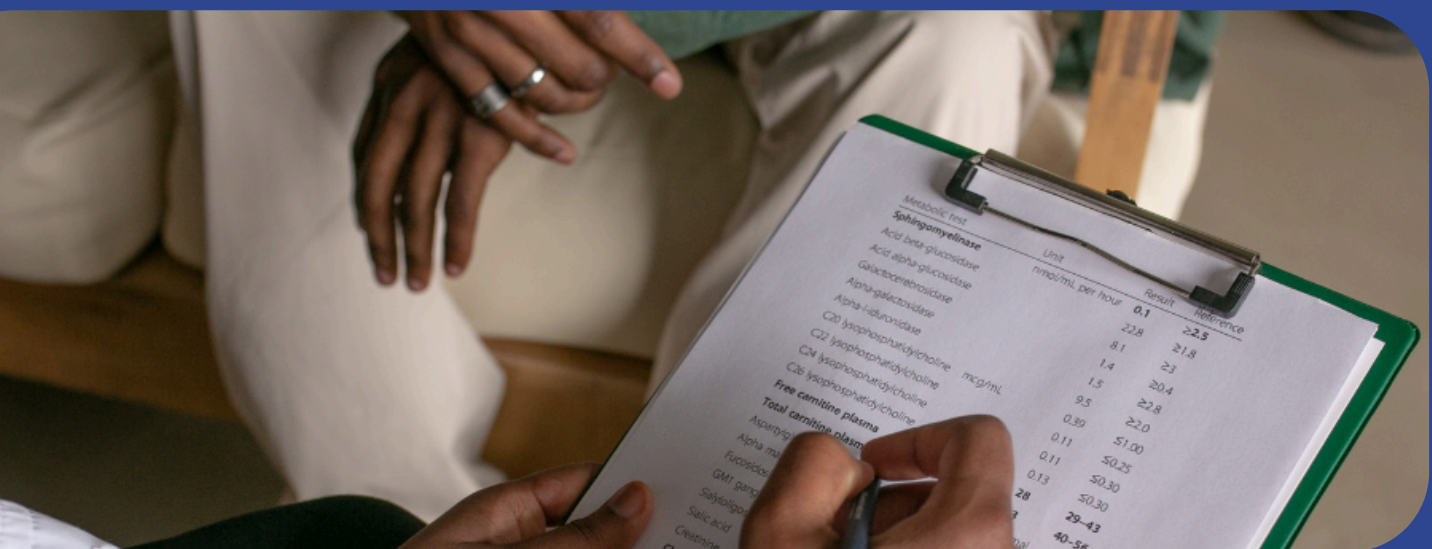

Summary Report

Ontario Long-Term Care Inspections

2024



Prepared By.
Concerned Friends
Policy & Advocacy Committee



LONG TERM CARE

Background

This report summarizes the issues and non-compliances identified and reported by Ontario's provincial inspectors in 2024. District Inspection reports are analyzed by the Concerned Friends Review Team and then combined to provide a provincial perspective. The findings help the Concerned Friends Board identify advocacy issues and are provided to the Ministry of Long Term Care as feedback on how both the sector and the inspections process are functioning.

There are different kinds of inspections conducted by the Ministry: critical incident system, complaint, proactive compliance inspection [PCI], follow-up of compliance orders, and other.

The Ministry has committed to conducting a PCI for each home on an annual basis. There are 7 inspection districts: London, Central West, Hamilton, Toronto, Central East, Ottawa and North/Sudbury. Each District has approximately the same number of Long Term Care Homes.

Findings & Issues

Number of Inspections

Table 1 shows the number of each type of LTC inspection, by District from 2019 to 2024.

- The number of 2024 inspections (all types) has increased by about 18% over 2023. The largest increase in the number of inspections was from 2022 to 2023, and the number is now above pre-pandemic levels.
- The **number of total inspections by district shows some variation**; 661 for Ottawa and 305 for the North. All other Districts show between 400 and 500 inspections.
 - The variation in the number of homes per District is not wide enough to explain the difference in the number of inspections completed.
 - Districts and reports within the same district vary in how many “intakes” (complaints and critical incidents) are grouped in one report.
 - It is likely that travel time in the North District is one factor that limits the number of inspections done.

