



September 25, 2020

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton , Minister of Long Term Care
Legislative Building
6th Floor, 400 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 1T7
email: merrilee.fullerton@ontario.ca

Sustainable Staffing in Long Term Care

Dear Minister Fullerton:

Our Advocacy team speaks for 86 Long Term Care homes in the Hamilton, Brant, Haldimand, Niagara, Burlington and Simcoe area. Family members of 11,000 residents have endured the visiting restrictions in all homes that supported the infectious control protocols during the destructive pandemic. We are relieved as these limitations are being slowly eased to support mental health and family connection.

Our Advocacy team has heard from many families in our network concerning the ongoing issue of inadequate staffing levels in many homes. The fear has mounted as the emergency funding for pandemic staffing has no indication of continuing. As Prime Minister Trudeau indicated September 24th in his television address - the second wave is now here and many families see that homes are not supported enough to withstand another combat with COVID-19..

We followed the response to the *Long-Term Care Staffing Study* by the Ontario LTC Staffing Study Advisory Group published on July 30, 2020. It identified a lack of staffing in LTC and recommended a minimum daily average of four hours of direct care per resident versus the current 2.7 hours per resident per day. It also recommended PSW and nursing staff wage increases, improved work load for full and part time staff, more quality time spent with residents. . We were also heartened with Mr. Trudeau's promise for national standards of care for Long Term Care. We urge Ontario to adopt and monitor standards immediately. There are ample references and resources in peer reviewed papers to support this move.

We know that staffing challenges have been a problem for the last 20 years in LTC . The *Time to Care Act* has been supported by Family Council Networks across the province. This act has advocated for an average of 4.1 hours of direct hands-on care for the past decade and has been presented 63 time in the legislature, never making it past the committee level. *Now* is the time to mandate this level of staffing to give staff a fighting chance to survive the second wave of the pandemic. RNAO has presented a similar paper outlining the care hours required by each discipline to meet the needs of the residents in the June 10, 2020 submission "[Nursing Home Basic Care Guarantee: RNAO Submission to the Long-Term Care Staffing Study Advisory Group](#)".

We were delighted to see that many of the recommendations in Commissioner Gillese's report "*Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System*" has been implemented. However, we are disappointed with an increasing concern that the sustainable increase to wages and care hours have been left silent. Creating a standard of care of four hours is the cornerstone on which many of the other improvement for care are built.

What is the government's action plan to deal with standardized staffing both in the short term / second wave and to sustain appropriate care in the long term?

Our team is again offering to discuss and share resources to support this action for standardized care hours and living wage levels, which we see as fundamental to fixing the complex issues of Long Term Care.

Yours sincerely

Carol Dueck,
Chair, Advocacy Committee of Family Councils Network Four
carol,dueck@gmail.com. / . 289-696-6994

c.c.
Hon. Doug Ford, Premiere
Christine Elliott, Minister of Health
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer
MPPs LHIN 4 Region
MPP Teresa Armstrong, NDP Health Critic
Samantha Peck, CEO, Family Councils Ontario
Cathy Fooks, Patient Ombudsman
Bonnie Lysyk, Auditor General of Ontario
Paul Dubé, Ontario Ombudsman
Frank Morrocco, Chief Justice, COVID-19 LTC Commission