



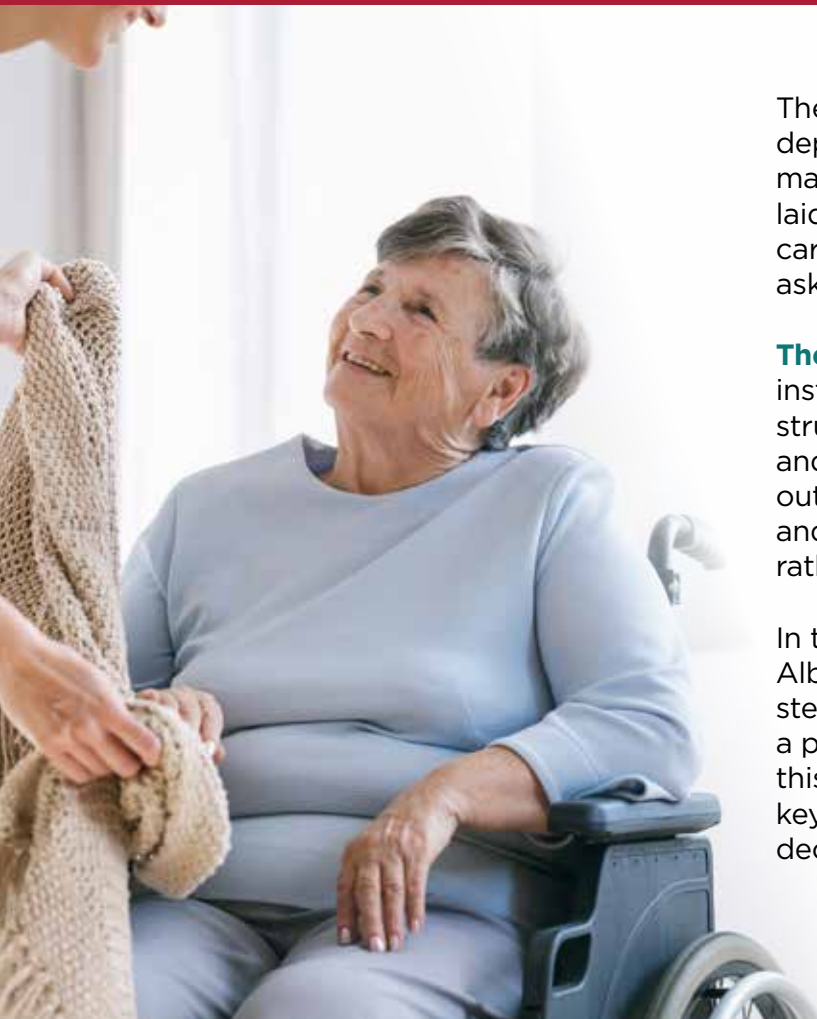
## **PRIORITY: Improved Care for SENIORS**

*“The best time to change course and address the wellbeing of seniors was many years ago. The second-best time is right now.”*

**ANDRÉ PICARD**

Reporter, Columnist and Author

*Neglected No More The Urgent Need to Improve the Lives of Canada's Elders in the Wake of a Pandemic*



The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the deplorable conditions endured by seniors living in many long-term care facilities across Canada. It also laid bare the dreadful working conditions of health care aides and personal support workers who are asked to do so much yet given so little.

**The evidence is clear:** dehumanization and institutionalization, disorganized or poorly structured care delivery, inadequate staffing and training, lack of cultural sensitivity, woefully outdated infrastructure, not to mention a regulatory and bureaucratic approach that focuses on tasks rather than on seniors' needs and quality of life.

In the face of such overwhelming evidence, the Alberta Francophone Health Network (RSA) is stepping up efforts to ensure senior care remains a priority to bring about real systemic change. To this end, the RSA is working collaboratively with key stakeholders, providing strategic support at the decision-making levels of the health care system.

## FRANCOPHONE Population: Rapidly Increasing and Changing Health NEEDS



[...] **Significant increases** were noted in the 2016 Census. Half of Alberta's Francophones come from elsewhere in Canada, and the province attracts many Francophone immigrants from Africa. This diversity increases the demographic importance of the Franco-Albertan population which is becoming increasingly visible.

 <https://l-express.ca/portrait-de-la-francophonie-canadienne>



**More than 264,700 Albertans** can speak both English and French. From 2011 to 2016, there was an increase of 22% of people whose mother tongue is French and of 53% of people who speak French most often at home.

