



January 22, 2021

For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

## **Ontario Long-Term Care COVID-19 Crisis: 100 Organizations Send Clear Message to Premier Ford, This is an Emergency, We Need Action Now**

Toronto – 100 organizations representing more than one million families of loved ones in long-term care, residents, care workers, health professionals, advocacy groups, seniors’ groups and community groups held a press conference today to deliver a powerful message to Premier Ford that the situation is not “hunky dory” as he said on Tuesday, and calling for immediate action to address critical staffing and care shortages, unsafe conditions, the devastating spread of COVID-19 and escalating death rates in Ontario’s long-term care homes.

The Ontario Health Coalition’s executive director, Natalie Mehra, laid out the numbers according to the Coalition’s most recent tracking report (up to January 19):

Of the 257 long-term care homes currently in outbreak, 99 LTC homes are in large outbreak (>10 residents and staff with COVID-19). There are a total of 626 long-term care homes in Ontario.

Of these:

- 53 long-term care homes have more than 50 residents and staff infected in the current outbreak
- 29 have more than 100 residents and staff infected
- 15 have more than 150 residents and staff infected
- 7 have more than 200 residents and staff infected
- 3 have more than 250 residents and staff infected
- 1 has more than 300 residents and staff infected.

There are 75 long-term care homes in the second wave that have had more than 1 in every 4 residents infected. Of these, there are approximately 17 long-term care homes in which we estimate that almost all residents have become infected.

Currently, the number of residents and staff who contract COVID-19 in Ontario’s long-term care homes in Wave II is escalating by 1,260 - >1,500 each week, the fastest rate of escalation to date. Ontario has surpassed the total number of residents and staff infected in Wave I by 2,607 cases and rising.

The death rates, which follow infections by several weeks have escalated dramatically over this second wave. In the most recent week, the total number of deaths was 171. (That does not include the new 46 deaths in the last day.)

New tracking reports [giving a full province-wide list of the large outbreaks](#) and [LTC homes with a significant proportion of their residents with COVID-19](#) are being released today by the Health Coalition here:

<https://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca/index.php/resources-analysis/covid-19-resources-analysis-of-the-ford-governments-response/#Tracking-report-on-COVID-19-outbreaks>

“At this point, long-term care residents in Ontario are dying as a result of COVID-19 at the rate of one person per hour,” said Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition. “There are thousands of staff who are off sick, some of whom take months to recover, some of whom never return. The staffing and care crisis is profound. To Premier Ford, if this does not constitute a crisis, what does?”

Ms. Mehra said that the 100 groups and families are speaking with one voice when they took issue with the Premier and Minister of Long-Term Care’s statements that “Everything is hunky dory here” (Premier Ford) and repeatedly, there are no long-term care homes with a staffing crisis (Minister Merrilee Fullerton). The Coalition is calling for:

- Immediate staff recruitment drive like the Quebec government did in June to recruit the thousands of staff needed, with fast-track intensive paid training, improved wages & working conditions to retain staff.
- Military support for the long-term care homes in crisis where local hospital teams are not available to come in.
- Provincial government action to enforce safety and infection control practices in long-term care homes. This means inspections, intervention at a low threshold of COVID cases, real enforcement. No operators have been fined or lost licenses, in fact the province made a priority of passing legislation to indemnify them from liability for negligence.

Families with loved ones in long-term care homes across Ontario shared their experiences of woefully inadequate staffing resulting in unsafe care levels.

Quotes from the families, advocates, care workers', health professionals' and nurses' organizations & unions are available here: <https://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca/index.php/release-ontario-long-term-care-covid-19-crisis-100-organizations-send-clear-message-to-premier-ford-this-is-an-emergency-we-need-action-now/>

## Organizations Included in the 100-person Press Conference:

### Long-Term Care Resident and Family Advocacy Groups

**Algoma Family Council:** What is essential now is to provide well trained, full time, fairly compensated hands-on staffing in Long Term Care. This will actually meet the need of residents. Now is the time for action, rather than assuming that the vaccine will solve all of the historic deficiencies in hands on care directly related to the lack of adequate Provincial funding.

