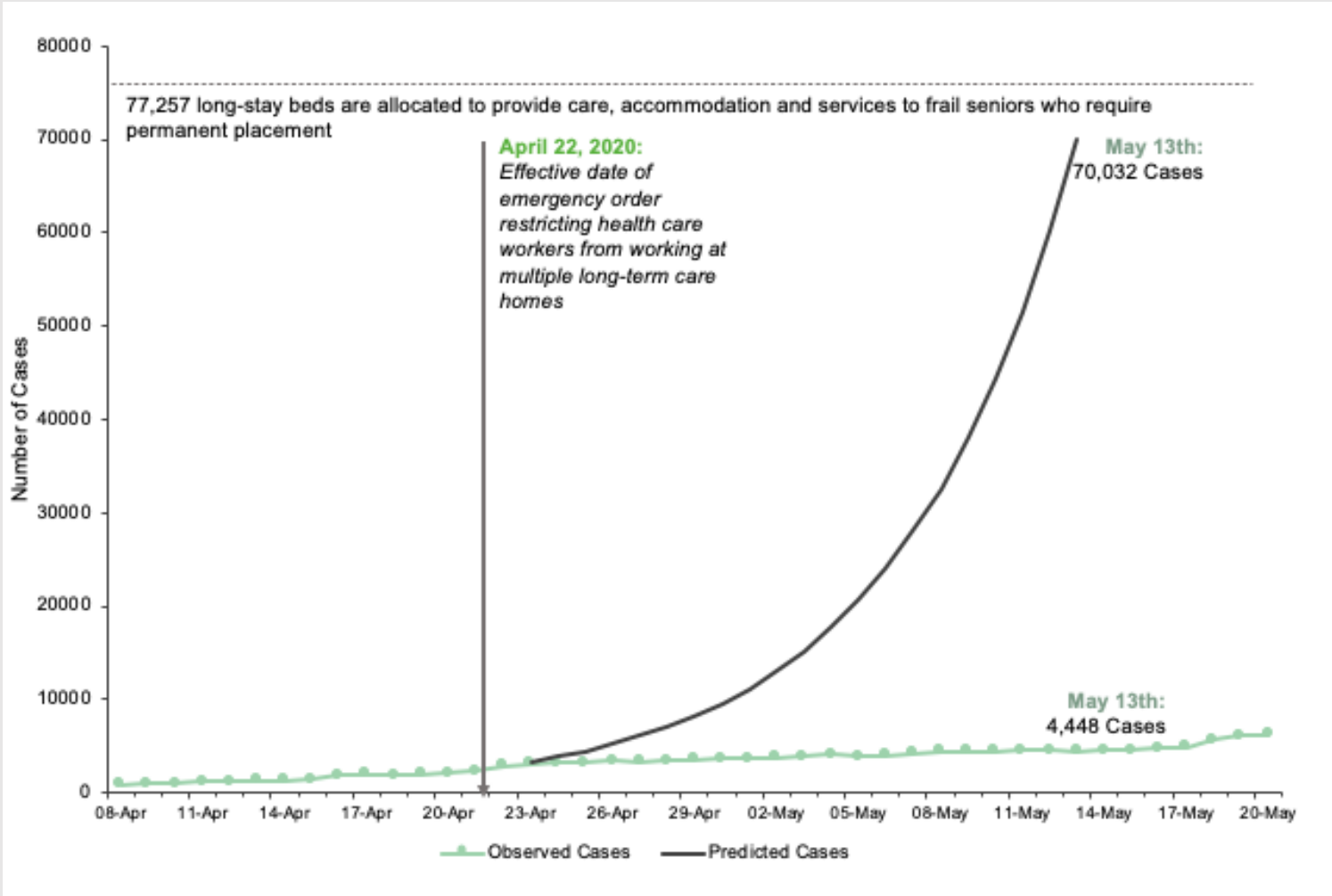


Figure 4. Estimated number of COVID-19 cases in long term care homes in Ontario

INCENTIVE PAYMENTS: Single site orders

- Among Canadian provinces and territories, BC has implemented one of the most comprehensive financial policies to stabilize the LTC workforce.
 - Employees restricted by the order will be paid the highest increment step they receive working at another facility and be able to work their total combined hours at a single site, up to 1.3 FTEs (more than full-time hours) (14)
 - BC's Provincial Health Officer also became the employer of all LTC staff. This central coordination, which will remain for six months, guarantees all workers receive the same standardized wage rate (15)

INCENTIVE PAYMENTS: Single site orders

- Other provinces have failed to adequately ensure LTC staff are not financially impacted by the order, given failure to protect against reductions in wage rates and failure to ensure sufficient hours are available.
 - For instance, employees in Saskatchewan are able to work their total combined hours at the assigned single site, although only to 1.0 FTE (16)
 - Newfoundland, Northwest Territories, PEI and Ontario's mandatory single site orders fail to provide details regarding the allocation of hours and remuneration rates for LTC staff affected by the order.

INCENTIVE PAYMENTS: LTC Bonus Payments

- Alberta and Australia have developed LTC-specific pandemic pay programs
- Alberta's *Health Care Aid Wage Supplement* provides a top of \$2/hour to healthcare aids employed at contracted LTC and designated supportive living sites until the end of the pandemic (17)
- Australia's *Retention Bonus* program supports the aged care workforce who, due to Covid-19, has faced staffing challenges. This program provides a quarterly \$800 bonus payment for residential aged care staff working 30+ hours a week (pro-rated if working fewer hours) (18, 19)

INCENTIVE PAYMENTS: Recruitment

- Other provinces have used financial incentives to boost recruitment into the sector
- Quebec began a recruitment program which provided \$21/hour for a 3-month training scholarship and successful completion will provide a salary of \$49,000/year (\$26/hour) for full-time employment in an LTC facility (17)
- Alberta is similarly using paid practicum placements (up to 1,000 placements) to fast-track health care aid students through their academic programs to increase the supply of trained staff in continuing care facilities (18)

Lee-Fay Low, PhD

- *Associate Professor in Ageing and Health at the University of Sydney*
- *Lead author of the LTCcovid report for Australia*

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/medicine-health/schools/sydney-school-of-health-sciences/academic-staff/lee-fay-low.html>



NEXT STEPS

- Ongoing data collection of hazard pay and incentive payments introduced in the US
 - There appears to be very little systematic movement in pay for LTC workers during the COVID19 pandemic at both the federal and state level
 - Arkansas, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Vermont appear to have introduced some form of hazard pay
 - Hazard pay has, thus far, not been introduced into Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Continued work to explore countries that have not introduced incentive payments presently:
 - Is this because workers in LTC are better paid and less likely to hold employment at more than one organization?
 - Please provide examples from your country in the chat box!

If you would be interested in collaborating, please reach out!

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