



Advocacy Committee Report to the 2021 CRFCN AGM (March 2020 – April 2021)

Membership:

Thanks to the members of the Committee for all their hard work over the last year: Mary Frances Taylor, Anna Lyall, Richard Pell, Jane Coyle, and Janet Luloff who stepped down from the Committee in February.

Priorities

- Our focus this past year has been on the pandemic and its impact on residents, families and staff.
- Priorities from August 2020 were confirmed at zoom meetings with family councils
- Expanded Network priorities document was prepared in early October: “Long-Term Care Must be Transformed”. Priorities for 2020-21 include: advocating for resident and family rights; improving care (person-centred care, more hours, improved salaries and benefits, more training); improving the physical environment (designing for person-centred care, creating home-like environments, re-developing older homes, improving HVAC systems), improving emergency preparedness, improving accountability (including the development of national standards), and reducing the impact of subsequent waves of COVID. The document was distributed to Family Councils and to all local MPPs with a request for meeting.

Letters

- April 10 to Minister Fullerton asking that front-line workers be restricted to one home; staff receive an immediate pay increase and adequate PPE; homes improve communication with family; and the Ministry maintain a list of homes in outbreak.
- May 11 to Minister Schulte asking for national standards for LTC, infrastructure investment and a national strategy recognizing LTC as an integral element of national health system.
- June 24 to Premier Ford asking that Bill 175 on home care be delayed until there was time to incorporate lessons learned during the pandemic and that home care be looked at in conjunction with the proposed review of LTC.
- June 28 to Cathy Fooks to congratulate her on her appointment as Ontario Patient Ombudsman
- July 3 to Minister Fullerton re unrealistic testing demands on family for outdoor visits.
- July 10 to Minister Fullerton asking that family voices be included in the announced Commission
- August 6 and 28 to Premier Ford asking that visitation policies be revised.
- Sept. 2 to Minister Fullerton on the need for second wave planning: recognize critical role of family caregivers, increase hours and pay for PSWs, accelerate hiring and training for staff, increase inspections and IPAC procedures.
- Sept. 14 to LTC Commission re ensuring family and resident voices be included in their consultations.
- Oct. 2 to Dr. Vera Etches for ask for her help with facilitating testing of essential family caregivers.

- Oct. 26 to Minister Elliot asking that rapid testing be expediated for LTC and that families and staff be tested in their LTC home.
- Nov. 4 to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, Ontario Legislature expressing concern about Bill 218 which lowers accountability for poor care and neglect of frail seniors in long-term care homes and makes it extremely difficult for residents and families to sue long-term care homes as a result of COVID-19.
- Jan. 8 to Premier Ford asking that home receive funding include essential caregivers in onsite surveillance testing and be allowed to visit their loved ones while awaiting test results
- Feb. 3 to federal Ministers Hajdu and Schulte re National Standards.
- Feb. 4 to Minister Fullerton re screening in LTC (requirements changed same day as our letter)
- Feb. 10 to Minister Fullerton re rapid antigen testing (directive changed on Feb. 16)
- Feb. 16 to Ministers Fullerton and Romano re PSW training program.
- March 8 to Minister Fullerton to follow up on announced training program: focus must be on attracting the right people to LTC and providing better pay, benefits and working conditions to retain staff.
- April 13 to Premier Ford on lack of funding in March 24th budget to address PSW retention issues

National Standards

- Had zoom meetings with Marie-France Lalonde in September to gather insight into approaches; advocacy group of the National Association of Federal Retirees to explore possible cooperation and with a policy analyst in Minister Hajdu's office to gain insight into status of work at the federal level. Trying to set up other meetings with key players.
- On-going monitoring of all standards development initiatives such as those from the Canadian Long-Term Care Association and the recently announced Health Standards Organization; we plan on participating in their planned town halls and will contribute as appropriate. Standards must be measurable, enforcement and linked to federal funding.
- Promoting national standards in meetings with MPPs.
- Planning a letter writing campaign asking MPPs and MPs to support the development and enforcement of national standards.