**Advocates for LTC Reform In Ontario:** We support this event because despite the Ford gov't's denial of any LTC problems, we see and hear about the issues daily from families, staff, and even residents themselves. The #1 complaint is ALWAYS the lack of staffing. These severely low staffing levels are putting both residents, and the staff themselves in danger. These homes need help immediately, and a plan to recruit/retain staff over the longer term.

**Advocacy Centre for the Elderly:** Ontario homes have been in a staffing crisis for many years, which was highlighted by the Gillette Inquiry, the Long-Term Care Staffing Study, and which has only increased during this crisis, as stated by Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission. The Ontario Government must take immediate action to increase staffing in long-term care homes to meet resident's care needs and the ongoing challenges which have arisen during the pandemic.

**Canadians Against for Profit Care and Support Group for the Elderly:** Residents, workers, families, friends, relatives and concerned conscientious Canadians are speaking but this Govt is in denial and just NOT listening but distort the facts. Act NOW to address the low levels of staff and care or more people will die needlessly

**Canadians For Long-Term Care Standards and The Families of Orchard Villa:** For those of us who have lost a loved one in long-term care during this pandemic it has been almost unbearable to face the reality of the horrible conditions our loved ones had to endure. Our lives have been forever changed, and we grieve as each new death is another family who enters this group no one would chose to be a part of. We stand with everyone in Ontario to demand better staffing conditions, increased staffing and a better quality of life for those in long-term care. We demand to see action now.

**Copernicus Lodge Family Council:** Copernicus Lodge is currently dealing with a COVID Outbreak with 90 residents who have tested positive (45% of our residents), 58 staff members (19% of our staff). Unity Health is now managing our home to control the outbreak. Limited staffing levels (especially with lack of registered nurses) for all shifts made it challenging to self-isolate and care for 200 residents in their room 24/7 since Dec. 20th (majority have dementia, average age 80, other complicated health issues). More staffing aligned with the health needs of our residents may have put us in a better position to fight COVID.

**Family Council at Southbridge Pinewood Court LTC:** This home like almost all in Ontario is almost always 25-33 % understaffed. Wages are so low (due to the for profit owners taking money off the top for dividends and big salaries for board members, often current or former members of the Conservative Party) and working conditions so bad that that it is no wonder that they can't attract people to work in these homes. It is time for this Conservative government to step up and pass legislation that ensures a better level of care for our Seniors!

**Family Council Network4 / Advocacy Committee:** Our team actively sought signatures on petitions and communicated to MPPs and the public for 12 years to ask the government to enact Time to Care Act. This Standard of Care needs to be enshrined in law and funded so that LTC homes are able to provide an average of 4 hours of care per resident. It is unreasonable to wait to 2024/25 for the 4 hours is attained. Recruitment will be challenged without creating a work life and workload that is manageable. This needs to be augmented with full-time at a living wage, plus benefits.

**Family Council McGarrell Place:** At our monthly Family Council meeting, December 2020, the McGarrell Place Executive Director told us that they lost a lot of staff when the directive came that staff could only work in one facility and that they are also losing part-time staff to full-time positions elsewhere. He quoted a 30% loss of RPNs. Senior staff are helping out at mealtimes. The home is continuing to recruit additional PSWs as well as Registered Nurses because when an RN is not available to work night shift, two RPNs replace. As part of the Director's report in January 2021 he said that, '10 staff currently receiving orientation; this includes some PSW's, 3 R.N.'s, Recreation staff and General Workers. General Workers will assist with environmental services (i.e. sanitizing high touch surfaces) as well as act as personal support assistants.'

We demand the reinstatement of annual comprehensive resident quality inspections for all homes, with consequences for homes that fail the inspections process, and for the creation of a new independent officer of the Ontario Legislature called the Seniors' Advocate. We support the enhanced recruitment of full-time, well-paid, well-trained staff, enough staff for four hours of hands-on care per resident per day.

