

Ontario's seniors are a large and fast-growing population. Despite numerous studies and reports in recent years, there remains a significant gap between their care, service, and housing needs and what is currently available. The purpose of this Position Statement is to ensure that the party that forms the next government recognizes the importance of this growing segment of the population and makes seniors' care and service needs a priority.



MEETING THE NEEDS OF SENIORS TODAY AND PLANNING FOR TOMORROW

Ontario must be able to meet the current and future care and service needs of the Province's seniors.

In 2017 it is projected that for the first time there will be more Ontarians over the age of 65 than children under 15.¹

Approximately 14% of seniors depend on others to assist them with activities of daily living, such as eating and bathing. This number is expected to triple over the next 50 years.²

Right now there are 77,500 people who receive care in a long term care home and there are 22,000 people on the waitlist. If there is no change to the current capacity, the number of people waiting for a long term care bed will more than double to 48,000 over the next seven years. Even if efforts over that period are successful in diverting 50% of those on the waitlist for a long term care bed to the broader community, there will still be nearly 24,000 people on the remaining waitlist.³

Solutions:

- ✓ Launch and complete a comprehensive capacity planning exercise, encompassing the entire seniors' care continuum, in close and effective collaboration with OANHSS and other stakeholders.
- ✓ Based on this capacity planning exercise, develop an informed and realistic, integrated, system-wide strategy to meet the needs of Ontario's seniors.

Ensure long term care homes are able to maximize the safety and well-being of residents and staff.

On average, over 40% of residents in long term care have six or more different medical conditions and that number is growing by nearly 8% per year. Staff education and training must keep pace with the changing needs of the resident population.

Nearly 60% of the 77,000 residents in long term care homes today have dementia. 35% of all residents are moderately aggressive and 11% are considered severely aggressive.

Over 30,000 long term care residents are in older and outdated homes, many of which do not meet current design or safety standards.

The safety and well-being of the residents and staff in our homes is our top priority.

Solutions:

- ✓ More direct care staff to better support an increasingly challenging resident population with a high level of dementia care needs, including:
 - More front-line staff (e.g. personal support workers).
 - Increased in-house behaviour care expertise.
 - Increased staff training and education funding.
 - Increased number of designated behaviour units to provide appropriate care for residents with high risk aggressive behaviours.
- ✓ Enhance the Province's existing Long Term Care Home Renewal Strategy to allow older homes to redevelop as soon as possible thereby bringing all homes in line with the latest design standards and current building and fire code requirements.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF SENIORS TODAY AND PLANNING FOR TOMORROW

Ontario's seniors must have access to a range of safe and affordable housing with the necessary supports to meet their diverse needs.

In 2012, over 45,000 seniors were on a wait list for affordable housing, representing nearly 30% of all people on the wait list.⁴

Many of Ontario's affordable seniors' housing projects are older buildings and many do not comply with current building and safety standards. Some not-for-profit housing providers do not have sufficient funds or are legislatively restricted in their ability to maintain surpluses necessary to make needed retrofits or renovations.

Solutions:

- ✓ Take a leadership role in the development of a renewed affordable housing strategy with the Federal Government. For any strategy to be viable, it must address the following:
 - Adequate housing supply.
 - Capital requirements and retrofitting.
 - Affordability.



Ensure Ontario's seniors have access to appropriate care and services at the right time and in the right place.

Most seniors prefer to live in their homes for as long as they can but they require supports and services in order to do so. Too many seniors go without the care and services they need when and where they need them.

Aging in place on a campus of care generally consists of a long term care home as well as other seniors' housing options. This type of campus promotes healthy aging and better resident outcomes leading to an improved quality of life. Often however, more and more residents must take the first vacant bed at a home outside of their campus rather than wait for the next available bed in the campus' long term care home. Too often this requires separation from their spouses or other loved ones.

In recent years, provincial funding has increased for the community support sector in response to the increase in demand. However, this increase in funding has often targeted new community programs and has not necessarily been made available to existing program providers.

Solutions:

- ✓ Increase base funding of existing community support providers to ensure they can continue to provide an appropriate level of services in their community and respond to the increase in demand.
- ✓ Recognize the importance of keeping a resident in their own community on a campus of care by allowing for more flexible admission policies that would allow residents to move from the housing component to the long term care home on the same campus when their care requirements change.
- ✓ Develop equitable solutions to increase the availability of supportive housing options to meet local community needs, thereby allowing individuals to remain independent with some care, and without having to utilize more expensive parts of the health care system.

ABOUT OANHSS

The Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors (OANHSS) is the provincial association representing not-for-profit providers of long term care, community services and housing for seniors.

Through the delivery of a full continuum of not-for-profit services, OANHSS members respond to the diverse needs of seniors. Member organizations operate over 27,000 long term care beds and over 8,000 seniors' housing units across the province.

- 1 "Ontario Population Projections Update, 2012-2036," Ministry of Finance, Spring 2013 – Based on the 2006 Census, p. 35
- 2 IRPP Study, No 33, June 2013, "Financing Long-Term Care in Canada", Michel Grignon and Nicole Bernier
- 3 "Ontario Long Term Care Demand Projection: 2014 to 2021", Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors.
- 4 "Waiting Lists Survey, 2013", Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA)



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