



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

## What's Next After the Elections?

By Carol Dueck, Chair FCN4 Advocacy Committee

Now that the whirlwind election season is over, it's time to look ahead and consider what's next on the agenda for all sectors of health care and particularly for family councils in Long Term Care (LTC). As new governments "norm and storm" to tackle the myriad of critical issues on their agendas, what should our FCN4's focus be for the coming year? Here are advocacy items to consider as our regional network considers its agenda:

### Priorities of next Federal Government

- National Standards: Advocating for consistent and high-quality care standards across all regions to ensure every individual receives the best possible care.
- Transfer Payments: Understanding how federal funding is allocated to provinces and ensuring that LTC facilities receive adequate financial support.

### Collaboration Between Federal and Provincial Levels

- Analyze the alignment of priorities in long term care of the new governments.
- Coordinating advocacy efforts to MPs, MPPs, Ministers and working committees to amplify the voice of family councils and ensure that the needs of LTC residents are met.
- Transition Process: Monitoring how new policies are introduced and put into practice ensuring that changes benefit LTC residents.
- Strengthening the collaboration with other Family Council Networks in LTC to advocate effectively to policy and funding authorities.

### The Changing Political Landscape and Its Effects

- Equity and Sustainability: Advocating for public health policies that promote fair and sustainable health care practices for all.
- Understanding implications of tariffs for Ontario and local purchasing challenges on homes.
- Identifying shared objectives between different government levels and how these can be leveraged to improve LTC.

Staying informed, engaged and proactive will be key to making the most of our energy and time. Urgent attention is needed on:

- Staffing recruitment and retention
- Reliance on for-profit staffing agencies
- A living wage for staff
- Matching the funding to hours of care to meet resident's needs
- Assessing the turnover of management positions
- The development of a supportive, learning inspection process with consistently applied penalties
- Adaption of a person-centered care model with funding for education
- Creation of "home-like" environment as new sites and spaces are built or redeveloped account
- Transparent account of progress toward 30,000 new resident spaces for LTCs
- Family supported as "Care Partners".

What is missing from the list from your family council's view? Where do we start? Do we have the right prioritization? We invite local family councils to share your priorities, concerns and suggested actions by sending an e-mail to [AdvocacyFCN4@protonmail.com](mailto:AdvocacyFCN4@protonmail.com). We want to hear and amplify YOUR Voice.

# Advocating for Enhanced Quality of Life in Long-Term Care Homes

By Janet Volkes

## Family Council Network 4's Vision for Resident-Centered Care

Ensuring the dignity, individuality and comfort of residents living in long-term care homes is a mission that resonates deeply with Family Council Network 4. We propose thoughtful and practical initiatives focused on personalization and communication to ensure resident's quality of life. We encourage Family Councils to help implement them in their homes. These changes aim to foster meaningful connections between residents, caregivers and families while enhancing the overall care experience.

### *"Getting to Know Me" Boards: A Window Into Lives and Legacies*

Imagine walking through the halls of a long-term care home and being greeted by the story of each resident displayed with care and pride outside their room. This initiative - a "Getting to Know Me" board - would serve as a tribute to the unique lives and legacies of the individuals residing there. The boards would feature:

- Where the resident lived, their occupation, and milestones in their life.
- Information about their loved ones and any family photos to celebrate their relationships.
- Things that have brought joy to their life, be it gardening, music, or a passion for books.

By sharing these snippets of life we create opportunities for caregivers, visitors and staff to engage with residents on a personal level and foster environments of respect and connection.

It also serves as a reminder that each individual

is more than a medical condition - they are a person with a rich history worth celebrating. By working with residents and families on what details they want to share, "getting to know me boards" can be done in a way that respects a person's privacy while celebrating them as individuals.

## Getting to know me



*hello!*

I'm **Cynthia**

You can also call me **Ceecee**

My birthday is **June 1st**

I am from **Vancouver**

I speak **English and Mandarin**

People who are important to me:

- **Jennifer (daughter)**
- **David (son)**
- **Susan (friend)**

MY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MY HOBBIES & INTERESTS

### *Personal Boards for Care Inside Each Room*

Building on the theme of personalized care, another idea is a dedicated board inside each resident's room to assist caregivers in providing tailored and compassionate support. This board could include:

- The preferred name of a resident, an essential step in affirming their identity.
- Names of regular visitors to encourage chatter about loved ones.
- Details about dietary likes, dislikes, and allergies to improve meal satisfaction and safety.

This tool assists caregivers to offer more individualized support and helps residents to feel seen, heard and valued. This simple initiative promotes smoother communication and reduces misunderstandings in daily interactions, especially with rotating or temporary staff.