**Family Council Pioneer Manor LTC:** We know it is critical that we address the long-standing and systemic staffing challenges the sector has faced". (Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, "A Better Place to Live, a Better Place to Work") Dr. Fullerton, our elderly in Long-Term Care homes across the province are paying dearly for the long-standing and chronic shortage of 'PSWs' – it is time to act now!

#### **Family Council in Sturgeon Falls**

**Haliburton, City of Kawartha Lakes Long-Term Care Coalition:** The Haliburton, City of Kawartha Lakes Long-Term Care Coalition believes that building locally together, we have power and a stronger voice to support our frontline workers and fix our LTC system for everyone. Together, we know how to make sure our seniors have the best care, accommodation, and dignity for the common good in their later years.

**Mauno Kaihla Koti Family Council:** It has become evident that inadequacies in Long Term Care funding over the last decade has exacerbated the crisis of care in Ontario during the pandemic. Now is the time to resolve issues like paid sick leave, adequate compensation, full time employment, and the formation of a professional governing body for PSW's.

#### **Madonna Long Term Care Home Family Council in Orleans**

**Melissa Miller, Howie, Sacks & Henry LLP Lawyer:** I represent dozens of families who lost loved ones, in long-term care homes in Ontario due to COVID-19, and hundreds of families who lost loved ones in long-term care pre-COVID-19. I organized the Broken Hearts, Empty Shoes demonstration at Parliament Hill in support of national standards for long-term care. Our provincial government needs to step in where, for the most part, large for-profit homes have failed to protect and care for our most vulnerable. Our government has not injected much-needed resources and we deserve transparency and accountability. Lives literally depend on this. The federal government has offered military intervention once again, which has gone unanswered by Ford's administration.

**Princess Court Long Term Care Home Family Council in Dryden:** Recruiting and retaining staff is an ongoing issue, and we really need the government to e.g. increase wages and benefits to attract and keep staff working in these Homes. We also need the government to put more capital money towards the building maintenance in general, as well as upgrades such as the PA system and speakers in the halls for paging staff, playing music for the Residents etc.

**Ralph Thornton Community Center:** The Ralph Thornton Community Center is appalled at the government of Ontario's callous disregard for the health and lives of our senior citizens. They are able to find the time and money to tear down heritage buildings in our neighbourhood without consulting our community but not for the health and safety of our fellow citizens in long term care homes. We support the Ontario Health Coalition's call for increased resourcing, increased staffing and better wages and benefits in our long-term care homes as has been done, and shown to be effective in protecting our citizens, in other jurisdictions

**The Ontario North Family Council Network:** For at least half a decade, the ONFCN and its predecessor, NEFCN, has identified the LTC staffing shortage as a priority issue, and has worked to shine a light particularly on the PSW shortage. Our 2018 fact-finding in Sudbury alone revealed over 90 PSW vacancies in local homes with wages and working conditions making it difficult to recruit replacements and to attract students to PSW programs in local schools. Since the outbreak of this pandemic, the ONFCN has met regularly with representatives across Northern Ontario who report similar staffing shortages that have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. The lived experience of Northern Ontario families with loved ones in care, corroborates an aged, persistent staffing crisis that has worsened in the second wave.

**Villa Colombo Toronto (Home for the Aged) Family Council:** Staff are burnt out, underpaid and lack the respect from our Ontario government. In order to provide an "Iron Wing" around our seniors and loved ones in LTC Homes we need action. Action in training, hiring and increasing pay. Homes must retain good staff and increase the number of registered in our Long-Term Care Homes. Doug Ford must act now. Every day, every week, every month makes a big difference in the lives of our seniors

*Vivian Stamatopolous, Ontario Tech University Professor*

**Voices of Long-Term Care:** We stand in solidarity for the dignity of seniors in long-term care. We demand immediate action by the military to take over many of the long-term care homes in outbreak. We demand that the government spends money on Staffing immediately modelling the Quebec government's swift action.

