
September 15, 2023

Long-Term Care Sector Update for Residents

Dear Residents and Residents' Council Supporters,

We hope that your Residents' Council week celebrations have been vibrant and fun! The OARC team is looking forward to sharing your highlights in our September OARC in Action newsletter later this month, and we'll be sharing some of our favourite celebration ideas and photos in our Fall/Winter Seasons magazine. If you missed our Wednesday celebratory webinar, you can still enjoy the recording [here](#). We were honoured to have Honourable Stan Cho, newly appointed Minister of Long-Term Care join us and share in the opening remarks!

September has been an eventful month so far! This special bulletin is intended to help residents and their supportive partners stay informed about recent updates and events that have taken place over the last 2 weeks.

We know that long-term care is a dynamic and evolving sector, but more importantly, we know that long-term care is *home*; home to close to 80,000 people in Ontario. OARC is committed to keeping residents informed about the topics that affect them, and we are here to listen and learn how experiences at both the home level, and system levels, are impacting you. Armed with this essential information and feedback, we continue to lift and leverage your voices and lived experience with government and stakeholder partners, to educate and effect change.

The team at OARC is here and available to serve you—by phone, email, or in person. We welcome your questions and conversations and invite your active participation through our weekly [Resident Forums](#): an opportunity to join other residents from across Ontario (using a computer!) to share about issues, experience incredible peer support and build relationships! We hope to see or hear from you soon!

Welcome Hon. Stan Cho, New Minister of Long-Term Care

On September 4th, Premier Doug Ford announced changes to his cabinet, which included the appointment of a new Minister of Long-Term Care. Shortly thereafter, Stan Cho, Member of Provincial Parliament for Willowdale and former Associate

Minister for Transportation, was sworn into the role, and he's already hit the ground running and is making his commitments to residents known. He shared that calling OARC was his second call as Minister of LTC, second only to his parents!

Learn more about Minister Cho [here](#).

As mentioned above, with much enthusiasm and anticipation, OARC welcomed the Hon. Stan Cho, as a special guest during our [webinar](#) on Wednesday, where he wished residents a very happy Residents' Council Week. Minister Cho spoke to his desire to work *with* and *for* residents. "Your voice is so crucially important," he said. "I want to hear directly from you on what you feel we should be doing."

Minister Cho also shared that he looks forward to meeting with Residents' Council groups during his visits to homes across the province. He has already signaled to OARC that he is keen to learn more about our organization and explore how we can continue to work in partnership to support quality of living in Ontario long-term care homes. Stay tuned as we get to know our new Minister and see him in action!

OARC sends our thanks and best wishes to former Minister of Long-Term Care, Hon. Paul Calandra for a smooth transition to his new role as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Access the full media release here:

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1003462/premier-doug-ford-renews-team-that-will-deliver-on-promise-to-build-ontario>

Lessons for the Long Term: Ontario Ombudsman Report

On September 7th, the Ontario Ombudsman, Paul Dubé released "[Lessons for the Long Term](#)" a report summarizing his investigation of the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, and their oversight of the long-term care sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. Understandably, this report, and the discussion around it, has reopened wounds and has been very triggering for those touched by the pandemic over the last 3 years.

In his report, the Ombudsman makes 76 recommendations to the province. The Ministry of Long-Term Care has accepted the report and its recommendations, many of which have been actioned already to address the areas of concern. These recommendations include:

- Ensuring that the Ministry's Inspections Branch has enough staff.
- Regular training for inspectors.
- Providing sufficient personal protective equipment.
- Establishing clear rules for when in-home inspections are needed.

- Ensuring the Ministry always has staff with expertise in infection control measures available for in-person inspections.
- Issuing immediate compliance orders in situations where residents are at an ongoing risk of serious harm.

OARC's Executive Director Dee Tripp and Resident Leaders spent several hours in direct consultation with lead investigators for the Ombudsman's investigation. While the hours of tearful and often strained reflection was painful to endure, our hope is that the voice of residents helped to set the tone and context for the narrow scope of the final report, which focused entirely upon the Inspections Branch of the Ministry of Long-Term Care. We know that the magnitude and devastation of the pandemic crisis in long-term care homes must be considered with a broader lens to ensure that the whole story can be told. We thank every organization, including the Ontario Ombudsman's office that contributed to a fulsome analysis of the crisis, and most of all we thank the brave residents and team members in each and every home. May the lives of all those we lost not be in vain.

OARC is encouraged by the many steps that have already been taken to strengthen the Inspections Branch and the enhanced training of their expanded team of Inspectors working in the field and the newly formed Investigators team. This has been a good and necessary effort to eliminate the backlog of complaints and critical incidents, and to proactively inspect long-term care homes annually. Over time, this investment into the Inspections Branch will create a baseline, a realistic picture of issues that homes and the sector are challenged with. Over the past few months OARC's team, including resident leaders have provided direct education sessions for both the inspectors and investigators.

Together, let's continue to work in partnership to identify solutions; incorporating lessons learned from the past, but focusing on our shared goal of forging ahead for the betterment of everyone connected to long-term care, especially residents. After all, they are the people who call these places *home*.

Access the Ombudsman's Report and Supporting Materials below:

[Lessons for the Long Term Report](#)
[Ombudsman Remarks \(transcribed\)](#)
[Facts and Highlights](#)