Focus on PCIs

- As with all inspections (see above), there is significant variation in the number of PCIs conducted across Districts. For example, London did only 23 PCIs in 2024 out of a total of almost 500 inspections, whereas Ottawa did 60.
- Overall there was a **significant increase in the number of PCIs** completed; 260 in 2024 versus 160 in 2023. However, this is out of a total of over 600 LTC homes; and is far short of the goal of an annual PCI for each LTC home.
- Since 2019, according to our records, **465 homes had received at least one PCI** inspection, about 75% of the homes in Ontario.
- The Inspections Branch has, several times, revised its goal of completing an annual **PCI for every home. Most recently, it was changed from 2025 to 2026.**

Responses to Non-Compliance

Table 2 shows the number of compliance orders (COs) and written notifications (WNs) issued in each District. The **number of compliance orders increased by 75%**, from 587 in 2023 to 1021 in 2024.

- It is probable that some of this increased enforcement is due to more inspectors who are now fully trained. The number of compliance orders issued varies widely by district.
- Of special note is the situation in the Central East district which issued 388 compliance orders, more than two and half times the number of any other district.
- Concerned Friends has raised this finding with the Ministry, asking for their understanding of why this district is such an outlier. Are there more non-compliances in this district? Are the inspections being carried out with different interpretations of criteria? Is the training of inspectors or of LTCH staff different enough to explain this finding? To date, no satisfactory explanation has been provided.
- While the Central East district is an outlier, homes in the Hamilton and North Districts also received double the number of compliance orders in 2024 compared to 2023, and an increase of 40% in the London district.
- The number of written notifications (WNs) has increased only 23%, perhaps suggesting that more non-compliances than in previous years have received the more serious compliance order.

The number of 2024 Director's Orders is at the same level as in 2023.

Table 3 shows the level of **follow-up on compliance orders**, in order to ascertain whether the home has been able to reach compliance by the time of the deadline set.

- In 2024 the Inspections Branch maintained the high level of follow-up achieved in 2023. This is a marked change from previous years when follow-up seemed to be irregular, or unrecorded. This level of follow-up is critical to ensuring accountability and continuous improvement in Long Term Care homes.



Table 4 shows the number of Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs or fines) in each District. Inspectors first started issuing AMPs in 2022.

- In 2024 there were a total of 206 AMPs totaling \$654,300.
- The number has increased over 2023 by 59%, with the dollars increasing by 32%.
- The largest increases were in the numbers of the lower fines: \$1,100 for the first time when a compliance order was issued within 2 years for the same non-compliance; \$500 when a second follow-up inspection was necessary on a compliance order.

Long Term Care Areas of Non-Compliance

The Inspections Branch denotes five most frequently occurring non-compliances: IPAC, Plan of Care, Duty to Protect, Skin and Wound, Transferring and positioning. This pattern of non-compliances has been long standing and deserves a focused strategy for improvement.

Table 5 shows the number of compliance orders and director's orders by District, and by problem categories as defined by Concerned Friends, which differ from the categories selected by the Inspections Branch. This table includes the history available from 2019 to 2023.

- **Note:** Table 5 uses unique categories of problems developed by Concerned Friends. This was done to further consistency among CF Reviewers and to focus attention on priority areas. Due to the limited level of detail available in inspection reports, the data presented here may not be complete and/or does not completely eliminate the potential for differences in categorizing issues among reviewers.

Examples of how CF categories of non-compliance may vary from those used by Inspectors:

- *Plan of Care* may be noted under other categories, depending on the issue: for example, if the issue is falls, skin care, medication issues, or transfers.
- *Nursing and Personal Care* includes "skin and wound," falls and continence management.
- *Transferring and positioning* usually goes under Other Safety Hazards.
- *Facility Management* now includes maintenance, as well as quality assurance, training, handling complaints, and all manner of reporting.
- *Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)* is any issue related to the risk of infections and the management of infections.

