

## RTO District 15 Political Advocacy Committee Action - Application ID 50011

This was a written submission sent to the Ontario Legislature with reference to Ontario's Bill 37, "Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors and Building More Beds Act", 2021.

### Purpose:

It was submitted to the Ontario government committee on November 25th, 2021, as our response to the proposed bill as were other submissions made by public groups. It was an attempt to advocate for seniors and influence the Conservative politicians to consider aspects of the bill that were seen to be detrimental to the lives of elderly seniors.

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### Premise:

For Profit Long Term Care Facilities must NOT be expanded. Making money on the backs of the illness and frailty of the elderly is morally reprehensible. Allowing investors to profit from the tragedy of the declining health of elders is unacceptable. The institutions which have been built to warehouse and intern the elderly to live as if they are in prison do not demonstrate a compassionate modern society of the twenty-first century. This is a black mark against a compassionate society which most Ontarians seek to achieve. Expanding For Profit Long Term Care must stop!

The government of Ontario has an obligation to preserve and enhance the public interest by supporting the Public and Not For Profit Long Term Care facilities. The role of government must be to ensure that human beings are taken care of physically and mentally so that they may participate fully in society, pay their taxes, obey laws, help others, and find a happy life for the full length of their lives.

No one wants to live in Long Term Care facilities-they want to live at home. However, In Ontario the Home Care system is cumbersome and inadequate. It must be updated and modernized to ensure that the coming wave of the Boomer generation has access to such home care in order to prevent the need for as many of them to require assisted care in LTCs as possible. Public and Not For Profit facilities demonstrate an effort to house the elderly, without the intent to profit financially. Supporting and expanding resources for Public and Not for Profit facilities must be a key priority.

### Staffing

The requirement of four hours of care per person per day in a LTC home is a beginning, not a target. Increased staffing must commence immediately. Negotiating a timeline for achievement of hours of care is failing the elderly now. One nurse on duty per facility is woefully inadequate. A team of nurses at a minimum allows them to work together to problem solve and advise other staff to provide direct service. A ratio of care might be a better system to meet the needs of each individual. Ontario can no longer afford to fund eldercare on the cheap.

Full employment in Ontario is an important goal. Many people are looking to explore careers in roles that are focused on helping the elderly. Employment in a LTC home must be an honoured and respected profession with financial compensation, benefits, professional development, and protection. Workers who are gifted with the character, patience and compassion to serve the frail and elderly must be retained and be allowed to share their professional experience and to mentor others. Full time work at one facility is essential in order to prevent future transmission of viruses.

Professional training, certification, and ongoing development of all workers in LTC homes should be consistent with workers in acute settings and remuneration must be consistent across all settings to ensure that respect and appreciation of workers extends to LTC facilities. All medical directors must have training and experience in gerontology. Let's make this happen!

#### Inspections

LTC homes must be open to scrutiny and accountability. Provincial inspections are one way to ensure that the elements of adequate care are in place to ensure the health, safety and emotional wellbeing of both residents and staff. Both scheduled and unscheduled inspections will reveal deficiencies which need to be addressed. There must be clear consequences for facilities who do not follow the laws that are in place and governments who do not enforce these laws will be accountable at the polls. A culture of encouragement by staff to coach one another and advocate for the best practices must address immediate errors that are identified. A culture of working together to protect the wellbeing of the residents and staff must be developed.

#### Proactive Planning.

Residents in Long Term care facilities have born the brunt of this virus with the shocking death toll that occurred as a result of the pandemic. Scientists predict this event will not be the last and will recur in the future. A plan must be put in place quickly to anticipate this eventuality and take specific steps to limit a repeat devastation.

Doubling the amounts of fines is a grand gesture but a weak one if none of the facilities with the worst standing have faced any consequence at all. If inadequate facilities are not closed or remediated, it tells all of them that there is no consequence for bad actors. Yet not one facility has been closed due to poor showings on inspection.

Ontario residents depend on government to protect their interests so there must be a plan for residents trapped in inadequate care in an emergency situation.

A Residents' Bill of Rights is a lovely sounding document but many residents in LTC may not be in a position to advocate for themselves. An Ombudsman, a Tribunal, as well as Nurse navigators in each facility must be instituted to protect the interests of the elderly.

#### Process

The hurried timeline for passage of this Bill implies that the government wants to sidestep open debate about the content of this Bill. The public in a democratic society has the right to debate the features of this bill. This has not occurred as the Bill was sent to public hearing on Monday, November 22, 2021 with the closure of submissions on Thursday, November 25th, 2021. This timeline does not allow fulsome debate by residents, family members or the public. It indicates a government not open to these elements of democratic public interests.

In several months, Ontario residents will get to vote on this government's handling of this critical issue.