

July 23, 2020

Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

On behalf of the organizations listed below, we are writing to you to consider our requests for the Long-Term Care (LTC) Commission. The crisis brought on by COVID-19 has exacerbated long-standing, systemic issues in LTC. Already under-staffed and under-funded homes with outdated infrastructure were challenged with outbreaks, infection control management, and inadequate resident care.

The impacts of COVID-19 have had particularly detrimental effects on residents, families, and staff well-being. Residents were left alone with little interaction from overworked and limited staff or other residents, while families worried from afar. The limits to social interactions have deteriorated physical and mental health, and cognitive function. In some cases, homes have even had to resort to inappropriately using physical and medication restraints to manage behaviours brought on by unmet needs. Residents living with dementia are three times as likely to be physically restrained on a daily basis, but twice as likely to be administered antipsychotics without a diagnosis of psychosis.

Given the urgency of the situation in LTC, we have a duty to act swiftly and amend the conditions that have negatively impacted our communities. We request that:

- The commission's membership and engagement needs to include experts (clinical and non-clinical), those living in LTC, families, and representatives from a variety of homes to best understand the systemic issues highlighted by COVID-19.
- Financial support be provided for older adults, families, and nonprofit organizations involved in the commission, given that previous participation in investigations and the effects of the pandemic have depleted resources.

The full magnitude of consequences and outcomes of the pandemic are still unknown and will require further exploration, support, and resources. The participation of key stakeholders is vital to ensuring that best practices are implemented to protect the wellbeing of older adults in Ontario.

Warm regards,

Cathy Barrick, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Ontario
Laura Tamblyn Watts, CEO, CanAge
Marta Hajek, Executive Director, Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario
Samantha Peck, Executive Director, Family Councils Ontario
Margaret Gillis, President International Longevity Centre (ILC) Canada and Dr. Kiran Rabheru, Board Chair, ILC Canada

Raza Mirza, Executive Director, NICE Network
Dee Lender, Executive Director, Ontario Association of Residents' Councils
Fred Mather, President, Ontario Long Term Care Clinicians