Directors Orders and Director Referrals

An inspector may make a Referral to the Director in cases of repeat non-compliance or inability to achieve compliance. The involvement of the Director (of the Inspections Branch) may result in further enforcement such as a Director's Order, an Order Requiring Management, or Cease Admissions.

- In 2024 director referrals resulted in one Director's Order related to skin and wound care (noted under Nursing and Personal Care), two Director's Orders related to management of Responsive Behaviours, and one Director's Order related to cleaning and inspection of HVAC systems (listed under Facility Management).
- During 2024, we are aware of four other Director's Orders, issued separately from the usual inspection reports. Of these four Director's Orders, three were orders to cease admissions. One was lifted within six months, one was issued in December and is still in force, and one was followed early in January 2025 with an Order Requiring Management (which has been included in these 2024 figures). These four Director's Orders are also listed under Facility Management.
- 2024 was the first year that we separated **abuse** by staff from **neglect** by staff, and we recorded double the number of non-compliances.
 - *How to explain the increase in reports of abuse and neglect?* It is not possible to know if the increase reflects an increase in the actual incidence of abuse or if it is a result of changes in reporting practices and protocols.
 - *How to interpret the data on abuse and neglect?* There is some uncertainty about how to interpret non-compliances related to abuse and neglect. Was there a complaint and it was substantiated? Or a complaint that was not confirmed but the related policy/procedures in the home were not up to standard? How is the abuse/neglect categorized by the Inspector, i.e., was it included under "failure to protect" or "failure to report"?

- **IPAC** is still a big area of concern. In 2023 the number of compliance orders went down; but in 2024 the number is higher than ever. Central East shows the largest number, *but all Districts but one show 2 to 4 times the number of compliance orders for this category*, compared to 2023. What is at the root of this significant shift? Multiple factors could be involved including staff turnover, lack of resources or training, etc. This is an area to be followed up by CF with the Ministry.
- The **Other Safety Hazards** category shows a similar pattern of increase as IPAC. This category includes unlocked doors, disfunctional communication systems (call bells), unsafe transfers and poor storage of hazardous substances, etc.
- When we examine the types of compliance orders across districts, Central East is highest by far in most CF categories reflecting the overall high number of compliance orders for this District. But there are some exceptions:
 - Under the Resident Rights category, Central West number is similar to Central East.
 - Under Facility Management, London District has the most compliance orders especially when Maintenance issues are added in (71). And Central West and Hamilton, as well as Central East, are all relatively high in this category.

Recommendations for Follow-Up

What does this review of Inspections Reports tell us?

The following issues are highlighted in this Summary and are recommended for follow up with the Ministry and through other CF advocacy efforts in 2025 to 2026:

1. Annual Proactive Compliance Inspections have been slow to roll out and should be a priority. These should be conducted at all sites, and should be in addition to any inspections addressing complaints or critical incidents.

2. Abuse by staff, Neglect, IPAC and Safety are central to the health and safety of residents. Unfortunately, they are also longstanding areas for improvement. Special strategies and resources need to be implemented by the Ministry and LTC Homes.

3. Variation among districts. How does the Ministry explain unusual patterns of non-compliance? How does the Ministry review their inspection results and how do they follow-up with identified areas of concern? For example, in 2024, the Central East district had a disproportionate number of non-compliances. Was this identified by the Ministry and how did they respond?

About Us

Concerned Friends began in 1980 when a group of concerned Ontarians met to discuss the lack of care in Long-Term Care Homes. In 1982 we were incorporated as a registered charity in Ontario and remain funded solely by supporter donations.

We are a volunteer-run organization governed by a Board of Directors with committees that work to support the Board in delivering on our strategic priorities.

Our mission is to advance the health and well-being and enrich the experiences of those living in long-term care homes across Ontario – over 90% of which are 65 years and older.

We identify important issues in the long-term care home (LTCH) system and bring these issues to the attention of government officials. Through our advocacy work, we engage fellow Ontarians to amplify the needs of LTCH residents and families.



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