Media

- Anna Lyall was interviewed by the CBC on the topic of the lack of air-conditioning in LTC and the impact on residents.
- Liz Payne consulted our network several times on LTC issues and we were quoted in several Ottawa Citizen articles.
- Jane Coyle was interviewed by Joanne Laucius for an Ottawa Citizen article published on March 18, 2021.
- Letters to the editor (unpublished): A letter to the editor (one to the Globe and Mail in response to Picard article that family take their family member out of LTC, to the Citizen in response to article on Bill 175, to the Citizen on PSW training in response to Liz Payne article (Feb. 2021). Our recent letter about moving a LTC home from L'Original to Orleans was published in the Citizen on March 24, 2021.

Submissions

- A 40-page submission was sent to the LTC Commission in mid-December based on feedback provided by family councils and their members. The public version of the document (minus family stories) was distributed to local MPPs.
- As we have done in previous years, we made submission to the pre-budget consultations of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs in February. The submission was sent to all MPPs in our region.
- Anna Lyall and Katherine Bennett prepared a detailed response to the proposed Ministry amendments to cooling regulations which was submitted to the Ministry on March 13.

Meetings with MPPs

- Met via zoom with Joel Harden (NDP), Lucille Collard (Liberal), Amanda Simard (Liberal) and Goldie Ghamari (Conservative) in the fall and with Jeremy Roberts (Conservative) and John Fraser (Liberal) this spring to advocate for CRFCN priorities.
- After the release of the military report last year, an email was sent to local MPPs recommending that all homes in outbreak should have an immediate visit by a trained inspector to assess conditions in the home and determine if there are adequate staffing levels with particular attention to the two homes in the region with the highest death rates.
- Mary Frances, Rosemary and Grace had a zoom meeting in December with Effie Triantafilopoulos, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Long-Term Care and Mason Saunders, Director of Stakeholder Relations to Minister Fullerton to discuss four hours of care.

Liaison/Outreach

- Co-signatory to AdvantAge Ontario letter to Minister Fullerton asking for financial assistance to participate in Commission (if needed).
- Supported the May 28th [open letter to Premier Ford](#) by the Ontario Health Coalition.
- On-going communication through FCO to clarify family visiting rights, essential visitor and essential caregiver status with the Ministry of LTC.
- Participation in LHIN LTC Liaison Committee conference calls with Public Health and Regional Emergency Response Group throughout the pandemic.
- During wave 1, had regular zoom meetings with the LTC Operational Task Group set up to support long-term care homes and residents and their families during the pandemic, to provide information about local family councils and discuss family issues and concerns.
- Through her involvement with the Canadian Patient Safety Institute, Jane participated in two separate meetings with Minister Elliott and the Auditor General's Office.
- With Rosemary Cavan, Grace participated in a call with the Patient Ombudsman's Office.
- Grace and Janet continued their participation in the Transformation Working Group which is looking at introducing person-centred care into our LTC in the Champlain Region and sharing best practices.
- Facilitated a meeting between Ottawa Public Health and Family Councils on December 4 to give OPH feedback on family visitor policies and testing depending on the colour designation for Ottawa.
- On Jan. 25th, participated with 19 other organization/associations interesting in improving LTC, in a zoom meeting convened by the Council on Aging of Ottawa.

- Continued communication and collaboration with Region 4 Advocacy Committee and Chairs of the Northern Ontario Family Council Network.

Other Activities

- Grace participated as a member of Long-Term Care Staffing Study Advisory Group between February and July 2020.
- Working with the Committee, Arnie Frances from the Fairview Manor FC conducted and compiled a survey of LTC homes' financial payment and communications options. We were pleased with the 38% response rate given it was the Network's first survey.
- Twitter: 163 followers including OLTCOA, AdvantAge Ontario, Long-Term Care Services National Standard, Sinai Geriatrics, many LTCs in our region, Eldercare Foundation of Ottawa, Jim Watson. 1247 Tweets Since April 2020.

Respectfully submitted by:

Grace Welch

Chair, Advocacy Committee, CRFCN

May 15, 2021