 <https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/statistics/infographics/french-presence-alberta>



**More than half of Franco-Albertans live in and around Calgary and Edmonton.** Francophones are also present in the other economic regions of the province, especially in the Athabasca-Grande Prairie-Peace River and Wood Buffalo-Cold Lake areas.

 <https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/statistics/infographics/french-presence-alberta>



The **65+ age group** is a growing segment within the Franco-Albertan population. According to the Fédération des aînés franco-albertains, there are 32,000 French-speaking seniors in the province, representing 37% of the population [...]. Statistics Canada estimates that seniors could represent more than one-fifth of the population by 2025 and one-quarter by 2059.

 [https://www.fafalta.ca/fichiers/rapport\\_annuel\\_2021\\_v2-compressed.pdf](https://www.fafalta.ca/fichiers/rapport_annuel_2021_v2-compressed.pdf)



## PROPOSED Key ACTIONS

One of Alberta's major policy directions in modernizing facility-based continuing care (FBCC) involves the provision of culturally appropriate continuing care services. Key actions proposed under that policy direction with respect to Indigenous peoples can also be implemented for the benefit of Francophone residents, namely:

**Establish a task force to focus on improving cultural sensitivity, diversity, and inclusion in FBCC sites. Have the task force consider implementing the following actions:**

- ♥ Include admission questions that ask about an individual's linguistic, cultural and dietary needs and preferences and integrate that information into care planning.
- ♥ Identify languages spoken by staff and assign shifts to ensure language support.
- ♥ Provide training related to cultural competence and sensitivity as well as diversity and inclusion for FBCC staff.
- ♥ Implement leadership training that includes diversity and inclusion, in both academic and in-service settings.
- ♥ Ensure that FBCC sites meet accreditation standards for diversity and inclusion wherever required.



## JOINING Forces to Rebuild TOGETHER

*“What do we want our lives to look like when we get old?”*

How we choose to answer this fundamental question posed by journalist and author André Picard for ourselves is all we need to set us on the right course. The time has come to do whatever it takes to modernize and deinstitutionalize long-term care.

Already, in the spring of 2021, the Alberta government tabled a **report, along with a detailed action plan**, to guide the modernization of its continuing care system and improve the lives of residents. The 42 recommendations are designed to better prepare us to care for an aging population and manage a new health crisis by learning from the lessons of these pandemic years.

Among the recommendations to be implemented, Alberta seeks to improve cultural sensitivity in long-term care. This means being culturally responsive to the cultural needs of residents and addressing language barriers that affect their safety, quality of care and quality of life. Research has documented the negative impact of language barriers on the health of Francophones. Seniors, especially those suffering from dementia and other cognitive disorders leading to second language attrition, are among the most vulnerable.

With respect to Alberta’s aging Francophone population, **the government and the RSA can do much to improve senior care and quality of life by joining forces.** We are already collaborating on a number of health-related issues regarding the North Zone Bilingual Network and the Government of Alberta’s [French Policy](#). Working together, we can continue to make greater health care improvements.



Improving Quality of Life for Residents in Facility-Based Continuing Care

Alberta Facility-Based Continuing Care Review Recommendations  
Final Report – April 30, 2021

Prepared for Alberta Department of Health

MNP

Classification: Public

🌐 [Improving quality of life for residents in facility-based continuing care : Alberta facility-based continuing care review recommendations: final report](#)

## A Better FUTURE for Alberta's Aging POPULATION



As a society, we now recognize that a culturally responsive, diverse and inclusive health care system is one that significantly outperforms any other. For Alberta's population, this translates into improved health outcomes.

**The seniors of today and tomorrow deserve nothing less than the full deployment of our best joint efforts to modernize long-term care together.**

*“We need to unleash a similar all-out effort to improve the care of elders. As we rebuild society and the economy, we have an opportunity to do things differently, to do them better. Elders have borne the brunt of the Covid-19 pandemic, and they should be the greatest beneficiaries as we come out the other side.”*

Source: *Neglected No More*  
The Urgent Need to Improve the Lives of Canada's Elders in the Wake of the Pandemic, 2021



### RÉSEAU SANTÉ ALBERTA (RSA) — OUR HEALTH CARE VISION

**A health system that provides culturally responsive care to Francophone Albertans.**

In nearly 20 years, we have made strides towards achieving this vision with the support of volunteers, in partnership with our community, health care professionals, the health care system and the government of Alberta. The RSA plays a leading role, informing, influencing, and mobilizing stakeholders to work together in improving access to French-language health care across Alberta, where it matters most.