

Co-Creating Implementation Strategies to Mitigate SARS CoV-2 Exposure Risks and Facilitate Wellness in Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes: Wellness Hub

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Objective

To co-create and implement with knowledge users (LTCH and RH residents and essential visitors, staff and their household members) tailored interventions to prevent and manage outbreaks, promote vaccine uptake, and optimize wellness.

Methods

We recruited 72 LTCH and RHs in Ontario to participate in the WH study. Of these, 48 homes were allocated to the intervention arm, and 24 to the control arm.

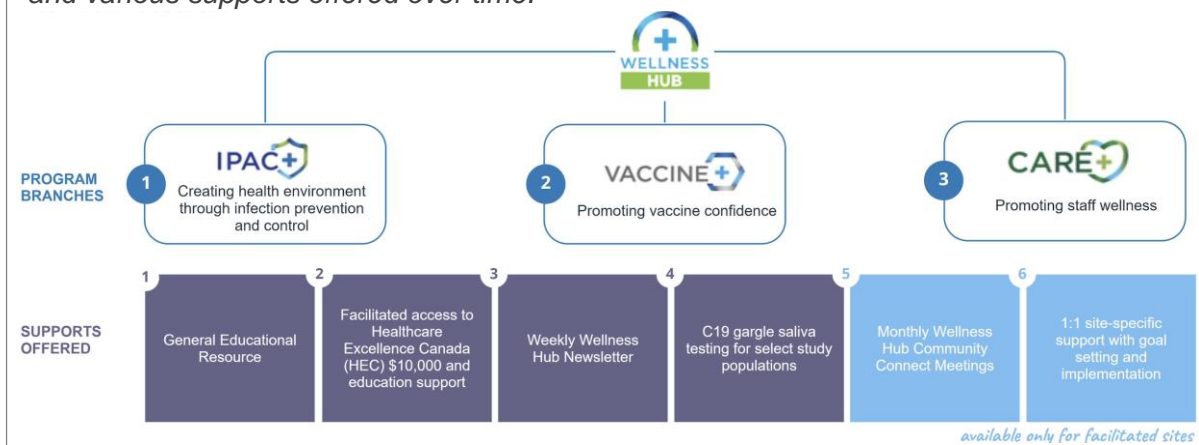
- We used an integrated knowledge mobilisation approach to co-design the WH support intervention, where homes identified their priorities and preferences during the pandemic via baseline needs assessment interviews (conducted between Feb 2021-Feb 2022) and identified barriers and facilitators to implementing strategies to address these challenges.
- Additional feedback was iteratively gathered via 1:1 meetings, monthly Community of Practice (CoP) meetings and email check-ins.

Needs assessment interview data were coded using a framework developed by the team a-priori, and then analyzed via rapid framework analysis.

- Barriers and facilitators to implementation were categorized using implementation frameworks (Theoretical Domains Framework; Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research).
- Theoretical mapping analysis was used to identify and design strategies to support homes, address barriers and leverage facilitators.
- We conducted a process evaluation to evaluate reach, use and satisfaction with the WH support program.

Results

Figure 1. Overview of the Wellness Hub Support Program, with its three Program branches and various supports offered over time.



- 56 eligible sites received facilitated access to Healthcare Excellence Canada (HEC) funding (\$10,000) and HEC education supports. Funds were most frequently used for supporting staff wellness. All homes receive a weekly WH Newsletter (with LTCH/RH directive updates, program announcements, resource features, and more), in addition to general resource access via our WH website.
- 38 original resources were developed, including our Vaccine Champions course (Sept 2021) and our CARE+ package (with 60+ pages of mental health and wellness wraparound resources). In 2022, the WH delivered more than 2600 printed booklets to 39 LTCH/RHs.
- Homes in the intervention arm received additional supports via 1:1 check-ins with a WH Facilitator, and invitations to monthly WH CoP meetings. These meetings are focused on challenges and feedback reported by sites, and offer sites an opportunity to engage and learn from each other. Topics have included: staff wellness, vaccine confidence, effective change management, racism in the workplace. Since Jan 2022, more than 400 people have attended these meetings.
- LTCH and RH staff reported that the CARE+ package and the CoPs were the most useful resources. 54 homes participated in collection of Dried Blood Spot sampling for SARS-CoV-2-sero-surveillance.

The WH support program was well received by homes, as demonstrated in the following quotes:

“CARE+ has been very helpful, we distribute the packages during staff meetings”

“The COPs are so helpful because you can compare yourself to other homes and what they are doing”

“The Wellness Hub is overall great for support”

“The website is user-friendly and great for resources”

Limitations

These findings represent a process evaluation of Wellness Hub implementation. An outcome evaluation, comparing the impact of Wellness Hub on SARS-CoV-2 infections among LTCH populations is ongoing.

Conclusions

We delivered a multi-pronged strategy that was well received, and shows the importance of iterative, continuous engagement.

Needs of the sites evolved throughout the pandemic and required the Wellness Hub team to be nimble and responsive.

- Staff burnout and turnover across the sites were (and continue to be) critical challenges.
- Staff working in LTCH and RH settings valued the opportunity to support their staff and residents by learning from each other and co-creating tailored resources.

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