

It's my nature to **care.**



OPSEU LONG TERM CARE, RETIREMENT HOMES, AND RELATED FACILITIES

News & Information for OPSEU Members From Sector 8 Long Term Care

June 2016



The dark side of retirement homes

As our parents or grandparents grow older we are sometimes faced with a hard decision – is it time to place them in a Long-Term Care (LTC) home? The pleasant alternative in years gone by was to consider a retirement home where they could live life to the fullest, surrounded by friends their age, playing cards or taking day trips. However, this is simply not the case anymore.

Time and time again, retirement homes are used as hospices or to house seniors who are waiting for a spot in a long term care home, when it is no longer safe for them to live on their own. The waiting time for a spot in a long term care home can range from between two to three years. Most residents placed in this situation often decline to the point that the move itself increases their mortality rate. Many pass away while waiting for a bed.

The long wait also has other challenges. Since retirement homes are often minimally-staffed, the care that is offered is minimal as well. It makes no sense to place seniors who require an advanced level of care into respite rooms in retirement homes that are under-staffed and ill-equipped to handle their needs. The only winner in this scenario is the retirement home, which bills residents for the increased care they receive. However, there is no increase in hours or pay given to the staff who provide that care. This creates undue hardship on the clients as well as the staff.

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The alternative is to use outside agencies to help with this care, but that continues to be a paid service. The cost of that care could bankrupt anyone living on a fixed income. Because retirement homes are not subsidized by the government as LTC homes are, the “for-profit home” sets the rates. With no new LTC homes slated to open in most regions, our residents are the ones that suffer.

It is a common feeling that due to the difference in accountability between the LTC and retirement homes, the process is systematically abusing our residents. Requiring seniors to have longer stays in retirement homes saves the government money because it doesn't have to pay subsidies. For-profit companies and private care agencies look at our seniors and see dollar signs. Longer stays

in these homes and increased care mean more money in their pockets.

This is an epidemic that is sweeping Ontario. The cost of running a retirement home is far less due to the supposed need for fewer staff and fewer regulations. In addition, staff feel powerless in the battle for their rights and the rights of the residents.

This article only scratches the surface of what is happening within the walls of retirement homes today. The system is broken and will take a commitment from the federal and provincial government to correct it.

Rhonda Ferguson
OPSEU sector 8 vice chair

OPSEU welcomes workers at Empire Crossing Retirement Community



OPSEU's Long-Term Care sector would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members. Workers at the Empire Crossing Retirement Community in Port Hope voted to make OPSEU their bargaining agent on December 2, 2015.

Here's what Warren (Smokey) Thomas, president of OPSEU, had to say to our new brothers and sisters on behalf of the Executive Board:

“We pledge the union's full support in giving them a powerful voice for fair wages and benefits, workplace health and safety, and job security. I know they will continue to do a wonderful job to improve the lives of seniors in Ontario,”

OPSEU is proud to represent these workers and approximately 3,500 long-term care workers across Ontario.

Support for minimum hours of care

The future will be brighter for residents in our care if Private Member's Bill 188, submitted by MPP France G  linas, Health Critic for the NDP, passes. The proposed amendment to the Long Term Care Homes Act, which passed First Reading on April 20, 2016, would legislate on average a minimum of four hours per day for 'hands-on' care.

Here are some excerpts from Bill 188:

“Based on assessment of resident

- (2) The licensee shall ensure that the care set out in the plan of care is based on an assessment of the resident, the needs and preferences of that resident and takes into account the licensee's duty to comply with subsection 8 (5).

2. Section 8 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsections:

Minimum standard of daily care

- (5) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that the average number of combined hours of nursing services and

personal support services offered at the home each day is at least four hours per resident, or if a higher minimum average is prescribed, the prescribed amount.

Same, calculation

- (6) For the purposes of this section, the average number of hours of nursing services and personal support services is calculated as prescribed by the regulations and does not include hours paid in respect to vacation, statutory holidays, leaves of absence, sick time or training time or for other purposes which do not involve direct patient care.”

We encourage all our members, friends and family to contact their MPP in support of this amendment. Check out the website below for the contact information of current MPPs: www.ontla.on.ca/web/members/members_current.do?locale=en

This Private Member's Bill has only passed the first of four stages. We still have a long way to go to reach Royal Assent.



Sector 8 Long Term Care Divisional Executive

Joan Corradetti, Chair

I am currently working in a resident home area in a long-term-care facility as a Personal Support Worker and have been employed for 21 years. I have held several positions on the Local Executive Council and have been worker co-chair for our Joint Health and Safety, Employer-Employee Relations, and Bargaining Committees. OPSEU gave me the opportunity to attend the Worker's Health & Safety Centre Instructor Training. I believe that we, as workers, should advocate for the members of our local and sector as well as for our residents. There is no 'I' in team, and together we can work to maintain safe and healthy workplaces for our members. Solidarity can achieve this.

As Sector Chair, my commitment is to assist where I can. Stronger collective bargaining language and addressing workload and safety issues can facilitate change to a better workplace environment for all our members

Rhonda Ferguson, Vice-chair

I am a mother of three, wife to my husband Joe and a Registered Practical Nurse in my local municipally-run home. I got into nursing to work exactly where I am working. I got into the union because I see the challenges that face the staff and want to be a part of the change.

My union activities include being unit steward of Local 494, mobilizing, bargaining, and serving on area councils. I am Region 4's 2016-2017 constitution committee representative and alternate Provincial Women's Committee representative. I hope to bring all this experience with me to Sector 8.

I am looking forward to representing Sector 8 as Vice-Chair and I want to say thank you to each of you for the opportunity.

Terri-Lyn Long, Treasurer

I am a Health Care Aide. I have been working in this sector since 1986 and have been an active member in OPSEU since 1999. I was chief steward in my workplace, secretary/treasurer of the local, and vice-chair of the LTC sector. I was also involved in a campaign for our home, called To Protect Residents Now. We succeeded in achieving our goal to provide proper care to our residents, and saved jobs. I have seen terrible changes in quality and quantity of care to our aging population. I want to continue to be involved in making positive changes for both staff and residents.



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