



**MROO**

**Municipal Retirees**  
ORGANIZATION ONTARIO

Protecting the pensions and enhancing the  
quality of life for all OMERS retirees

January 18, 2021

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton  
Minister of Long-Term Care  
Government of Ontario  
400 University Avenue, 6th Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 1N3

**Via Email**

Dear Dr. Fullerton,

**Re: Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission**

On September 15, 2020, your office responded to our letter of July 9, 2020 concerning the establishment of the Long-Term Care Commission. At this time, I am writing to advise you that the Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario (MROO) firmly supports the interim recommendations contained in the LTC Commission's first and second letters addressed to you and dated October 23, 2020 and December 4, 2020 respectively.

In the first letter of Interim Recommendations on October 23, 2020, we wish to specifically highlight and express support for the following:

- **Comprehensive Human Resource Strategy** – “The ministry’s Long-Term Care Staffing Study, released in July 2020, identifies the best path forward. Further “study” of the Study is not necessary. What is required is the Study’s timely implementation.”
- **Health System Integration and Support of LTC Homes** – “There is no need to wait until an outbreak has occurred before a local hospital assists or is compelled to assist a LTC home. Clearly defined supports and surge capacity for each LTC home must be in place and quickly mobilized when an emergency situation arises.”
- **Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)** – “... conduct timely, focused inspections to ensure homes are properly implementing proactive IPAC measures, and are responding effectively to their assessment results.” MROO respectfully urges that “timely” inspections should include regularly scheduled inspections in addition to complaint driven inspections.

Regarding the second letter of Interim Recommendations on December 4, 2020, we wish to specifically highlight and express support for the following:

- **Leadership and Accountability in LTC Homes** – requirement for “... a clear lead for the quality of care amongst the leadership team of the Executive Director, Director of Nursing and Personal Care and Medical Director in each LTC home.”

- **Performance Reporting** – “Include performance metrics such as resident and family satisfaction, staff engagement, staffing levels, and supply of PPE in the LTC home performance reports. Publicly post the home performance reports ... so that the public can search and access a comprehensive picture of each home’s performance.”
- **Inspection and Enforcement** – “Reintroduce annual Resident Quality Inspections for all LTC homes and ... enforcement by prioritizing timely responses to non-compliance with IPAC and Plan of Care orders.”

On January 4, 2021, the LTC Commission posted its exchange of correspondence with you in December 2020 “in regards to the timing for the conclusion of the Commission’s investigation”. We understand and appreciate your “request that the Commissioners remain focused on the reporting deadline of April 30, 2021”, consistent with the Commission’s original mandate. However, at this time, it seems prudent to point out that it seems highly likely that the impacts of this second wave of COVID-19 on LTC homes will be felt long after April 30<sup>th</sup>. Also, it has been reported that the Commission has been having difficulty getting all of the data and information it requires from ministries in a timely manner. MROO is a strong advocate for **evidence-based decision-making and management by fact** at all levels of government. Accordingly, we would kindly ask you to reconsider your position and **allow the LTC Commission to continue its work throughout the duration of the pandemic**, including issuing letters containing Interim Recommendations as and when determined appropriate by the Commission.

MROO presently has a dedicated Advocacy Committee for Housing Support for Ontario Seniors comprised of MROO members that have relevant experience and expertise. The Committee continues to make long-term care its principal focus, including following the work and reviewing the reports of the LTC Commission. Some committee members have worked in the long-term care sector and have witnessed firsthand the systemic and institutionalized attitudes and practices which have become more evident during both stages of the current pandemic. These MROO members remain dedicated to their current task and would willingly step up to serve in any capacity that may be beneficial to your Ministry.

At their December 2020 board meetings (virtual), the MROO Board of Directors supported a Committee recommendation to request the Ministry of Long-Term Care to step up efforts to safeguard our most vulnerable citizens in LTC homes by taking action on the following three critical issues as a minimum immediate starting point:

1. **Labour Force Issues** - This needs to go further than the four hours of care commitment to be implemented over the next four years. The funding formula should include funding for additional professionals such as RPNs and RNs. It should also address and facilitate hiring more full-time staff, particularly PSWs, instead of the current over reliance and use of part time staffing, in order to provide consistent,

quality resident care. The educational program for LTC workers must include the importance of resident focused care based on individual needs and care planning.

2. **Health, Safety and Wellness** - Continue with the implementation of the internal rapid testing protocols and strategies for all types of out-breaks, in addition to COVID 19, in all LTC homes. There should be immediate implementation of increased inspections to ensure compliance. The focus must be on accountable resident care. All LTC homes should complete accreditation by a recognized organization. The Ministry should also focus funding and inspections on the mental well-being as well as the physical needs of residents in a safe environment.
3. **New Construction and Retrofitting Dated Homes** - This area has to begin a more substantial roll out as soon as possible to ensure new construction and renovations are based on a prescribed standard focusing on resident needs and best care protocols and practices, including elimination of all existing four-person units in LTC homes.

As the pandemic continues to devastate our LTC residents and health care workers in our communities across Ontario, MROO believes it is paramount that the Government of Ontario takes immediate action to safeguard our most vulnerable people.

Thank you very much for considering our input and suggestions for providing safe and secure environments for residents and staff in LTC homes.

Sincerely,



Keith Robicheau  
President, MROO

- c Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health  
Hon. Justice Frank N. Marrocco, Lead Commissioner, LTC Commission  
Ms. Angela Coke, Commissioner, LTC Commission  
Dr. Jack Kitts, Commissioner, LTC Commission  
Ms. Jane Sinclair, Board Chair, AdvantAge Ontario  
Ms. Lisa Levin, CEO, AdvantAge Ontario  
Mr. Dan Kaniuk, Board Chair, Ontario Long-Term Care Association  
Ms. Donna Duncan, CEO, Ontario Long-Term Care Association  
Members, MROO Board of Directors  
Ms. Lucie Lombardo, Chair, MROO HSOS Advocacy Committee  
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