

March, 2022

Family Council
Network 4
Advocacy
Committee

Newsletter



Committed to improving the lives of Ontario Residents in Long Term Care

Making Headway! One Step at a Time.

By Carol Dueck, Chair of the Family Council Network Four (FCN-4) Advocacy Committee

After just 3 months, 2022 has already had its ups and downs. As Omicron cases rose, so did lockdowns in long term care homes. In response, on February 1st and 2nd, we sent letters to Paul Calandra, Provincial Minister of Long Term Care and Erin Hannah, Associate Deputy Minister for LTC Pandemic Response to request an end to the isolation of our loved ones. FCN-4 is very supportive of the grassroots group being spearheaded in the Toronto area that has contacted the media, emailed and called MPPs to have this policy reversed. This time, they listened. On February 4th, the Ministry announced gradual lifting on the restrictions on visitors and essential care partners – welcome news!

Despite this slow shift, isolation and staffing remain the greatest concerns expressed by care givers and family councils. We have received reports of residents in isolation despite regular negative COVID-19 testing. Isolation is causing irrevocable psychological damage to our loved ones. Staff are reporting depression and anxiety are again rising.

Further, it seems many homes are still unsure about the protocol around whether an isolated resident can leave his/her room to have a bath or shower. This means many residents have had only sponge baths for weeks at a time. There are disparities and inconsistencies on how and when LTC homes implement new directives by the Provincial Ministry or by municipal public health departments.

To correct this, Family Councils need to establish and maintain open communication with the administrators of homes to reduce anxieties and promote clear adaption new protocols. Families also need to raise their voice on incidents where homes are not keeping to new protocols or seem out of step with provincial and municipal guidelines.

Staffing is also a critical, systemic issue. Many homes are understaffed sometimes by as much as 50%. This forces residents to remain in their rooms eating meals alone out of Styrofoam containers with plastic cutlery. Just to operate, too many LTC homes regularly rely on agency staff. Not only does this cost more but it means there is no continuity of care – increasing transmission and reducing meaningful relationships. This needs to change. Bill 124, which limits nursing staff increases to 1% for health care staff, must be repealed immediately. We will ask the Ministry again for a progress report from the Staffing Commission.

The Ministry of LTC also needs to work with regulating bodies to facilitate the accreditation of internationally trained nurses and health care providers. FCN-4 along with other family networks has carried the torch for years on the need for four hours of care per resident per day. In 2021, the Time to Care Act was accepted by all parties in the legislature, but its implementation plan will not be realized until the 2024-2025 budget. Substandard care will continue for three years, and administrators have their budget hands tied, unable to recruit those needed to meet all care needs. We need to see changes in the Act now to alleviate this staffing crisis.

**Just like how badly
you need your parents
in childhood**



**your parents need you
when they grow old**

Over the coming months, the FCN4- Advocacy group will fight for improved care in our LTC homes by lobbying the government for better policies to minimize the loneliness and mental stress our loved ones are experiencing through isolation. We will continue the battle to have the minimum wage ceiling raised as well as adding more staff now to reduce the critical shortages.

You can help! Call, write or email your local MPP member, Premier Doug Ford, Paul Calandra Minister of LTC and Erin Hannah Associate Deputy Minister of LTC Pandemic Response and give them a personal account of the situation with your loved one and what needs to change. Words matter. And real stories have an impact. This is bubbling up to become a provincial election issue in June.

2022 Ontario General Election- Have Your Say!

The next Ontario general election will be held on or before June 2, 2022 to elect Members of Provincial Parliament to serve in the 43rd Parliament of Ontario. In preparation for this election here are some questions related to improving long term care you could ask the candidates seeking election in your area.

1. Perpetual staffing shortages in LTC has been a major issue for many years and is at a crisis level across the province. What specific actions would your party take to remedy the problem now, not 3 years from now?
2. Many advocates support the adaptation of National Standards for Long-Term Care. However, health care and long term care are provincially managed. Will you commit to working towards federally-regulated and enforceable National Standards for Long-Term Care?
3. The Time to Care Act has been needed for two decades and was finally passed into legislation in 2021. Research indicates that residents in LTC need at least 4.1 hours of care each day; most homes are barely funded to achieve 3 hours. The present government is waiting until the 2024-25 budget year to provide more PSW and nursing staff. This is not acceptable. Will your party remedy this short fall and commit to enact the legislation in 2022?
4. Long term care experts recommend shifting from large institutional settings to smaller emotion-focussed care communities such as The Butterfly Model which greatly increases the level of care and comfort residents receive. What is your position on building more homes along this model and converting existing homes to this model?
5. What is your position on funding for-profit versus not-for-profit Long Term Care homes?
6. Ontario is desperately short of nursing staff on all levels. How do you propose to attract people to this profession and maintain them? In the meantime, how do you intend to keep the nursing staff we have from leaving the profession? Will you repeal Bill 121 that restricts nurse wage increases to 1%?