**Warrior Advocacy Crusade ASLM All Senior Lives Matter Seniors B4 Profit:** TOTALLY 100 percent in line with holding Gov/others accountable to the immediate long over decades of change that has us fighting even harder today to get put in place, while countless more lives are being dismissed compromised, disassembled, devastated, destroyed, including families being kept out, and our loved ones/others are tragically & horrifyingly dying with all these indignant conditions that they are being left to have to live in. Including horrendous staffing conditions.

**Will Davidson LLP** representing families in long-term care home class action suits against a number of for-profit chain operators.

### Organizations Representing Nurses, Care Workers and Professionals in Long-Term Care Homes:

**Bowmanville Nurses Association:** What does it take — apparently not thousands of deaths, appalling conditions in some LTC homes for residents and staff as outlined by the staff, relatives and even the military. The denial needs to end and let's get on with hiring and training more LTC staff with decent wages and working conditions; paid sick leave; adequate PPE with infection control supports; and ACCOUNTABILITY.

**Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario (CUPE Ontario):** CUPE Ontario demands immediate action by the Ford government to improve the time to care in long-term care homes. Our elders deserve no less!

**Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU/CUPE):** Staff working in long-term care are stunned that the government continues to allow the virus to prey aggressively on the most vulnerable members of our society. Action is urgently needed to bolster the threadbare staffing levels, including asking the military for help. The practice of keeping residents with the virus in the same facility as those who are not infected must end immediately. And long-term care staff have to be equipped properly to work safely around the virus.

**Canadian PSW Network:** We would like to address that since our inception almost 3 years ago, we have fielded many calls, emails, and messages from PSWs and family members of residents in regards to PSWs being overworked due to chronically low, and often critically low staffing levels in LTC. We have had many inquiries from family members asking if there are mandated staffing ratios in place as the administrators will often tell them there is. They are usually given the numbers 1:8, or 1:10, but never more than 1:12 "the odd time", and the PSWs will also tell them there are no mandated staffing ratios anywhere. The staffing ratios we have been informed of from families and PSWs, is: pre-pandemic - anywhere from 1:10 or 12 up to 1:30 or more in some places (especially on overnight shifts where the presumption is that "everyone is asleep". This could be no further from the truth and any PSW will tell you the same thing) Since the Pandemic started in March 2020, we have had reports from family and PSWs that ratios are substantially different ranging from 1:18 or 20 to 1:30 or more. We have even had some PSWs in the more remote, rural, and Northern regions tell us there have even been instances of 1:45-50 in some cases on an overnight shift.

**Fighting for the Frontlines (PSW group):** The crisis we all see in our long-term care homes today is huge evidence of the many years of an unsupportive government! Staffing, education and wage rates are affecting the everyday care needs, our most valuable people are dying ... Fix this crisis TODAY!

**Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 3000:** Our members are risking their lives every day by going to work in Ontario's long-term care homes during a pandemic when the staffing levels in those homes has been at crisis levels for months now. Instead of throwing money to owners, the province needs to get serious about increasing wage levels, ensuring access to adequate PPE, and guaranteeing paid sick leave/paid isolation leave for all frontline workers. This is literally a matter of life or death!

**Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL):** The humanitarian crisis unfolding in long-term care is devastating and requires urgent action. The Ford Conservatives must immediately recall the legislature, pass legislation to fix the crisis across the entire sector, and immediately provide increased and dedicated spending in the upcoming provincial budget. Anything short of that is simply negligent."

**Niagara Regional Labour Council:** Our long-term care homes are in a severe crisis because of the FORD government and their blatant lies. We don't need more promises! We demand that the FORD government reverse the funding cuts, hire and train more staff. We demand that the FORD government provide better wages and benefits and safer working conditions for these long-term care workers that provide the crucial care to our Mothers, Fathers, Sisters, Brothers and children day after day. We also demand that the FORD government bring long term care in the Public system and regulate it under the Canada Health Act immediately!

**Toronto & York Region Labour Council:** "The Ford government continues to duck responsibility for the carnage in our long-term care homes while our loved ones and their courageous carers live in fear. Every day without action is another day Ford's failures harm our communities and leave our elders without the dignity they deserve."

**Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA):** The Ontario Nurses' Association knows that improved staffing is key to tackling COVID-19 head on in long-term care homes. ONA fully supports the broad consensus that immediate actions are needed to speed up recruitment and training of staff and to ensure appropriate infection control measures, including PPE, are in place.

**Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU):** Staffing levels were in a crisis before this pandemic. All our homes are in need of more trained staff to help care for our residents. Too many of our staff are getting run down and hurt because of the extra hours they are working to provide even minimum care.

**Unifor:** Unifor is here to add our voice to call on the Ford government for meaningful and immediate action to end the crisis in our Province's long-term care system.

**Unifor Local 27:** The Ford government has refused to address staffing crisis in our long-term care homes. In LTC homes with large outbreaks, staffing is an issue. Many LTC homes (more so in the for-profit homes) have desperately low levels of staff. We demand the Ford government to act now to increase staffing levels and take the profit out of long-term care. We are demanding an immediate mass recruitment for the thousands of needed PSWs, RPNs, RNs and other vital staff. The Ford government must begin to hold long-term care home owners and operators accountable for dangerously inadequate infection control measures. As well, we are calling for COVID-19 vaccines rolled out to LTC residents, caregivers and essential caregivers as a priority. 61% of the deaths from COVID-19 in Ontario are happening in LTC.

**United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) Locals 175 & 633:** As a Union representing over 6,000 healthcare workers in Ontario, we've directly seen the desperate need for reform in long-term care. UFCW Locals 175 & 633 strongly advocates for immediate improvement in all elder care settings and is proud to support the Ontario Health Coalition calls for the Ford PC government to take action and address the ongoing crisis in long-term care.

**United Steelworkers District 6:** There is still a crisis in long-term care homes across Ontario. We need the government to act immediately to ensure safer living conditions and better staffing levels.

### **Family Members of Loved Ones In LTC:**

**Ann McIntyre - Family member of loved one in long-term care:** Many residents and staff are dying with the disjointed inaction by the Ford Government, so action needs to be taken now not 2024-25. Contrary to Merilee Fullerton's comment, most Long-Term Care homes are in a staffing crisis and have been for a long time.

**Anna Tomlinson – Family member whose mother, Gloria, lives in a Barrie long-term care home**

**Deb Weber - Essential caregiver of spouse who is in long-term care:** I continue to advocate for person-centred care for all residents in congregated settings. I am witness to far too many burned out staff, understaffing, inadequate personal support, inconsistency in personal support and a glaring lack of meaningful stimulation due to staff shortages and adequate training for PSWs. My heart breaks each day when I go to assist with my husband's mealtime.

**Debbie Shubat - Family member of mom who lives in Southbridge Roseview in Thunder Bay and survived Covid-19 in the current wave**

**Dennis Hladysh - Family member of wife in long-term care:** I am tired of hearing the political double speak whereby the province promises to deliver to the silver hair tsunami more beds, more staff, better care in the future. We need this now. How can the government deliver this promise when the majority of the facilities are for profit, privately run facilities that consistently fail to provide the minimum expected care?

**Jennifer Penney - Daughter of Yvette Braunch, who died on Christmas Eve at Oakwood Park Lodge in Niagara Falls**

**Jo-Anne Beggs - Family member who lost her mom, Barbara, in a long-term care in Oakville and currently has a father, Bob, in LTC**

**Jody Smith - Granddaughter of long-term resident that passed away and daughter of long-term care resident in a home with an active outbreak:** My grandmother lost her life to COVID-19 due to unsafe conditions in her private long-term care home. Now my father has been living in outbreak conditions for 63 days. I am both sad and angry. Our loved ones need action! We are long overdue providing time to care and safe conditions for residents and for their caregivers.

**Patricia Tait – Family member whose mother, Margaret, is in a long-term care home in Lambton County**

**Patty Bates - Family member whose mother is in a long-term care home in Thunder Bay:** Our LTC staff need reinforcements; they need more staff to allow them days off to recharge, and better training and support to deal with an increasingly challenging resident population.

