



Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario

Protecting the Pensions and Enhancing the Quality of Life for all OMERS Pensioners

Hon. Deb Matthews
Minister of Health and Long-term Care
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor
80 Grosvenor St
Toronto ON
M7A2C4

February 23, 2013

SUBJECT: Support for Ontario Seniors' Care Strategy

Dear Minister:

On behalf of the 15,000 members of the Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario (MROO), working on behalf of all 120,000 OMERS pensioners, I would like to congratulate you on your return to the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, and on your many accomplishments in that portfolio.

We are particularly pleased that you will have an opportunity to take Ontario down the path that Dr. Sinha has charted for seniors' care in Ontario.

It was a brilliant stroke to recruit Dr. Sinha, an internationally renowned seniors' care physician, to encourage him to consult widely, and to empower him to think broadly about the transformation of Ontario's seniors' care system. As we have previously written you, MROO believes that home care, which empowers seniors to live independently in their own homes as long as possible and with dignity, is the corner of Ontario's health care edifice still very much under construction. Too many of our relatives, neighbours and former colleagues fall through the cracks.

In our submission to Dr. Sinha, we noted that, from the perspective of individual seniors, the most urgent need is help to navigate the system. It is bewildering in itself, even more so since old age creeps up so unexpectedly, and yet more critical for seniors whose families live far away and/or whose partners are themselves infirm or

bewildered. Every senior in Ontario - once critical junctures have been reached - needs a "system navigator".

It is clear that Dr. Sinha has listened carefully to a wide range of input, including ours, recognized the significant weaknesses of the current system, and made a comprehensive set of thoughtful recommendations for change. Perhaps acknowledging the Ontario Government's budget deficit, his recommendations do not call for dramatic new funding. His approach seems to be: let's transform the system we have, so that it delivers good client-centred service, well-coordinated across the system, and with maximum efficiency, before throwing new billions into the system.

We note nonetheless that your Ministry has acted quickly to pledge greater funding for home care services and better training for home care providers, among other quick responses to Dr. Sinha's recommendations. MROO is very encouraged that you, Minister Matthews, have remained to see this transformation through.

Our board will continue to campaign for better-coordinated and more accessible home care for seniors and - being non-partisan - to communicate accurate information to our members about what is or is not being done on that front.

We are eager to lend you our support for substantial action however we can.

Sincerely,

William Harford,
President,
Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario

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Our Purpose

The Municipal Retirees Organization of Ontario (MROO) was created as a not-for-profit corporation in 1977. All recipients of an Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) pension are eligible to join. MROO has 15,000 members, all across Ontario. We are an independent, non-partisan organization formed to voice the interests of all OMERS retirees to OMERS and to governments at all levels, to represent our membership in legislative matters that affect retirees, and to provide such other services as will improve the lot of our members.

Our Membership

Our members include retirees from union, non-union, and management backgrounds in municipalities, police forces, fire departments, libraries, hydro commissions, school boards, health units, and other employers in the OMERS pension plan. Our Board consists of nine directors, one from each of nine zones across the province. Our past and present Boards have contained a retired chief building official, municipal budget chief, municipal clerk-treasurer, school board superintendent of business, administrative assistant, school secretary, nurse, hydro commission comptroller, police superintendent, police chief, city treasurer, and municipal engineer, among others.

MROO is the largest OMERS retiree organization, and the only one with membership open to retirees from all walks of local government life.

Our Programs and Priorities

In addition, we have for 29 years sponsored health, dental, life, home and auto insurance plans designed by and for OMERS retirees. We offer scholarships to members' grandchildren as they enter second year of university or community college. We communicate regularly to all our members via printed newsletters three times yearly, and welcome over 1200 members to annual meetings in each zone.

MROO has a credible record of responsible advocacy and service to our members, and has direct communication with more than 15,000 pensioners across Ontario.