CSA Group long-term care standard: Impact on Indigenous communities



Introduction

- The Canadian Standards Association (CSA Group) is a **leader in standards development, research, education, and advocacy**, whose mission is to enhance the lives of Canadians through the advancement of standards in the public and private sectors.
- CSA Group recently published a standard called **CSA Z8004, *Long-term care home operations and infection prevention and control***.
- This standard provides guidance on **safe operating practices**, design, and infection prevention and control (IPAC) practices in long-term care homes (LTCHs) while incorporating a person-centred approach. The standard takes into consideration what is required during both normal, day to day circumstances and catastrophic events.
- As published, the standard is voluntary, however, governments, regulators, and the long-term care industry are encouraged to use it through incorporation in regulation and/or industry best practices.
- This document focuses on the potential impact of the standard on **Indigenous LTCH residents and families**.



Impact on Indigenous LTCH residents and families

- Indigenous peoples can have **unique family, community, religious, and spiritual needs**, and may be more likely to have experienced institution-related trauma, which will affect their experiences in LTCHs. To help Indigenous residents maintain good health and well-being, LTCHs should consider their needs in their operations and facility design.
- CSA Group heard from consultation session with the staff and officials working in LTCHs serving Indigenous residents that approaches to supports for Indigenous peoples must be **adaptable and suited to their diverse and varied needs.** The standard provides direction on how to be inclusive of all cultures and religions.

Culturally appropriate care

A central theme that emerged from the consultations was the importance of LTCHs providing **culturally appropriate** care to Indigenous residents. It is fundamental to residents' quality of life and well-being.

The standard requires LTCHs to:

- Apply an **equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) lens** to their operations and design.
- Communicate to residents in their native languages by translating written materials and hiring a translator when necessary.
- Consider adding **Indigenous representatives on committees** responsible for overseeing the adherence to the LTCH's policies and procedures.
- Recognize and honour the diverse cultures of residents.



Access to nature



CSA Group heard that **access to nature is critical** for many Indigenous residents' health, well-being, and sense of place and belonging. For many Indigenous residents, it is important to be able to connect with nature while living in an LTCH.

To support access to nature, the standard requires LTCHs to:

- Provide **easy access to an outdoor space** that could include walking paths, rest stops, a space to garden, and private areas for contemplation or meditation.
- Add **windows or views of the outdoors** in all resident spaces when LTCHs are being built or renovated.

Access to traditional foods

CSA Group heard that for many Indigenous peoples, food is a key cultural component and provides a physical and spiritual connection with the land. It is important for Indigenous LTCH residents to have regular access to traditional foods.

The standard requires LTCHs to:

- **Create tailored culturally appropriate meal plans and provide residents and caregivers an opportunity to provide feedback on the food being served.**

Connecting with families

Maintaining **strong connections with families** and caregivers are important for LTCH residents' well-being and sense of belonging. Many Indigenous LTCH residents l**ive far from their families**, which can make in-person visits challenging and less frequent.

The standard requires LTCHs to:

- Provide **internet access** to residents and visitors that is accessible within residents' bedrooms so that residents can carry out virtual communications in private.
- Regularly **communicate with families or caregivers** about changes and improvements at the LTCH that impact residents.



Residential design

CSA Group heard that settings that look institutional can be **retraumatizing** for Indigenous peoples who are residential school survivors or have had traumatic interactions with other institutions. Having an **environment that feels like home** can help Indigenous residents to feel more comfortable when living in an LTCH.

To make LTCHs feel more like home, the standard recommends that:

- Residents are given the opportunity to **customize their bedroom space** with personal belongings.
- The design of the LTCH is **residential in nature** and designed with consideration of the region's demographics. For instance, LTCHs in communities with large Indigenous populations may add additional design components that will make residents feel more at home.



Where can I learn more?

Join the CSA Group Long-term Care Homes Community and get access to additional resources, discussion forums, and more: Long-term care homes community

Information about what CSA Group heard through consultations can be found in the What We Heard Final Report on the CSA Group website and Long-term care homes community.

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