

AGING IN PLACE

FROM MROO'S HOUSING SUPPORT FOR ONTARIO SENIORS COMMITTEE

"It's Not the Years in Your Life That Count. It's the Life in Your Years." – Abraham Lincoln

Do you ever sit back in your chair and think, "I really hope I can live out my days in my home", or, "wow, I hope the kids don't end up putting me in a Nursing Home (Long Term Care facility)!".

We all recognize the absolute need for Long Term Care (LTC) facilities - that will not change. However, research shows that 90% of Canadians prefer to age at home.(1) Not all of us look to stay in our homes as we age, but many of us cannot afford the monthly cost of life in a Retirement Home nor have loved ones that we know we can rely on to take care of us.

More and more seniors are researching how they can live at home independently, or live independently within a housing assisted setting, such as Abbeyfield Canada (<https://abbeyfield.ca/about/>) or the Oasis Program, Kingston (2)

In September 2020, MROO established a *Housing Support for Ontario Seniors* (HSOS) Committee, whose purpose

is to advocate for housing support options for Ontario seniors, including retirement living, home care, and LTC in Ontario. Learn more about the committee on our web site at <https://www.mroo.org/en/whats-happening/advocacy.aspx>

One of the committee's upcoming initiatives will be to advocate for more home support to enable seniors to age in their, or a caregiver's, home, and to build on the information we provide for home support on our web site.

The government of Ontario knows that seniors 65 and over are projected to double by 2046, (February 10, 2022, Premier Doug Ford, advised the C.A.R.P Annual Meeting), and that wait times for LTC outweigh the beds available.

In 2020 Ontario's budget for LTC was \$5.76 billion. It costs \$201.65 per resident, per day (\$73,587 per year). (3)

In the months to come, the HSOS will continue to communicate with provincial and federal bodies to advocate for independent living for seniors to 'age in place'. We recognize that the province funds Home and Community Care Services (formerly LHINs, formerly CCACs) <http://healthcareathome.ca/>. However, we believe it is time for our governments to consider programs that will provide funding to our aging population and their caregivers to enable them to age with dignity in their own homes. Perhaps we can learn from the many European countries (UK, Germany, Netherlands) that have well established, successful, cash-provided home care programs that do exactly that.

- (1) *Standards Council of Canada (SCC), LTC Initiative, Jan 2022*
- (2) *Reader's Digest Canada, Healthy Living*
- (3) *2020 Ontario Budget, LTCH Level-of-Care Per Diem Funding Summary (April 1, 2020)*

The Canada Census of Population 2021: Some Results for Ontario

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|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Ontario Population 2021 | 14,224,000 |
| Ontario Population, 2016 | 13,448,494 |
| Ontario Population Increase 2016-2021 | 5.8% |
| Ontario Population 2011 | 12,851,821 |
| Ontario Population Increase 2011-2016 | 4.6% |

| AGE GROUPS | People in 2021 (000s) | % of Total 2021 Ontario | People in 2016 (000s) | % of Total 2016 Ontario |
|------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 0-14 | 2252 | 15.8% | 2208 | 16.4% |
| 15-24 | 1697 | 11.9% | 1706 | 12.7% |
| 25-54 | 5,631 | 39.6% | 5447 | 40.5% |
| 55-64 | 2016 | 14.2% | 1836 | 13.7% |
| 65+ | 2638 | 18.5% | 2252 | 16.7% |
| 65-74 | 1505 | 10.6% | 1266 | 9.4% |
| 75-84 | 795 | 5.6% | 685 | 5.1% |
| 85+ | 339 | 2.4% | 301 | 2.2% |

Some Observations:

- * Ontario has been growing on average by >150,000 people per year
- * The rate of increase is accelerating; from 2011-2016 Ontario gained <120,000 people/year
- * The age groups less than 55 years old all shrank 2016-2021 as a % of total Ontario population; the age cohorts 55+ all grew
- * Ontario had more seniors than children 0-14 by 2016; that difference got larger by 2021
- * The bulge in the 55-64 age group grew again, the last of the baby boom. Economists are concerned that over the next 10 years, more people will retire and leave the labour force than will enter the labour force (the 15-24 year olds)
- * Over the next 10 years, given increasing longevity and the growth in the 75-84 age population, the number of Ontarians 85 + will expand and is expected to triple in 20 years

