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March Highlights

As March comes to an end and we welcome a new season, it's a wonderful time to look back on the themes and events that were highlighted throughout the last month.

For many residents living in long-term care, March is synonymous with **Nutrition Month** - a time to recognize the contributions of Dietary teams, participate in kitchen tours, and learn about food production and nutrition. This popular topic inspired the theme of OARC's March webinar, which you can read about below.

March is also **National Social Work Month**. In long-term care, Social Workers and Social Service Workers work closely with residents to help navigate times of transition, access resources and support other aspects of wellness. Learn more about the social worker role [here](#).

Additionally, March has been identified as a time to raise awareness about a number of health areas (including liver health, kidney health, epilepsy etc.) and to bring attention to other important topics, such as fraud prevention (**Fraud Prevention Month**), music therapy (**Music Therapy Awareness Month**), pharmacy services (**Pharmacy Appreciation Month**) and developmental disabilities (**Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**).

OARC recommends utilizing the digital and printable [Diversity Calendars](#) produced by the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation, to identify awareness days/months, religious and spiritual days of significance, cultural celebrations and health promotion days that your Residents' Council and long-term care teams would like to recognize.

Congratulations to Minister Kusendova-Bashta

OARC wishes to congratulate Minister Natalia Kusendova-Bashta on her re-appointment as Ontario's Minister of Long-Term Care. Last month, Minister Kusendova-Bashta was re-elected as the Member of Provincial Parliament for Mississauga Centre, a position she has held since 2018. On March 19th, Minister Kusendova-Bashta was sworn in as Minister of Long-Term Care. We look forward to continuing to work with the Minister to improve the lives of Ontario's long-term care home residents.



OARC Attends RNAO Symposium

On Thursday March 20th, OARC's Executive Director, Dee Tripp, and Resident Leader, Ann Donaldson, had the privilege of attending the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario's (RNAO) Annual Symposium. This event brought together over 250 RNAO members to celebrate and learn more about the exciting work being done in long-term care (LTC) homes through the adoption of RNAO's evidence-based best-practice guidelines (BPG's), and participation in the RNAO's Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) LTC Designation program. To date almost 300 LTC homes in Ontario have joined the BPSO LTC Designation program.

A valued partner of OARC, RNAO was founded in 1925, and serves as the professional association representing registered nurses, nurse practitioners and nursing students in Ontario. While RNAO advocates for excellence in policy, nursing practice and the contributions of the field of nursing to the overall health system, RNAO plays a vital role in strengthening the long-term care (LTC) sector in Ontario.

By embracing and implementing RNAO Best Practice Guidelines (BPG's) over the course of three years, LTC homes can earn a BPSO designation by taking steps to increase the quality of living for residents and making positive changes in their home's culture of care. One of the guidelines that resonates strongly with OARC is the Person- and Family-Centred Care BPG. Interestingly, and wonderfully, OARC's [Through Our Eyes: Bringing the Residents' Bill of Rights Alive program](#) (available in every LTC home in Ontario) aligns 100% with the evidence-based principles found within this RNAO guideline.

During the RNAO Symposium event, Dee and Ann had the opportunity to speak with RNAO members about the important role and influence they have in the care and life experience of residents. They encouraged attendees to consider residents as part of the solution for any issue that arises in their LTC homes. Residents are tremendous ‘untapped resources’, full of ideas and unique perspectives because they live in their homes, every day and every night. Ann shared some personal remarks and thanked those in attendance, crediting nurses and her care team for saving her life when she moved into her LTC home. By supporting and encouraging her to become stronger and healthier, she has been able to thrive in this new chapter of her life. What a special day for Ann and Dee to share with such dynamic members of the nursing profession!

OARC Nutrition Month Webinar and OSNAC Survey Reminder for LTC Teams

On Wednesday, March 19th, OARC hosted special guest Heather Toll, Registered Dietician, from the Ontario Seniors Nutrition and Advocacy Committee (OSNAC) for a webinar entitled, “Keeping Residents Informed and Engaged.” This food and nutrition themed webinar was right on time for National Nutrition Month, an annual event taking place during the month of March.

Webinar attendees learned about the various ways that OSNAC is advocating on behalf of people living in long-term care homes through letter-writing campaigns and by surveying long-term care home residents and teams so that OSNAC is well-equipped to engage in direct consultation with Ministry of Long-Term Care partners on the topic of food and nutrition. **One such survey that is currently underway for long-term care home Corporate Leaders, Administrators, Nutrition Managers and Dietitians etc. can be accessed [here](#). Please stay tuned, as a complimentary survey to collect resident feedback is being co-developed with OARC Resident Leaders and will be launched in the coming weeks!**

Our audience also received essential information on how nutrition funding for long-term care works, and how dietary teams work to maximize every funding dollar received. Heather shared some innovative ideas about how to involve residents in nutrition planning and advocacy, but stressed that it isn’t always easy to implement all the great ideas due to time and resource constraints within the system.

You can access a recording of the webinar [here](#). Let us know what you think by reaching out to Stephanie Ventura, Director of Education, at sventura@ontarc.com.

Save the date for our April webinar – topic and featured speakers to be announced soon!

OARC’s next Webinar Wednesday is scheduled for Wednesday, April 16th at 2pm. Our session topic and registration information will be circulated in a special bulletin and posted on OARC’s website.

OARC Annual Membership... It's time to renew for 2025-2026!



April 1st marks the start of a new membership period for Residents' Councils that hold annual membership with OARC.

For current OARC Residents' Council members, your 2025-2026 renewal packages, including invoices, have been emailed to the attention of your Residents' Council Assistant. We thank you for your continued support and investment in the work of OARC!