**Rose Anne Reilly - Family member of mom who lives in long-term care and was hospitalized with Covid-19:** Our Elderly CANNOT wait for our help until 2024/25. Make changes now! The money is there, USE IT!

## Seniors' Organizations

**Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) Chapter 7 Long Term Care Transformative Committee:** Care over Profits, Stop Warehousing Seniors, Mandate 4 hours of hands on care in a 24-hour period.

**Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) Halton Chapter:** The Halton Chapter of CARP has been for well over a decade demanding more and better care time for the residents of LTC Homes. We whole heartedly support the OHC call for the government to step forward to do what is right for the residents of LTC.

**Hamilton, Burlington and Oakville Chapter of the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (HBO CURC):** Members of HBO CURC have aged parents and colleagues who are requiring long-term care services and are greatly concerned about the standards of care being provided to residents in these facilities, especially in the private for-profit long-term care facilities. Premier Ford is on record as saying that the long-term care system is broken and that he is going to fix it by building an "iron ring around long term homes"; instead, he has built a legislative iron wall of protection around the government and the owners and operators of private for-profit long-term care homes. Disgraceful.

**National Pensioners Federation:** The National Pensioners Federation has a 75-year history representing nearly one million seniors across Canada. We unequivocally join with the OHC and all who stand up against negligence and abhorrent representation of our most vulnerable in society. (We remain devastated by the glaring statistics that medical evidence provides in the deaths of older persons in Ontario and specifically those in Long Term Care. We condemn the Ontario Minister of LTC in the handling of her portfolio.) We urge Ontarians to never forget and take this to the (election) ballot box. We have come to see that is our only united power that can makes a difference.

**Ontario Federation of Union Retirees (OFUR):** OFUR calls for health care reform that includes a national pharmacare program, a national dementia strategy, public non-profit long-term care, home care and palliative care systems and a minimum of four hours care in the long-term care system.

**Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) Region 4 Retirees Division:** As retired workers of the public service, we strongly believe that privatization of our long-term care homes is not in the best interest of our seniors. It is plain to see that good public policy is lacking in order to protect the private interests who own and operate much of our long-term care in Ontario.

**OSSTF Association of Retired Members (ARM) Council & ARM Chapter 22, Niagara:** The ARM Council of OSSTF endorses the Ontario Health Coalition's work attempting to have this government see the urgent danger in which it is

placing our residents in Long Term Care and supports more health care workers caring for this precious resource i.e. using all resources of the province in their care.

### ***Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO/ERO) District 14 Niagara***

***Seniors Health Advisory Committee of Sault Ste. Marie and the Algoma District:*** The Seniors Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) of Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma district is a seniors' organization that advocates for the well-being of seniors. We are dismayed at the continuing crisis in the long-term care homes of Ontario. The unacceptable levels of infection resulting in misery, sickness and death are truly horrific. Vulnerable seniors are suffering the tragic consequences of a persistently underfunded long-term care system with inadequate staffing levels. SHAC urges the Ontario government to take the necessary action NOW to solve this crisis.

### ***Unifor Retirees Chapter 1325***

## **Local Health Coalitions**

***Chatham Kent Health Coalition:*** How heartbreaking it is to hear seniors call for help for toileting, to call for a drink of water, or to call for human contact! We are obligated to ensure that seniors are cared for with respect, which means proper staffing numbers and mix. We are experiencing the worst staffing crisis in Ontario's history, and it must be fixed NOW!

***Hamilton Health Coalition:*** Hamilton Health Coalition joins with many other allies and organizations to voice concerns about the deplorable conditions in Long Term Care in Ontario and to pressure the Ontario government to improve Long Term Care. Ford recognized that Long Term Care was broken and promised to fix it. Over the summer of 2020, he had the opportunity to put in measures to protect our seniors but he did nothing, whereas British Columbia and Quebec hired staff to improve the working conditions for the residents. Now is the time to take care of our seniors. No more delays!

