



AUDIT AT A GLANCE

Performance Audit of the Ministry of Health: Inspecting Special-Care Homes

Why It Matters



Special-care homes provide personal and nursing care to residents who can no longer live independently due to health conditions, disabilities, or advanced age.

The Ministry of Health is responsible for inspecting special-care homes.

Without regular inspections and proper follow up, special-care home residents are susceptible to neglect, abuse, and even death.

Why We Did This Audit

Regular, risk-based inspections at special-care homes and timely follow-up are essential to ensure safe, high-quality care of some of Saskatchewan's most vulnerable residents and to maintain public trust in these facilities.



Key Facts and Figures

- At July 2025, 130 out of 161 special-care homes inspected since December 2021; over 30 homes still not visited in the past four years
- We found five homes with critical incidents between April 2023 and June 2024, and yet not inspected until 2025
- At July 2025, six inspectors, all based in Regina, are responsible for conducting inspections province wide
- There were 161 special-care homes across the province—125 operated by the Authority; 36 operated by healthcare affiliates at March 31, 2025



What We Found

We found inspection frequency and announced notice did not align with good practice.

Some homes had yet to be inspected since the program began in 2021. The Ministry also does not conduct follow-up inspections to confirm whether homes sufficiently address non-compliance issues identified.

Since 2022, the Ministry has only conducted one independent follow-up inspection, which found repeated critical non-compliance issues related to physical restraint use.

Our testing of 16 inspections found it took up to 203 days in some instances to fix critical and/or high non-compliance issues because of extensions granted by the Ministry.

We Made Six Recommendations



The Ministry of Health needs to:

- Use a risk-based inspection approach that prioritizes homes with a higher likelihood of poor care outcomes (e.g., reported critical incidents) to determine its inspection priorities and frequency, and it should conduct unannounced inspections
- Conduct follow-up inspections and confirm timely remediation of non-compliance issues found
- Assess whether it has sufficient resources and capacity to carry out risk-based inspections and follow-ups
- Analyze inspection results to identify potential areas for improvement and trends in non-compliance to guide corrective action
- Publicly report inspection findings