Important! Mark Your Calendars.

Advance notice for the next Family Council Network Four Regional Meeting:

FCN-4 Zoom Meeting

Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Time: 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Visit our website for details and how to attend the session.

<https://www.network4longtermcareadvocacy.com/>

Significant Changes in Staffing Needed Now in Long Term Care Homes!

I worry about the care that my husband receives in one of Niagara's LTC homes. Daily I find him sitting alone in his wheelchair watching television which he cannot see because he is blind. The staff are caring but there are just not enough of them. Too often staff are forced to focus on more demanding patients and my husband is left alone. They are clearly overworked and under paid for the work they do to support our loved ones - our vulnerable population. The COVID pandemic may be receding, but the staffing crisis is not.

Projections indicate that between 2022 and 2031 there will be a larger demand for LTC facilities as the last cohort of baby-boomers turns 65. It is predicted that 35% of 65 year-old healthy men and 46% of 65 year-old healthy women will reach the age of 90. These numbers indicate that changes must be acknowledged and mitigated in terms of staffing in LTC homes. While a nurse must be available at all times, most of the hands-on work is done by Personal Support Workers (PSWs). Currently, there are too few people choosing to become PSWs largely because they are poorly paid for their heavy workloads, paid on an hourly basis with few benefits, vacation or sick leave. Seniors in LTC homes need to be helped with some or all of the following physical activities: eating, getting in and out of bed, dressing, grooming, toileting, and showering. Additionally, they need to be simulated and entertained. These one-on-one services are generally provided by PSWs.

Recently, the Ontario Government guaranteed that each patient would receive a minimum of 4 hours of daily interaction by March 2025 which is still a future dream. If we are to have the appropriate care for our burgeoning aging and needy seniors, we need to address vital changes related to the role of the PSW worker. Salaries need to be on a grid which reflects, years of experience and job expectations. Benefits, vacation and sick days must be supported. When the working conditions improve, care in our LTCs will improve. Adequate, personal and dignified care is part of a benevolent society where it is safe to grow old

National Long-Term Care Standards

The Standards Council of Canada (SCC), Health Standards Organization (HSO) and Canadian Standards Association (CSA Group) are working collaboratively on developing two new national standards for LTC that will be shaped by the needs and voices of Canada's LTC home residents, workforce, local communities, as well as broader members of the public. The standards will address the delivery of safe, reliable and high-quality LTC services as well as the operation and infection prevention and control practices in LTC homes.

For more information and to submit feedback, see:

<https://healthstandards.org/public-reviews/long-term-care-services/>.

Ontario Launches LTC Homefinder

All families have experienced, with surprise and dismay, the daunting maze to get access to a long term bed. This new website provides an easier, more convenient way for prospective residents and their families to search and compare long term care homes. Go to our website and click on the link to get all the details. This attempt to streamline the process is welcome and will be actively followed for actual improvements to access care.

FCN-4 Advocacy Committee Website

<https://www.network4longtermcareadvocacy.com/>

Books For Sale

We have access to several books written by local writers that deal with issues related to long term care, aging and seniors issues; caregiver topics; and healthy living. Check our website for details on the following:

A Slice of Life (\$15); ***Voices of the City*** (\$12); ***Older Caregivers*** (\$12); ***Staying Healthy*** (\$10). Proceeds from the sale of these books are used to support the work of the FCN4 Advocacy Committee. To purchase any of these books, e-mail: Tom Carrothers at carphaltonchapter@gmail.com.

Paul Calandra, Minister of Long Term Care

(From Ontario PC Website)

Paul Calandra is the Member of Provincial Parliament for Markham-Stouffville. Before being elected to the Ontario Legislature in 2018, Paul was a Federal Member of Parliament, elected in 2008 and re-elected in 2011. Before entering public service, Paul was a small business owner and insurance broker. During his tenure as MP, Paul served as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Queen's Privy Council. Paul first got involved in provincial politics to bring change to Queen's Park. He ran on a platform to lower hydro bills, make life more affordable, and unleash the economic engine of Ontario. Small businesses are the backbone of Markham-Stouffville and Paul believes in a government that empowers our small business owners to build better lives for themselves and their families.



Paul lives in Stouffville with his wife Melanie and two daughters Natalie and Olivia.



FCN-4 Advocacy Committee Website

<https://www.network4longtermcareadvocacy.com/>

Have you been on our website lately? If not you are missing out on lots of new postings related to what is happening in LTC. On the **Home** page read the latest on visiting restrictions in LTC homes; the development of a *National Long-Term Care Services Strategy* and how you can have your say; the new *Green House Model for LTC* and how it will improve the quality of life for residents. And, click on the **New Articles** tab to keep up-to-date with the latest news items and issues related to LTC.

Also, keep up with the latest by following us on our Facebook Page: [Family Council Network 4](#)

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