### *Restaurant-style Dining Experience*

To break up the regular routine and boost well-being, we suggest a monthly restaurant-style dining experience. This initiative, spearheaded by the Family Council in collaboration with dietary staff, would invite residents to dress up for the occasion and enjoy a fine dining experience within the care home. Waiters, (staff or volunteers), dressed professionally, would offer table service creating an atmosphere of elegance and indulgence. Adding rented or borrowed linens, theme menus or unique options, fresh flowers and thoughtful décor would elevate the event bringing a sense of celebration and occasion. Such an experience fosters joy, builds anticipation and allows residents to relish moments of dignity and festivity.

## Tangible Benefits of These Initiatives

Ideas like these, offering personalized experiences can have significant benefits that ripple across various aspects of long-term care homes:

- Residents feel more connected to those around them through shared knowledge and understanding.
  - Staff gain quick access to vital information about residents making their care more precise, personalized, and empathetic.
  - Families find comfort in knowing their loved ones' personalities and histories are being honored, which builds trust in the care system.
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## Hot, Hotter, Hottest Topics: Quality and Accountability

By Carol Dueck, Chair FCN4 Advocacy

As we listen to the concerns of families of residents and scan the media, the FCN4 Advocacy Team has a growing list of Long Term Care (LTC) issues upon which to focus. Workload, burnout, and turnover of staff and administrators are very much in the spotlight of the ongoing LTC staffing crisis. In both the recent provincial and federal 2025 elections, the discussion of any health care issues took a back seat to questions of a spiraling economy and affordability. The political parties seemed to offer their perspectives for a hurting system but little on tangible actions and solutions.

The Government of Ontario put into place the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, which included updates to accountability and compliance measures. Notable results included hiring and training 190 more inspectors and increased fines for repeat violations. However, here comes the “but.” We have long called for a refined approach to inspections, where the focus is on lessons, learning and change, not simply penalties.

Sharing best practices from other homes and reviewing care standards can ease anxiety about both scheduled and surprise inspections. Receiving reports promptly and properly documenting compliance with reported issues would be a welcome improvement. Early in the pandemic, inspections were largely halted to cut bureaucracy. However, a system review and additional funding helped restore the focus on maintaining quality and compliance. In October 2024, the Ministry offered a webinar to share the proposed changes to the inspection process and the training for the enlarged inspection staff. We are watching for evidence of a fair and supportive quality assessment process.

The inspection process and penalties must be carefully balanced. If inspectors focus only on enforcement, they risk causing harm and overlooking underlying issues. Homes are fined for non-compliance, however, if the base budget is lacking where do they get the funds to fix the issues in the report? Remember, the Ministry of Long Term Care determines the resource allocation. Are we simply moving money around to patch the problem instead of spending it on sustainable systemic renovation?

Accountability and quality improvement should address systemic performance issues while incorporating proven best practices and lessons learned. Families are an integral part of the care partnership and can provide insights to the overall care at a home. We proposed to the Provincial Minister of LTC to create a “Quality Circle” where all participants, including families, have input to identify issues, propose and review solutions

Questions to ask at local council meetings: Are families at your home included in the interview process during the inspection process? Does your family council receive reports of inspections and critical incidents? FCN4 is interested in your feedback on concerns and suggestions about the entire inspection process. Drop us a line at <https://www.network4longtermcareadvocacy.com>.

### **Wanted! *One person to serve on the FCN-4 Advocacy Committee!***

Do you care about Long Term Care? Are you willing to devote a small amount of time to have your voice heard? If so, contact Carol Dueck, Chair of FCN-4 Advocacy Committee to learn more!

[AdvocacyFCN4@ProtonMail.com](mailto:AdvocacyFCN4@ProtonMail.com)

# Building Strong Family Councils: Strategies for Growth and Engagement

By Janet Volkes

Following our November 2024 newsletter on attracting and retaining Family Council members, we're excited to share a letter from an Ottawa Family Council. This message offers another way to inspire and connect with potential members, complementing the strategies we previously shared.

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*Hello to all of you, family/friends/POAs to Residents at (your place).*

*As some of you might already be aware, we have a Family Council here at (your place). The Family Council is an autonomous family-led group dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of our residents/our family members. The Family Council serves as a valuable platform for family members to express concerns, provide feedback, and contribute to ideas that help improve the care and well-being of our loved ones.*

*We believe that active family involvement is an essential part of creating a supportive and positive environment for both our residents and the staff.*

*We'd like to ask you to join us in any way you can. As part of the Family Council, you will have the opportunity to collaborate with other family members, share your perspectives, and work alongside our team to ensure the best possible care.*

*Here are some examples of things we have accomplished as a Family Council since January 2024:*

- We have communicated and expressed our concerns to (your place) to help improve the safety of our loved ones. Hence, there is now a better video system in and around the facility, the general swipe card has been removed in the entrance, and there is enhanced front lobby presence.*
- (your place) has allowed us to add a consent form for us to be able to communicate with new families in the Resident folder. As well, we created a new website and a new poster to promote the council which is posted all over (your place).*
- We pushed for better outdoor furniture.*
- We have communicated and expressed our concerns about different issues (such as pest control, maintenance and care) and worked with (your place) to improve them.*
- Furthermore, we've improved the communication with the Executives and all who work at (your place).*

