

June 30, 2020

Ontario Premier
Legislative Building,
Queen's Park, Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

Concerned Friends of Citizens in Care Facilities is a not-for-profit organization formed in 1980. Our commitment remains strong to advocate for elderly people that have made major contributions to Ontario and are valuable human beings who deserve the quality of care that we would expect for ourselves.

The problems identified in Long-Term Care homes have existed for decades. It is the devastating effects of COVID-19 on our most vulnerable population that simply brought it to the attention of the general public.

During the past five years, the government itself has recognized the significant problems:

- 2015, 2016, 2018 Auditor General Report on LTC Inspection Program
- 2018 1st Reading Private Members Bill 13 – To establish a minimum standard of daily care in LTC
- 2019 Auditor General Report on Food and Nutrition in LTC Homes
- 2019 Wettlaufer Public Inquiry and Recommendations
- Feb 2020 LTC Staffing Study Advisory Group formed, report due July 31 2020
- June 2020 Ontario Ombudsman and Patient Ombudsman Offices launch LTC Investigations
- July 2020 Premier's Long-Term Care Commission to start

We need collaboration of all these findings, accountability and to develop a plan forward and the time is now. Concerned Friends has identified three priority areas of focus.

1. Staffing

There are over 77,000 adults living in Long-Term Care representing a very complex population in terms of the level of care required to ensure their safety, dignity, respect, and individuality.

There is a need for an appropriate front-line staff to resident ratio within each facility that adequately meets the care needs of the residents. To ensure the continuity of care there needs to be designated permanent front-line staff earning a wage with benefits, that is indicative of the responsibility they are providing. Funding should be tied to a staffing plan that shows permanent full and part time staff employed with minimal movement allowed between homes.

2. Annual Resident Quality Inspection

There needs to be an immediate reinstatement of a thorough comprehensive inspection conducted annually in all facilities. This will provide more in-depth information and insight into the quality of care provided in the home. Currently most of the facilities Performance Level listed on the Ministry's website are based on 2017 information.

There should be a resurrection of the LTC Resident Quality Inspection Advisory Group or some other commission with more accountable, reporting directly to the Minister of Long-Term Care. This group should meet at minimum two times per year and include representation from stakeholders, including Concerned Friends who was previously at the table.

3. Cross Sector Sharing and Support

There is a need for more cross-sector collaboration and sharing of expertise between LTC homes, hospitals, and geriatric services to facilitate and support LTC staff with specialized training and assistance in particular around infection control and behavioural supports. A good example of this is how Markham Stouffville Hospital stepped up during COVID.

Concerned Friends have spent the past 40 years identifying problems and advocating for individuals living in long-term care. We bring knowledge and experience and would appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Commission. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miranda Priestman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Miranda Priestman, RN BScN
President of Concerned Friends
board@concernedfriends.ca

cc: Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care
Christine Elliott, Minister of Health