

Long-Term Care in Ottawa: We Need Change Now!

The Council
on Aging
of Ottawa



Le Conseil sur
le vieillissement
d'Ottawa



Provide more care

Fund more direct care staff (Registered Nurses (RN), Registered Practical Nurses (RPN), Personal Support Workers (PSW) and other health workers) in LTC with a regulated minimum number of care hours/resident appropriate to the complexity of care needed.

Concerns: Staffing levels in LTC have remained virtually unchanged over the past 10 years despite a very significant increase in the complexity of health care needs of residents in LTC and those waiting for care. There has also been an increase in the complexity of procedures that LTC homes now perform. The Council on Aging of Ottawa remains concerned that the care currently required in LTC is not being funded adequately and that this situation is getting worse despite increasing care needs in LTC.

Staffing levels are well below four hours of direct care recommended as the minimum level necessary to ensure quality care. In Ontario, direct hours of personal care (nursing, registered practical nurse and personal support work) have only risen from 3.17 hours/resident/day in 2008 to 3.26 hours/resident/day in 2017.

Ontario needs to legislate at least four hours of direct care/resident/day. This increased level of direct care in LTC has been widely supported by families, unions, research studies and professional organizations for many years. A private member's bill, *Time to Care Act*, received unanimous support by all parties at second reading in the Legislature in 2017. It was re-introduced in the Summer of 2018 and received first reading.³

To address inadequate care in LTC, residents and families are increasingly turning to paid caregivers to supplement the care funded by the province and by unpaid caregivers. While these extra care expenses have not been formally tracked, they need to be carefully monitored in the coming years.

³ Bill 13, *Time to Care Act (Long-Term Care Homes Amendment, Minimum Standard of Daily Care)*. (2018). First Reading July 31, 2019. Retrieved from the Province of Ontario Legislative Assembly website: ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-1/bill-13

LTC homes are facing major challenges in retaining and recruiting staff, particularly personal support workers. Staff burnout is a significant issue due to heavy workloads, workplace violence and stress. Rates of abuse and violence have risen to unprecedented levels both resident-to-resident and staff-to-resident. Without needed changes in LTC, the situation will continue to worsen for staff and residents.

Measuring Progress/Current Status and Data⁴

- 1. Implementing a *Time to Care Act*** (Long-Term Care Homes Amendment, Minimum Standard of Daily Care)
 - *First Reading on July 31, 2018*
- 2. Implementing recommendations (particularly #85 - increase the number of registered staff in LTC homes) from the *Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System (2019)*⁵**
 - *Progress report due on July 31, 2020*
- 3. Mandating timely and transparent reporting from every LTC home**
 - a) of direct hours of paid care/resident**
 - b) when minimum care hours not provided**
 - *No reporting on these at level of individual homes*
 - *Some provincial-wide data are available – 3.26 hours of direct care/resident/day in 2017*

⁴ Data taken from the Province of Ontario, Home and Community Care, Client Health and Related Information System (CHRIS) unless otherwise provided. hssontario.ca/News/Pages/Meet-CHRIS.aspx

⁵ Gillese, E. (2019, July 31). *The Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System, Volume 1: Executive Summary and Consolidated Recommendations*. Retrieved from the Long-Term Care Homes Public Inquiry website: longtermcareinquiry.ca/en/final-report