*If you are interested in becoming a member of the Family Council or learning more about its role, we would be happy to discuss how you can be involved or you can contact us at: (your place email). There is no work necessary to be part of the council unless you want to. All we need are your ideas and input to continue helping to improve the care for our family members. Your ideas and participation is crucial in making a difference in the lives of our residents. Please join us online for our monthly meetings that usually take place on the 2nd Weds. of the month at 7:00PM.*

*We look forward to working together as a group to make (your place) a better and better place.*

*Sincerely,*

*The Family Council representing all of the Houses!*

## Books For Sale

We have access to several books written by local writers dealing 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)

***City Voices Connecting Through Creative Expression*** (\$15)

Proceeds from the sale of these books are used to support the work of the FCN-4 Advocacy Committee. To purchase any of these books, e-mail: Tom Carrothers at [carphaltonchapter@gmail.com](mailto:carphaltonchapter@gmail.com).

# Granite Ridge Family Council Consent Form

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Helen Keller

**Who is the Granite Ridge Family Council?** Granite Ridge Care Community Family Council (GRFC) is an organized volunteer group of family and friends of residents who meet on a regular basis.

**Our Mission Statement:** The Granite Ridge Family Council's mission is to promote an atmosphere of compassionate care and support among staff, friends and family.

**Our Goals:** To welcome and support residents, families and friends of Granite Ridge;  
To provide a means for families and friends to share ideas and propose solutions;  
To provide advice to staff and management on the concerns of family and friends;  
To facilitate communication between residents, staff, management, friends & family  
To sponsor activities and educational events in support of residents & their families/friends  
To advocate for the residents, families and long term care system as a whole;  
To liaise with Residents Council; and  
To network with other family councils to share information and ideas.

<p><b>YES, I consent to Granite Ridge sharing my contact information with the Granite Ridge Family Council.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> By agreeing to this, a Family Council team member will connect directly with the family of each new resident.</p>	<p><b>NO, I do not consent to Granite Ridge sharing my contact information with the Granite Ridge Family Council.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> By not agreeing to this, you will <b>not</b> be contacted by a Family Council team member.</p>
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Family member's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*For more information or if you have any questions, please email: [grfamilycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:grfamilycouncil@gmail.com)*

*Visit the Granite Ridge Family Council website at:*

<https://sites.google.com/view/graniteridgefamilycouncil>

*(Date revised: 2025-01-19)*

## **Congratulations to Natalie Kusendova-Bashta, Minister of Long Term Care**

Congratulations to Natalie Kusendova-Bashta and your team on your successful re-election as Member of Provincial Parliament in Ontario and your re-appointment as Minister of Long Term Care. The Family Council Network 4 (Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant, Norfolk, Burlington) looks forward to your continuing support and the implementation of the initiatives to improve the quality of life for Ontario Seniors that were outlined in the forty-third legislative session.

Your healthcare background and understanding of the diverse needs of residents who call long-term care “home” was evident during our meetings last year. We appreciate your visits to a number of homes in various corners of the province to hear and see the issues first hand.

There are still transitions in practice, staffing challenges, and standards of care that need to be addressed. Our team is here to listen, advise and assist you as we continue our advocacy role. We look forward to a follow-up meeting before the summer is into everyone’s schedule.

Carol Dueck,

On behalf of the Advocacy Team of Family Council Network 4

<https://www.network4longtermcareadvocacy.com>

### **Next Family Council Network 4 Regional Meeting!!!**

**Date: May 20, 2025    Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon    This is a ZOOM Meeting**

#### **Topic:**

**“A Day in the Life of a PSW”**

#### **Guest Seaker:**

**Miranda Romanowicz**

**(CEO of Ontario PSW Association and Canadian Support Workers Association)**

#### **To Register:**

Send an e-mail to Carol Dueck, Chair of our FCN-4 Advocacy Committee,  
at [AdvocacyFCN4@protonmail.com](mailto:AdvocacyFCN4@protonmail.com)

Include: Your Name, the name of your Long-Term Care Home,  
and your e-mail address and phone number.

### **FCN-4 Advocacy Committee Website**

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

Have you seen the new postings?. Read the latest breaking information on LTC issues and progress made towards a Universal Health Care. Find **New Articles** to keep up-to-date with the latest news items and issues related to LTC including videos from **Concerned Friends** on important issues. You can also keep up with the latest by following us on our Facebook Page: [Family Council Network 4](#)

**Newsletter Committee :** Editor: Carly Volkes

Design: Peter Gnish

Proofing: Members of FCN-4 Committee

**Contact:** Carol Dueck, Chair FCN-4 Advocacy Committee at [AdvocacyFCN4@ProtonMail.com](mailto:AdvocacyFCN4@ProtonMail.com)