

Long Term Care in Ontario

Understanding the Landscape

Canada is graying. With the first wave of baby boomers turning 65 in 2011, the number of people aged 65 and older is expected to reach 6.7 million by 2021. In Ontario, this group will double to reach 3.5 million – representing more than 21 per cent of the province’s population – by 2031. As a result, caring for seniors is becoming a greater priority for the province and the country.

There are many services available in Ontario to help seniors maintain their health and functional independence.

Long term care homes, as an integral part of Ontario’s publicly funded and publicly regulated health care system, are designed to meet the needs of those who require care levels that are not available in the community or sufficient to meet their needs, including those who require convalescence to recover strength or functioning before returning from hospital to the community. Today’s long term care homes are working with their health system partners to create innovative programs to help reduce the pressure on hospital emergency departments.

For those with moderate care needs who prefer to remain at home, home and community support services provide flexible and practical solutions. For seniors who require or desire more supportive and personal care, supportive housing and retirement home options are available. Retirement homes are not part of Ontario’s publicly funded and publicly regulated health care system.

Long Term Care Homes

Ontario’s long term care homes offer medical and personal support to individuals who require nursing care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These homes pride themselves on providing specialized care that meets the varying activity levels and individual needs of residents.

The experienced professionals who work in long term care homes play an active and vital role caring for many of Ontario’s most vulnerable individuals within a safe, secure, home-like setting. Staff members are passionate about the contribution they are making to the lives of the many residents who rely on their services each day.

Ontario’s long term care homes are accountable to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Local Health Integrated Networks (LHINs) in which they operate. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and taking action to ensure that all homes comply with the applicable acts and regulations. Long term care homes are currently regulated by three separate pieces of legislation which will be replaced with the Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007, once it is proclaimed.

Best Practices in Long Term Care

- Resident Safety is a priority for the long term care sector and individual homes.
- The long term care sector works in partnership with the Canadian Patient Safety Institute, the Institute for Safe Medication Practices, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ontario Health Quality Council and other organizations to continually improve resident outcomes.
- Nine out of ten residents of long term care homes rate the overall quality of care they receive as good to excellent¹.
- Ontarians who have had an experience with a long term care facility are more likely (77%) to recommend a long term care home to their family or friends².
- Through voluntary accreditation, Ontario’s long term care homes regularly test their practices and outcomes against national and international standards.

¹ May 2009 report, the Ontario Health Quality Council (OHQC) – an independent agency funded by the government of Ontario to monitor the quality of the health system

² April 2009 Omnibus Survey, Ipsos-Reid – survey commissioned by the Ontario Long Term Care Association