



SPA-LTC ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025-2026

THANK YOU!

As we step into the new year, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to the entire team for your incredible contributions to the SPA-LTC program. Your dedication and hard work have made it possible to strengthen the palliative care approach in long-term care homes. Thank you!

Sneak Peek into 2026

- Funding for the Health Canada project wrapped up in March 2026.
- The Partner Working Group presented at the Community of Practice on January 8th, 2026 sharing their thoughts on why caregivers' voices in research matter
- An e-module for new learners about having Serious Illness Conversations is currently available in French and English in the e-learning section of the SPA-LTC website

Highlights of 2025

The Care Partner page went live on the SPA-LTC website

Hosted 6 Innovative Dementia Care Webinars

New Brunswick received provincial funding for Phase 3 of the project

Began implementation of SPA-LTC in PEI

Within the past year, SPA-LTC released 10 podcasts



SPA-LTC Hosted an Innovative Dementia Care Webinar Series in 2025

1) “The First Dementia Village in Canada: The Village Langley Story”- Elroy Jespersen (founder of Village Langley)

2) “Where Tradition meets Innovation: Building a new Paradigm for Dementia Support with Bluebell Village “- Andrew Karesa (Founder and CEO of Bluebell Village)

3) “Home for Us: Building a New Long-Term Care Model and Environment “- Scott McCarten (Vice President of Providence Living) and Jennifer Gibson (Executive Director of Providence Health Care)

4) “Developing Supportive Physical Environments in Long Term Care Settings: Principles and Practices”- Dr. Habib Chaudhury (Professor, Department of Gerontology, Simon Fraser University)

5) “Small: Innovation in Long-Term Care Design for Seniors with Dementia”- Neda Basharat and Tony Ross (Principals at Montgomery Sisam Architects)

6) “Breaking Silos: A Neighbourhood Approach to Person Directed Care”- Debra Boudreau (Occupational Therapist, Tideview Terrace) and Jessica Pulley (Registered Dietician, Tideview Terrace)

In January 2025, SPA-LTC started a free webinar series entitled “Challenging the Status Quo: Embracing Innovative Dementia Care Environments in Canada”. This concluded in June 2025 as a 6-part speaker series.

Our six-part webinar series attracted 714 registrants joining live on the day and the remainder accessing the recorded sessions afterward. Participants represented 12 of Canada’s 13 provinces and territories, along with international attendees from five countries: Ireland, Japan, the Philippines, Portugal, and the United States. If you are interested in watching any of the webinars, please email spaltec@mcmaster.ca

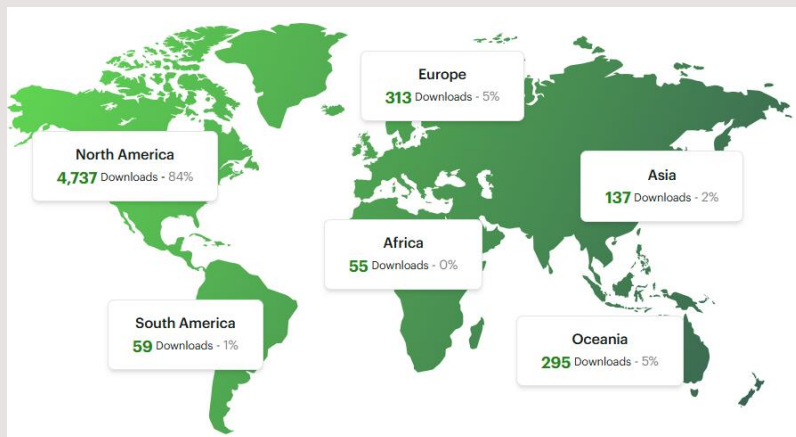
Implementation Study

We interviewed 11 participants, 8 provincial champion leads and 3 Palliative Pain and Symptom Management Consultants (PPSMCs) to learn about their experiences implementing SPA-LTC in long-term care homes across Canada.

Participants described SPA-LTC as a comprehensive program supporting residents, families, and staff throughout all stages of the living-dying trajectory. Staff valued the wide range of resources, tools, research, education, and training. Participants noted the importance of tailoring implementation to each home’s capacity.

Key challenges included limited understanding of a palliative approach and hesitancy to discuss it with families. Facilitators included strong interdisciplinary champion teams and partnerships with external organizations to foster collaboration and resource sharing. The full article should be available to read by the summer of 2026.

The Podcast Channel is Steadily Gaining Traction



The Strengthening a Palliative Approach to Long-Term Care podcast is in its fourth year of hosting the SPA-LTC Podcast. The podcast channel has seen steady growth, with 48 episodes published to date. In September 2025, we reached a major milestone of 5,000 downloads, spanning 70 countries and 877 cities across 6 continents. We have a new monthly record with 240

downloads, surpassing our previous high of 222 in November 2024. To date, the channel has over 6,000 downloads and continues to average at least 30 downloads per week. This year, the SPA-LTC podcast ranked #8 on the 15 Best Long-Term Care Podcast List and #14 on the 20 Best Nursing Home Podcasts. To listen to the podcast, [click here](#).

Thank You to the Partner Working Group

The Partner Working Group (PWG) aims to leverage caregivers' experience of supporting a loved one in long-term care with dementia and use their experiences to help make the SPA-LTC program more applicable to caregivers across Canada. Thank you so much to our members for their meaningful contributions. You have helped to strengthen the SPA-LTC program to reflect caregivers' perspectives and needs.



Highlighting the Maritimes Achievements



New Brunswick

New Brunswick has engaged an estimated 325–375 participants in SPA-LTC activities and is planning a major interdepartmental stakeholder summit for early 2026. Led by Dr. Pam Durepos, the province has secured a third round of funding, bringing its total investment to nearly \$1.5M over three years. A total of 62 homes have participated across Phases 1–3, including 44 active nursing homes and an expansion into 32 special care homes. This marks the first extension of palliative-approach supports into the adult residential sector. New Brunswick continues to strengthen its leadership in sustainable, person-centred palliative care within LTC.

Nova Scotia

Thanks to funding from the Department of Seniors and Long-Care, the SPA-LTC workshops in Nova Scotia have been an overwhelming success with almost 50 workshops and over 500 people attending. Early evaluations show strong impacts, with participants reporting increased confidence, improved communication, deeper understanding of the palliative approach, and appreciation for in-person learning as a safe space to discuss end-of-life care. Government funding has now ended however the workshops will continue to be offered by Lesley Hirst, the lead for SPA-LTC in Nova Scotia. To learn more contact Lesley at hirstl1@mcmaster.ca.