

September 20, 2019

Ontario Long Term Care Association statement on extension of the Structural Compliance Premium and High Wage Transition Fund

Earlier this year, the Ontario government announced it was planning to discontinue two important sources of funding for long-term care homes, the Structural Compliance Premium and the High Wage Transition Fund.

Today, the Minister of Long-Term Care, [Dr. Merrilee Fullerton](#), [announced that these funds will continue for a while longer](#) while the government looks at the gaps in long-term care funding and staffing, and works with its long-term care partners to develop new programs to help improve long-term care.

Minister Fullerton's announcement also included a commitment to developing a long-term care staffing strategy in partnership with the long-term care sector, and to develop a minor capital fund for long-term care homes so that they can pay for capital maintenance and repairs.

"Ensuring that long-term care homes have the funding and staffing they need is key to providing high-quality care and to expanding the number of long-term care beds in the province," said Donna Duncan, CEO of the Ontario Long Term Care Association.

"We are at a critical stage in the evolution of long-term care in Ontario and the government is to be commended for listening to concerns, recognizing the system challenges, and committing to work with the long-term care sector to develop solutions."

The importance of a staffing strategy

There is a recognized staffing shortage of personal support workers across the health care system, and in some areas, registered nurses as well. This is having a significant impact on the ability of long-term care homes to recruit and retain staff.

In a 2018 survey of Ontario long-term care homes, 80% of respondents said they had difficulty filling shifts. Homes are working

staff into overtime, working without a full complement of staff, and sometimes unable to fill the required shifts to provide care that residents need.

Staff are also caring for a more complex population than five years ago. People are staying home for longer, and by the time they are admitted to long-term care, their physical and cognitive decline is at a more advanced stage. Homes need more staff in order to provide them with a higher level of care.

The situation has reached a crisis point. A staffing strategy is needed both for the immediate crisis and for the future. The government has committed to an additional 15,000 long-term care beds within five years, and an estimated 20% more care staff (8,500 full time equivalent positions) will be needed to provide care to these additional residents.

A new minor capital fund for older homes

The Ontario government has also committed to upgrading 15,000 beds in older buildings that don't meet current design standards. Today's announcement included a commitment to develop a minor capital fund for long-term care homes, which will help to pay for capital maintenance and repairs while these homes are waiting to renovate or rebuild.

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