***Kawartha Lakes Health Coalition:*** With recent alarming outbreaks in LTC in Kawartha Lakes, Caressant Care in Lindsay in particular, to protect our seniors and staff long term care needs immediate investment to tackle staffing issues and infection control and prevention measures.

***Niagara Health Coalition:*** Niagara is an afterthought for Ford. In spite of have some of the highest infection, outbreaks and death rates, Niagara was not on the list to get the first wave of vaccines - then one shipment was redirected last week. We see no plan to ensure that all residences have the number of health care workers required for their size.

***Oakville Health Coalition:*** The Provincial government or Ontario's prevention of and response to outbreaks of COVID 19 in long term care homes has been seriously inadequate. In both circumstances the preeminent requirement was, and is, more trained staff with good pay, benefits and good, safe, working conditions

***Ottawa Health Coalition:*** Since the beginning of the pandemic, over 400 people in the City of Ottawa have died from COVID-19. Most of these deaths have involved residents and workers in long term care settings. We are disgusted by recent comments from Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, the Minister of Long-Term Care and MPP for the local Ottawa riding of Kanata Carleton. She has failed to take the necessary action to deal with the severe staff shortage and is failing to protect the most vulnerable in our health care system.

***Sarnia Lambton Health Coalition:*** The glaring inadequacies in LTC have been brought to light with the Covid-19 health crisis. It is time to place our vulnerable elderly over profit. Please put the needed dollars into adequate staffing, training and a living wage for our unsung heroes, the PSWs, so that they can provide the care that they so desperately want to give, but don't have the time to do.

***Sudbury Health Coalition:*** LTC facilities in the PHSD catchment area are desperately short of qualified personal support staff. This was documented before the pandemic in an LTC PSW staffing report done commissioned UNIFOR in 2019 and released in February 2020 Sudbury PSWs and administrators were interviewed. All LTC facilities in the area have been seriously short of staff throughout the pandemic. Several home care agencies have been tried to improve the staffing levels in LTC facilities when they have staff able and willing. Outbreaks continue Today we have 2 of seven LTC



facilities in outbreak, one LTC facility has just come out of outbreak, and 1 retirement home with 35 COVID-19 positive residents and 3 staff plus 4 deaths in 15 days. The hospital paramedic team took over the home today. All residents are in strict isolation in the home, remotely monitored by the paramedics. Designated staff will only enter the rooms if the resident's physical safety is compromised. HSN reports 13 in hospital with COVID-19 and 7 are suspected but awaiting test results. 1 is in ICU

**Thunder Bay Health Coalition:** For well over two decades the Thunder Bay Health Coalition has been lobbying provincial governments identifying the shortages in staffing in long term care homes and the stress that staff in the homes are under in trying to provide the care that the residents need and deserve. The staffing issues that we have brought to the governments attention over the years has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and yet premier Doug Ford and his government have refused to follow the lead of the governments of Quebec and British Columbia by instituting a massive hiring program. It is well beyond time that this government act responsibly by hiring staff and providing appropriate education, wages and benefits to ensure that the residents in long term care are provided the care that they need.

**Wallaceburg-Walpole Island Health Coalition:** Elderly and disabled people require a lot intervention especially emotional support during Covid-19. When their families cannot see them, it is critical. Being isolated in rooms for weeks and weeks creates a crisis to their wellbeing.

**Waterloo Region Health Coalition:** Adequate care in LTC requires a mandated standard of care of 4.1 hours per person per day. Make Bill 13 the law and this will happen, especially if you implement fines on negligent LTC operators. Premier Ford, why are we waiting for a legislated standard of care?

**Windsor Health Coalition:** Windsor Essex has been very hard hit by COVID-19. We currently have 19 outbreaks in LTC/RH with seniors and workers fighting for their lives while being ignored by the Premiere despite repeated calls for urgent help to save lives. We need immediate action to protect the lives of the most vulnerable in our community.

