

Nursing Home Without Walls (NHWW) – Guide for Nursing Homes Summary



About Healthcare Excellence Canada

Healthcare Excellence Canada (HEC) works with partners to spread innovation, build capability and catalyze policy change so that everyone in Canada has safe and high-quality healthcare. Through collaboration with patients, caregivers and people working in healthcare, we turn proven innovations into lasting improvements in all dimensions of healthcare excellence.

HEC focuses on improving care of older adults, bringing care closer to home and supporting the retention of the health workforce – with quality and safety embedded across all our efforts. We are committed to fostering inclusive, culturally safe and equitable care through engagement with different groups, including patients and caregivers, First Nations, Métis and Inuit, healthcare workers and more.

Launched in 2021, HEC brings together the Canadian Patient Safety Institute and Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement. HEC is an independent, not-for-profit charity funded primarily by Health Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.

150 Kent Street, Suite 200
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 0E4, Canada
1-866-421-6933 | info@hec-esc.ca

Social Media

[LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#)

Healthcare Excellence Canada honours the traditional territories upon which our staff and partners live, work and play. We recognize that the stewardship of the original inhabitants of these territories provides for the standard of living that we enjoy today. [Learn more](#)

Overview

The *Nursing Home Without Walls (NHWW)* program is an innovative, person- and community-centered model designed to support older adults in aging in place. NHWW leverages the assets of nursing homes and community partners to improve quality of life and delay or avoid entry into long-term care. Originally developed in New Brunswick by Dr. Suzanne Dupuis-Blanchard, NHWW has shown success through collaborative implementation with the Government of New Brunswick Ministry of Social Development, Université de Moncton and Healthcare Excellence Canada (HEC).

This summary is for nursing and long-term care leaders, directors, and coordinators who want to expand their reach and provide innovative aging-in-place solutions.

Nursing Home Without Walls – Guide for Nursing Homes

You can read the full Implementation Guide Here:

[Full Guide for Guide for Nursing Homes](#)

Program Foundations

Core Principles

- NHWW is led by a nursing home or long-term care centre that partners with the community to co-develop and deliver services.
- Services are offered at no cost to older adults and their care partners.
- Emphasizes autonomy, social connection, and aging as a valued life stage.
- Utilizes asset-based community development approaches.

Key Activities

- Needs assessments to identify local gaps and opportunities.
- Development of flexible, culturally safe, and responsive services.
- Connection to and navigation of existing supports.
- Ongoing data collection, evaluation, and service adaptation.
- Planning for sustainability and continued community engagement.



Implementation Framework

Assess Organizational Readiness

Assess your nursing home's readiness to plan and sustain the NHWW program. This includes assessing the availability of funding, current and future partnerships, community awareness and capacity for the home to hire and deliver services.

Hire a NHWW Coordinator

The NHWW coordinator plays a key role in the development and implementation of the NHWW program. The coordinator helps to support older adults and their caregivers by guiding them through the information, resources and services available through the NHWW program and in the community.

Assess and Map Community Assets

Asset-based community development (ABCD) focuses on the strengths of people and organizations within a community. Assessing these assets helps you understand older adults' experiences and the factors that shape aging. Consider:

- a. Engaging with diverse older adult communities.
- b. Building relationships with community organizations.
- c. Review the existing services available to support aging in place.

Develop Person Centered Services

A person-centred NHWW program is designed in partnership with older adults and is focused on delivering services based on your community asset mapping.

List potential services and identify gaps NHWW can fill. Where services exist, explore access via personalized navigation and referral. Prioritize high-impact services that build on existing nursing home or community assets. Design person-centered services with a focus on equity, safety, cultural safety, and inclusion to address systemic barriers.

Plan For NHWW Human Resources

NHWW programs need flexible staffing and volunteer support tailored to community needs. Key roles include coordinators, navigators, and activity workers. Volunteers bring valuable perspectives and help leverage community assets. Ongoing planning and creative recruitment address staffing gaps and sustain services.

Evaluate Your Progress

Evaluating how your services are supporting older adults will enable your NHWW program to remain person-centered and responsive to new and changing needs.

Consider how you will measure and collect information on participation, service delivery and outcomes and transform it into meaningful insights that can be used to enhance and improve your NHWW program.

Share Your Learnings and Adapt

Sharing knowledge, collaborating with the community, and learning from other programs help improve service delivery and strengthen the long-term sustainability of NHWW. These efforts enable nursing homes to adapt to changing needs and support older adults in aging with dignity and independence.