

Long-term care

*A vital provider of
affordable housing and
care for our seniors*



OLTCA

**Budget Submission
2024**



Building high-quality, sustainable long-term care

Ontario's long-term care (LTC) homes play a vital role in the lives of seniors with complex care needs and within their communities. LTC homes provide quality care, affordable housing, individualized supports and a caring environment for people living with conditions such as advanced dementia or severe stroke.

Long-term care is undergoing a major transformation, including embracing emotion-focused care and forming new partnerships with hospitals and others to enhance resident care. The Ontario government has made historic funding commitments to rebuild and expand long-term care capacity, as well as to increase hours of care for residents and enhance staffing programs.

These activities and investments are supporting progress – but we are in a race against time. The current wait list for long-term care is nearly 43,000 people and with the rapidly aging population, it is growing at 1,000 seniors a year.

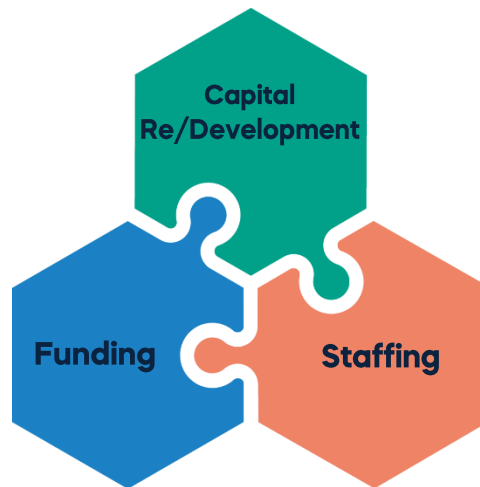
Homes are facing significant challenges with staffing, financial pressures, and their ability to modernize and build new spaces. They need further support and investments to continue to build a long-term care system that meets the needs of seniors – today and tomorrow.

The issues

There is a severe staffing shortage of health care workers at a time when more residents are entering long-term care with higher needs than ever before. Ontario's Auditor General highlighted these pressures in his December 2023 report. Most significantly, financial pressures from factors including continued COVID costs as well as operating and construction costs affected by inflation and rising interest rates, are causing financial shortfalls and instability for homes.

Staffing, funding, and capital re/development are tightly interconnected.

This staffing and operating funding instability is also jeopardizing the ability of homes to re/develop. Long-term care homes must raise the equity needed to build the home and must demonstrate they are financially stable to secure the financing. In order to do this, homes must have sufficient operating funding and staff resources to run the home. More than 200 older homes still need to re/build, but many face significant barriers in moving forward with the current operational funding and challenging human resource environment.



If homes are unable to re/build, the communities where the homes provide vital services will be required to find alternative safe and appropriate care and accommodation for seniors with very high needs who cannot live at home. This will create extraordinary pressure on local hospitals, primary care, families and other caregivers.

The solutions

This submission identifies key issues and proposes solutions that will strengthen and stabilize long-term care homes, enabling them to ensure quality resident care and build in communities across Ontario to meet the needs of seniors. As the challenges are interdependent, all solutions must be connected in order to succeed. A strong sector requires stable operating funding, a strong capital program and staff resources to meet the needs of residents today and tomorrow.

With the needs of today's seniors being far more complex, and as the Baby Boom generation soon approaches its elder years, ensuring that our communities can provide the care and housing that our seniors need and deserve is one of Ontario's biggest challenges. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the Ontario government to provide safe and high-quality care and services, and to create meaningful opportunities for our seniors who need long-term care to live and thrive.

Stabilize funding for long-term care homes to operate today and build for tomorrow

- **Recommendation: Increase care funding** to ensure homes can meet the increasing complex care needs of their residents and achieve the target for increased hours of direct care.
- **Recommendation: Ensure sufficient, stable and predictable funding for resident accommodations and services** by closing the deficit / funding gap made worse by the pandemic, to ensure homes can maintain operations and provide a safe and secure workplace and living environment.
- **Recommendation: Introduce an annual operating grant for small, rural and northern homes** to address their significant and unique structural operating pressures.

Strengthen capital re/development so homes can modernize and meet the needs of seniors now and in the future

- **Recommendation: Strengthen the opportunities for re/development** by building on the success of the recent capital top-up program so all remaining homes have a viable path to re/develop in a timely manner.
- **Recommendation: Ensure that capital funding stays current** with the costs to build and remains reflective of challenging economic conditions.
- **Recommendation: Maintain long-term care capacity** by providing license extensions for long-term care homes planning and in the process of re/development

Grow the long-term care workforce to support homes in meeting the government's commitment to increase hours of direct care and in ensuring homes can maintain vibrant teams

- **Recommendation: Continue investments to attract, retain and advance the workforce** to meet the increasing complex care needs of residents.
- **Recommendation: Increase supports and tools for long-term care homes to recruit and support staff**, recognizing the ongoing staffing challenges across the broader health system.
- **Recommendation: Enable long-term care team members to work to their full scope of practice**, and support the adoption of emotion-focused and cultural models of care so that multidisciplinary teams can fully care for and enrich the lives of the people they are serving.



About the OLTCA

For more than 60 years, the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA) has been committed to advancing the quality of long-term care services in Ontario. With advocacy and leadership as a key focus, the Association has been able to influence legislative policy and regulatory change, support sector expansion and redevelopment, and provide educational opportunities to ensure the increasing needs of residents are being met with safe, high-quality care.

Today, the OLTCA has the privilege of representing 70% of the long-term care homes in Ontario. Like the system itself, the OLTCA includes a range of ownership models: private operators, non-profit and charitable organizations, municipally operated and First Nation homes.

The OLTCA represents the shared interests of homes across the province and believes in our collective responsibility to build a strong and sustainable long-term care home sector that delivers the best quality care to Ontario's seniors.



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