## Organizations

**Accessible Housing Network (AHN):** The Accessible Housing Network is calling on the Ford government to raise wages, provide paid intense training, recruit/train staff, address poor work conditions and make long-term care homes safe for staff, seniors, and persons with disabilities. We are also calling to amend the Ontario Building Code to mandate that all units in all new multi-unit residential buildings be built to universal design standards (fully accessible) as this can reduce overcrowding in LTC homes and also make it safer for both the residence and our healthcare workers. To address these current issues, it is imperative that urgent measures be put in place to have COVID-19 vaccines rolled out to LTC residents, caregivers and essential caregivers as a priority.

**Building Up Our Neighbourhoods:** Building Up Our Neighbourhoods stands with Ontario Health Coalition to condemn the Ontario government for its mismanagement of COVID-19 pandemic response throughout the Long-Term Care system. Change is needed now.

**Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) Ontario Council:** With decades of little oversight in our long-term care facilities, we are now faced with a severe crisis, heightened by the pandemic. Further to "A Better Place to Live, a Better Place to Work: Ontario's Long-Term Care Staffing Plan," which is welcomed, we need current information on timelines regarding recruitment, training, staffing, and regulation requirements.

**Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) Scarborough:** Given these long-standing deficits in care in Canadian LTC facilities, CFUW urge the federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to define and implement high-quality LTC that is achieved by, but not limited to: ensuring that person-in-care/staff ratios are consistent with evidence based best practices and that care providers are qualified, well-paid and offered their choice full or part time positions; ensuring that all new LTC facilities are built on a non-profit model.

**Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) Stratford:** CFUW Stratford authored CFUW's resolution calling for national standards for Long Term Care which should be removed from the profit sector and covered by the Canada Health Act

**Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) Windsor:** The Canadian Federation of University Women urges the federal, provincial, territorial, and indigenous governments of Canada to create universal, accessible, regulated, respectful, and quality long-term care for the immediate and growing needs of elderly and vulnerable persons in Canada by placing it under the Canada Health Act.

**Council of Canadians:** “The Ford government must stop ignoring the infectious disease experts and take the necessary steps to protect our vulnerable LTC residents and the people that care for them. Ontario has the money, the power and the mandate to ensure LTC residences can hire, train and equip the staff needed to solve this problem now.”

**Council of Canadians Kitchener-Waterloo chapter:** We demand immediate action by the Ontario Government to address the shameful situation in long term care which your deliberate inaction has not only permitted but enabled and protected.

**Democracy Watch**

**Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)**

**Guardian Angels Program:** I believe it is horrible that Premier Ford-P.C. Government has done nothing to help the second wave of the pandemic. Dr. Fullerton and Christine Elliott are useless. They had time to be ready for this.

**Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC):** Let there be no delay in ramping up staffing, improving working conditions to incentivize people to seek employment and mandate 10 paid sick days. Only in this way can we reduce the occurrence and impact of outbreaks in long term care homes and increase the safety of the environment to allow residents to be visited by family members and clergy.

**Niagara District Council of Women:** The Niagara District Council of Women (NDCW), formerly the St. Catharines Local Council of Women, has lobbied the government since the early 1980s to improve senior care, considers this a crisis, which could well have been avoided and now needs immediate remedial and preventative actions. As NDCW President Gracia Janes notes, “This may be the most difficult of times to deal with all the flaws in the system, but it is certainly the time for everyone to work together towards helping our most vulnerable Ontarians immediately.”

**Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF):** Just as we've seen the Ford government implement half measures and confusingly vague direction in Ontario's education system, we are seeing the same play out in long term care homes with exponentially more devastating results. It was recently revealed that the Ford government diluted their plans to keep students, staff and families safe from COVID in schools. By all appearances, the government has taken the same approach with long term care homes. It's no coincidence that the Ford government's failure to make critical investments in health care, education, and long-term care to fight COVID has led us to the crisis we have in Ontario today.

**TOES Niagara:** As an organization that works with newcomer women to Canada, -most of whom make up the bulk of healthcare front line workers in various forms- we recognize that while putting their health at risk, these women are also bearing the brunt of the negative impacts of the pandemic, being hard hit from both a health and economic standpoint. Health care workers deserve better working conditions to address these disparities and those of the people they care for.