

**Regional Meeting (via Zoom)  
Round Table Discussion – November 1, 2023**

**Background, Discussion, Ideas and Suggestions**

**Synopsis of Topics**

❖ **Staffing**

- Slightly less of a crisis than in the spring, but still an issue for most LTC homes.
- Canada-wide problem
- Agency Staff usage is a major concern:
  - Gouges the budget of LTC homes (pop-up agencies charging outrageous rates, but there is little recourse if the LTC home needs staff “on duty”).
  - Impacts teamwork, as LTC staff are working alongside agency staff, who are earning 2x-3x more per hour, BUT the agency staff are unfamiliar with routines, equipment, or individual resident needs.
  - Inconsistency of care
  - There have been reports of unqualified agency staff reporting for “duty”.
  - Media are reporting this issue: Raised at federal level (Health Ministers’ conference in PEI), and NDP tabled issue the day after our *Regional Meeting* in Ontario!
- Retention and recruitment of staff
  - Need bold actions ... try “out of box thinking” with scheduling systems and patterns, workshops for leaders.
  - Heavy workload is still driving early retirement in health care & LTC.
  - Inconsistency in calculating care hours and sharing with Family Councils? (Benefit hours are not to be used in calculating “hands-on personal care”)
  - Bill 124 and lack of living wage still in play – some local contracts settling above 1% wage increases.
  - Staff need paid time for education and training.
  - Recognition for “free” caregiving by families and friends.
  - Use of students for care and potential hiring
  - Issue not just for PSWs and registered nursing – but also for recreational therapists and social workers.
  - Need to find a balance by offering overtime to staff (instead of agency) without causing burnout or increased sick time.
  - Perks – parking, ridesharing

- **Ideas ... What can your Family Council do?**
  - Raise this topic at your FC meetings with your LTC home Administrator.
  - Perhaps, *Agency Staff* should wear different badges ... so they can be easily identified when they are in the LTC home.
  - Full-time and/or part-time staff may be able to “bid” on shifts when there are vacancies in your LTC home (and reduce the use of *Agency Staff*).
  - Media – more articles, LTC has been out of media lately, encourage reporting locally and province-wide.
  - Monitor legislature / question period: Will anything come of recent NDP motion to end use of *Agency Staff* (*see link below*)?
    - *NDP introduce legislation to end private nursing agencies in Ontario hospitals, long-term care.*  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/ndp-ontario-end-private-nursing-agencies-hospitals-long-term-care-1.7015636>
  - Talk to your local MPP.
  - One LTC home found improvement in staff satisfaction by creating a positive environment and focussing on making it a “great place to work”.

❖ **Triple Threat: preparation for fall infections**

- COVID / Flu / RSV are all ticking up this fall.
  - Cost of COVID test kits (\$5/test) and RSV vaccine (>\$200) will impact compliance.
  - Vaccinations have already started for residents.
  - Increasing number of outbreaks, but more consistency in practice. Less fear than in 2021/ 2022 and fewer “total home” outbreaks.
  - Supply is not an issue so far (although funding for PPE stopped in late spring).
  - Protective masking has started at LTC homes – directive issued by LTC Ministry effective November 7, 2023.
  - Finding some staff now reluctant to vaccinate
- **Ideas ... What can your Family Council do?**
    - Communicate on the importance of up-to-date vaccinations for residents, staff, and family members.
    - Town Hall information: Medical Director answering questions was helpful.
    - Some places like *Sobey’s* still offer test kits for free (*check expiration date*)

❖ **Family Council Effectiveness**

- Ongoing challenge to encourage new families to get involved in Family Council at local level (standing issue on regional meetings).
- Shorter length of stay of residents can impact family involvement over time.
- Thankfully some families do stay involved after their loved one has passed away.

- Orientation package or letter needs follow-up for newly admitted resident and family (due to information overload in the first few weeks).
- Education for family appears to not be a big drawing card for attendance.
- Participation in staff recognition does get interest.
- Some reluctance due to fear of being asked to take on a leadership role.
- Meetings are face to face and remote access with offering a variety of meeting times to entice those that are working or unable to meet in evenings needed or are needed in the home to be with resident.
- Some FC still face lack of cooperation / information / support from the LTC home administration.
- Sharing that Family Councils and family members are recognized in the new LTC Act and family as care giving partners is important.
- Demographics have changed – more transient or residents without families.
- Surveys were not helpful.
- Families seem to respond only during crisis situations.
- **Ideas ... What can your Family Council do?**
  - Continue to share ideas that have worked in your home.
  - Don't be afraid to try sometime new.
  - Quarterly meetings helped some councils with attendance.
  - Newsletters and website, use of MailChimp.
  - Organize to visit with residents without families.
  - Social activities and decorating for seasonal events.

❖ **New LTC Minister – again**

- **Stan Cho** – 4<sup>th</sup> minister in 4 years
- Minister Cho has appeared at press conferences to announce new LTC builds – but it needs to be more than a “photo op”.
- The minister needs a briefing (from a family perspective) on the importance of:
  - New build standards (small homes, not more institutional facilities)
  - New models of care (resident centered)
  - Staffing issues for old and new buildings
  - etc.
- **Agreed:** It is important that *Family Council Networks* invite the minister to meet with them.
- **Ideas ... What can FCN-4 do?**
  - Collaborate with Champlain and Northern Family Council Networks to engage minister in meeting January or February.

## Other Issues Tabled:

### 1. Medication

- Concern about delivery of some medications by PSWs – new task added to role.
- Survey and round table discussion held by ministry in spring 2023.
- Some LTC homes have implemented ... and some haven't.
- So far, this does not seem to be a major issue (for Family Councils at the LTC homes represented on this Zoom meeting call).
- Need to continue to monitor for: education, training, mentoring, list of approved drugs for PSWs to deliver (usually over the counter type), etc.

### 2. Inspection Process

- Ombudsman report signalled lack of inspections during COVID was a key problem that led to horrendous care and deaths in LTC.
- Uncertainty about new inspectors:
  - How many hired, training, consistency in evaluation?
  - Process for quality?
  - Inspection criteria?
- Potential topic for our next *FCN-4 Regional Meeting*.