



- Mike Arsenault
- CTV News Winnipeg Videojournalist
- Follow | [Contact](#)

Updated Jan. 8, 2022 6:59 p.m. CST
Published Jan. 8, 2022 6:49 p.m. CST

Share

WINNIPEG -

There were 3,265 new cases of COVID-19 identified in Manitoba on Friday, and the rise in cases is having a severe impact on personal care homes.

The province announced 11 new outbreaks in care homes across the province, a pattern all too familiar for Eddie Calisto-Tavares.

Calisto-Tavares lost her father in the COVID-19 outbreak at Maples Personal Care home in late 2020 and left her home to care for him in his final days.

- Manitoba declares COVID-19 outbreaks at 10 personal care homes
- Manitoba declares COVID-19 outbreaks at hospitals and personal care homes

"I went from Oct. 31 to Nov. 11, which was the day he passed," said Calisto-Tavares. "I learned how to use PPE, and I could just not bear that my father would die alone."

She said the current uptick in outbreaks is reminiscent of what she experienced with her father, and she's losing confidence in the province's ability to manage the issue.

"I don't trust when our Premier, or Shared Health, or whoever comes on and says 'we have it under control.'"

The Long Term and Continuing Care Association of Manitoba said the majority of active COVID cases in personal care homes are from staff.

Jan Legeros, the association's executive director, said that with record high daily COVID cases occurring in Manitoba, it's not surprising to see care home outbreaks.

"The staff are doing everything in their power to keep COVID-19 out of the long term care residences, but unfortunately with community spread that high, it's very very difficult."

Legeros said more than 20 personal care homes in the province have implemented a mandatory vaccination policy for their staff.

Laura Tamblyn-Watts, the CEO of CanAge, Canada's national seniors' advocacy organization, said it's time for the Manitoba government to mandate vaccination in all care homes.

"Personal care home staff need to be vaccinated. It's just critical both at this time, and we know in the future we're going to be battling with this as well," she said.

"If you are taking care of older vulnerable people, you just need to be vaccinated."

Tamblyn-Watts said provinces like Quebec, Ontario, and B.C. have already mandated vaccinations for personal care home staff.

She said rapid COVID-19 tests at the front door of care homes could also help prevent future outbreaks.

"It's not perfect, but it's another important way we can try to keep omicron out of [care] homes."

Calisto-Tavares agrees vaccination is the key to ensuring care home residents are safe.

"First and foremost, let's mandate vaccinations, let's get health care aides and nurses healthy and empowered."