



Pandemic Preparedness and Response in Nursing Homes – Department of Social Development

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Why Is This Important?

- Nursing homes provide care for one of New Brunswick’s most vulnerable populations
- 1,955 nursing home residents and 2,036 staff in New Brunswick had been infected with COVID-19 as of March 31, 2022
- Of the 358 New Brunswickers who lost their lives to COVID-19 as of April 2022, 90 were residents of nursing homes

Overall Conclusions

- The Department of Social Development (Department) did not ensure that nursing homes were prepared for a potential pandemic
- The Department provided support, guidance, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to nursing homes in response to the pandemic. However, we noted areas for improvement for responding to future pandemics

What We Found

Pre-Existing Systemic Challenges Contributed to the Impact of the Pandemic

- Clinical staff shortages existed prior to the pandemic
- There was a lack of access to infection prevention and control expertise
- The Department did not have a capital or risk management plan to address deficiencies in nursing home design
- The Department was aware of several areas of non-compliance as noted during inspections; however, enforcement options are limited

The Department and Nursing Homes were Unprepared for the Pandemic

- The Department did not have an updated pandemic plan
- The Department did not provide nursing homes with financial resources for pre-pandemic planning

Improvements Required for Future Pandemic Responses

- The Department should work with nursing homes to address key inspection non-compliance areas, notably in the area of adequate numbers of care staff
- The Department should ensure timely access to infection prevention and control specialists