

Ontario Long Term Care Association to Co-Chair Task Force on Improved Resident Safety and Quality of Care

The Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA) and its Members deeply regret any harm to seniors that occurred in Ontario long-term care homes. "One incident is one too many," remarked Gail Paech, CEO of OLTCA.

"As committed caregivers and human beings, we owe each and every one of our residents the highest dignity and respect as we strive to provide a safe and supportive environment. We have not achieved this goal across the board," continued Ms. Paech. "We will be working to make performance improvements as of today."

"Starting immediately, all long-term care homes within OLTCA will re-iterate a zero tolerance approach to any incidence of harm, and each home will continue to strongly support immediate reporting," stated Ms. Paech. "We must continue to value the transparent compliance system we have in Ontario, and the role it plays in ensuring high quality patient care."

The OLTCA believes there is a need for renewed focus on seniors care. Over the coming weeks, the OLTCA will co-chair a task force with the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors (OANHSS), including members from Concerned Friends, the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils, the Ontario Family Councils' Program, as well as staff and residents from long-term care homes. This task force will be actively advised by a number of independent subject matter experts and will identify one independent individual to act as Chair of the Task Force.

The Task Force will be committed to: better understanding the current challenges in delivering quality care; developing an Action Plan for a path forward to be implemented by every participant in the industry; and delivering the Action Plan to the Ontario Minister of Health and Long Term Care, Deb Matthews, by early 2012.

"The vast majority of front-line staff and administrators in long term care come to work every day with a deep commitment to providing thorough, dignified, compassionate care for the 77,000 residents of long-term care homes in Ontario," says Ms. Paech. "We all have a role to play in indentifying strategies to ensure that residents have the safest and highest quality care every day."

Employees who work in long-term care serve residents who have more acute care needs than even five years ago. Seventy-three per cent of long-term care residents suffer from Alzheimer's disease or dementia, 91 per cent are incontinent, 89 per cent require assistance with dressing and more than 85 per cent are classified in the mid- to heavy-care categories. Overall, staff are caring for an increasing number of residents with more complex care needs.

“We are confident that the long-term care sector can work together with government and stakeholders, to improve the care and services we provide to the residents of all long-term care homes in Ontario,” said Ms. Paech.

About the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA)

OLTCA represents the operators of more than 430 charitable, not-for-profit, private and municipal long-term care homes. OLTCA homes provide care, accommodation and services to almost 50,000 seniors annually and employ about 50,000 Ontarians.

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For further information, please contact:

Gail Paech
Chief Executive Officer (Interim)
Ontario Long Term Care Association
905-470-8995 ext. 24
647-971-2422