Some Residents' Council memberships with OARC are organizationally supported through our corporate membership program. We are grateful to our current corporate members (displayed below). Annual membership invoices for corporate

member homes have been sent to the central offices of each organization. Learn more about corporate membership [here](#).



Consider OARC Membership for your Residents' Council

Residents' Councils that may be considering becoming an OARC member are encouraged to [visit our website](#) or contact us directly to learn more and have your questions answered. We'd love to have you join our network of close to 500 Residents' Council members from across Ontario! Contact Jennifer Langston at 1-800-532-0201 extension 220 or by email: jangston@ontarc.com.

OARC Home Support Highlights

Melissa (Mel) Matheson, OARC's Home Support and Education Manager, has happily resumed visits with residents and long-term care teams after an extended period of inclement winter weather and seasonal outbreaks. Recent in-person visits have focused on the delivery of presentations and tailored support on topics ranging from residents' rights to



Council operations, including leadership structures and Bylaw creation. Each visit has provided opportunities for the OARC team to learn and share new promising practices, while building relationships with Residents' Councils in different areas of the province.

During her travels, Mel also spent quality time with OARC Resident Leaders Eric (Markdale), Carol (London) and Jim (Kitchener).



In London and Chatham, Ontario, Mel and Stephanie (Director of Education) met with several groups of residents who are engaged in their homes as teachers, promoting inclusive Residents' Council practices and educating others about their Bill of Rights. At Meadow Park Chatham, residents have established a relationship with their local Alzheimer's Society, with a representative coming in regularly to provide education for residents who are keen to learn about the experiences of their peers living with dementia and different types of cognitive change. Mel and Stephanie observed firsthand how these learnings have positively impacted the Council, who in turn, have embraced the strengths and contributions of all residents as leaders in the home.

OARC would like to acknowledge and thank the following homes for their warm welcomes and memorable visits. It was a joy spending time with you!

Eatonville Care Centre, Etobicoke

Roberta Place, Barrie

Shepherd Village, Scarborough

Grey Gables Home for the Aged, Markdale

Sunnyside Home, Kitchener

Kensington Village, London

Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care, London

Southbridge London, London

Meadow Park Chatham Long Term Care, Chatham



If your Council might appreciate some support or education, please feel free to reach out to Mel at 1-800-532-0201 extension 280 or by email: mmatheson@ontarc.com to set up a home support call or visit.

Patient Ombudsman Released 2023-24 Annual Report

On March 25th, Patient Ombudsman released its [2023-2024 Annual Report](#), which provides an overview of their operations as well as insights into health care experiences across Ontario. Of interest to residents, 8% of complaints (365) received by Patient Ombudsman included concerns about long-term care homes, with concerns about the overall quality of care being the most frequently reported issue. To learn more about this report and the services provided, OARC looks forward to hosting Patient Ombudsman for a future webinar.

- Read the [summary](#) of the report.
- Access the full annual report [here](#).
- Read the [media release](#).

LTC Conference Corner

Mark your calendars for some of OARC's most anticipated conferences coming up in 2025:

- **Together We Care Convention and Trade Show, April 7-9, Toronto Congress Centre**
Canada's largest gathering of leaders from the long-term care and retirement living sectors. Learn more: <https://www.together-we-care.com/>
- **Advancing Senior Care: AdvantAge Ontario Annual Convention, April 30-May 2, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel**
Catch OARC Resident Leaders on the main stage before the keynote and visit our booth outside the ballroom! Learn more: <http://na.eventscloud.com/website/78408/>
- **Connecting Through Care: 2025 Family Councils Ontario Conference, June 11-12, Hamilton Waterfront Conference Centre (Hybrid event with virtual option available)**
With a focus on empowering family council members to become champions of change, Family Councils Ontario's upcoming conference will equip delegates with the tools they need to make a lasting impact. Learn more: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/creating-champions-connecting-through-care--2025>
- **Therapeutic Recreation Ontario 2025 Conference (Virtual), June 4, 18, and 25, 2025**
With 27 sessions on topics including long-term care and mental health, this virtual conference allows delegates the flexibility to participate live or tune into recordings. Learn more: <https://www.trontario.org/conference/>
- **This is Long-Term Care, hosted by the Ontario Long Term Care Association Oct 26-28, Beanfield Centre and Hotel X**
This conference seeks to highlight emerging research, quality improvement initiatives, innovations and expertise that can educate and inspire others in seniors' care and provide practical strategies that improve quality of care and quality of life. Call for content is now open. Learn more: <https://thisisltc.com/call-for-content-2025/>

Preparing for the Federal Election – April 28, 2025

Residents might be aware that Prime Minister Mark Carney has called a federal election, and Election Day for Canadians will be on Monday, April 28th. As with previous elections, OARC encourages residents and their Residents' Councils to work together with their LTC home teams to raise awareness and communicate plans in advance, to ensure that all residents who wish to exercise their right to vote are supported to do so.

The Elections Canada website contains helpful information about federal elections and accessible voting: <https://www.elections.ca/home.aspx>.

We invite LTC homes to share your creative and collaborative approaches to election preparedness with the OARC team – we'd love to spotlight your home in a special bulletin! Email Melissa McVie at mmcvie@ontarc.com. Thank you!



Thank you to [AdvantAge Ontario](#), [Extendicare](#), [Java Group Programs](#), [Schlegel Villages Inc.](#), [Sienna Senior Living](#) and [S&R Group](#) for supporting OARC's Confidence in Culture Change Program. To find out more about how you can support OARC, please contact Dee Tripp, Executive Director dtripp@ontarc.com 1-800-532-0201 x 240.

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