



June 2, 2020

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Health
Government of Canada
Patty.Hajdu@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Deb Schulte
Minister of Seniors
Government of Canada
Deb.Schulte@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Hajdu and Minister Schulte,

Wounds Canada is writing to you in response to the Canadian Armed Forces' reports on long-term care homes in Ontario and Quebec. We are deeply saddened by the content of the report and the lack of care for vulnerable Canadians, but we are not shocked. Wound prevention and care for patients have been a problem across Canada in all health-care settings for a long time, and the COVID-19 pandemic has simply exposed this issue in long-term care homes.

While delivery of care falls under the responsibility of the provinces and territories, Wounds Canada urgently recommends that the Government of Canada take an immediate leadership role on the issue. In addition to increased funding and support for long-term care, the Government of Canada must develop national standards on wound care in partnership with the provincial and territorial governments and key stakeholders, similar to what was accomplished for the national mental health strategy. In order to improve care for patients with or at risk of developing wounds, Canada also needs a concrete strategy to collect and publicly report wound related outcomes in all health-care sectors, such as the prevalence, incidence and recurrence of common wound types (pressure injuries, diabetic foot ulcers, venous leg ulcers, etc.), healing and complication rates, resource utilization, patient satisfaction and cost, among others.

The military's report succinctly points out that best practices in wound care, or anything remotely resembling them, were not implemented or followed in these care homes. Many of the observations in the military's report relate to horrific pressure injuries. For wounds to reach stage 4 or to be unstageable—to reach the bone—means that a basic, common-sense risk assessment and prevention measures were not carried out. The sight and smell of such a wound are horrifying, and the distress, pain and harm to the person are immeasurable. The fact that our long-term care homes had such severe wounds points to unconscionable gaps in a number of areas, including a lack of expertise on site, poor coordination between long-term care, acute care and wound care experts, and inadequate policies or implementation of policies designed to provide even baseline care. To clarify the severity of these wounds, we have attached an image of an unstageable pressure injury (warning: the image is graphic).

1/2

The wound care issues outlined in the military's report have long existed and been overlooked in long-term care homes across Canada, as well as in acute care and community care. We have heard from health-care professionals that amputations and infections related to inadequate wound care are on the rise across the health-care system because of pre-existing issues and the additional pressure that COVID-19 has placed on our health-care resources.

Wound prevention and care must be a priority for all governments across Canada. Right now, Canada spends \$4.3 billion on wound care. By investing in prevention and better management earlier on when a wound occurs, patients will have improved health outcomes, and significant savings will be realized. Most importantly, the Government of Canada, in partnership with the provinces and territories, would be providing the type of universal, accessible care that our seniors and wound care patients deserve.

Minister Hajdu and Minister Schulte, Wounds Canada would like to request a meeting to discuss and initiate the development of national standards for wound care, and we would like to be part of developing the solution to provide better care in Canada's long-term care homes.

Thank you for your consideration. Wounds Canada looks forward to your response and to working with you.

Sincerely,



Mariam Botros, CDE, D.Ch, IIWCC
CEO, Wounds Canada
Director, Diabetic Foot Canada

Attachment (1)

cc: Pamela Simpson, Director of Health Care Programs and Policy Directorate, Health Canada

Tahiya Bahkt, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of the Minister of Health

Stephanie Muccilli, Director of Policy, Office of the Minister of Seniors