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Long-term care in Canada needs to be fundamentally transformed from an institutional, task-oriented model to one that puts the human dignity and needs of residents at the focus of care. To quote from the July 2020 Ministry LTC Staffing study “we need to make long-term care a better place to live, and a better place to work”. To achieve this transformation, the government must:

Improve care

- Ensure all long-term care is based on a person-centred model.
- Create and fund a LTC human resource plan to attract and retain an adequate workforce of well-trained staff with the personal attributes for work in LTC.
- Improve wages and conditions of work (more full-time positions, better benefits, respect in the workplace) to aid recruitment and retention.
- Fast-track the implementation of the recommendations of the 2020 Staffing Study (July 2020) and LTC Commission.
- Implement the minimum care standard of four hours of direct care now, not in 2024/25, and review whether four hours is adequate to address the complex care needs of today’s residents.
- Require that all homes publicly report staffing levels and report non-adherence to MOLTC.
- Develop consistent standards for PSW education and on-the-job training, especially dementia and end-of-life training to ensure quality resident care.

Improve the physical environment

- Revise the current building standards to create smaller home-like environments that are conducive to the delivery of person-centred care and have proper temperature and air-quality controls; new builds should have private rooms with ensuite bathrooms.
- Expedite the redevelopment of homes that do not meet current design standards.
- Reduce or eliminate the proportion of for-profit homes.

Improve emergency preparedness

- Ensure all LTC homes have an infection control specialist on-site (or for smaller homes, have agreements with hospitals for IPAC support) and plans which include adequate staffing, training, PPE, and infection control policies and procedures; plans must be regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensure the participation of Family Councils and Resident Councils in pandemic and emergency preparedness planning for the home.

Improve accountability and transparency

- Mandate that all homes have a Family Council and that home management encourage and support their activities.
- Promote the role and rights of families and Power of Attorneys who are recognized as essential partners in care, critical to the physical and emotional well-being of residents and have access to their family members in LTC regardless of outbreak status.

- Review and revise current performance measurements with stakeholders (including families) to ensure a focus on quality of care and quality of life. Performance metrics must be publicly available.
- Review financial audit processes to ensure that government funds are spent appropriately.
- Re-assess the current inspection process to ensure that it is achieving quality improvement in LTC and modelling best practices. Repeated non-compliance should result in penalties and immediate follow-up action.
- In partnership with the federal government, develop concrete, measurable national standards for long-term care.

The Champlain Region Family Council Network supports the Family Councils in the 60 LTC homes in the Champlain Region through education, information-sharing and advocacy.