

2016-2017 Advocacy Committee Report to the Champlain Region Family Council Network 2017 AGM

The Advocacy Committee continues to advocate on long-standing issues which affect the care and safety of our family members and friends living in long-term care homes.

Janet Luloff who sits on the Garry Armstrong Family Council joined the committee in 2016. Continuing members are: Rosemary Cavan, Jim LaPlante, Mary Frances Taylor, Grace Welch (Chair) and Doreen Rocque (ex-officio).

Our key priorities for action remain the same as in 2015-2016: improving care by mandating a minimum care standard and increasing the food budget; ending violence in long-term care by expanding the Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) program; and, lastly, achieving better capacity planning to reduce wait lists and ensuring that there are adequate beds for an aging population.

Petition:

The major initiative of the committee in the past year has been promoting a petition in support of a private member's bill called the Time to Care Act (Bill 33, formerly Bill 188). The bill, introduced by France G elinas, MPP Nickel Belt and NDP Health Critic, calls for an amendment to the Long Term Care Act such that homes would have to provide a minimum of 4 hours of nursing and personal care per resident per day (averaged across all residents). The Advocacy Committee partnered with the Advocacy Committee in Region 4 (Hamilton-Niagara-Haldimand-Brant) to contact Family Councils across Ontario as well as other interested organizations, to gather signatures in support of the Bill. Nearly 10,000 signatures have been collected since the campaign was launched last summer. Lisa MacLeod, MPP Nepean-Carleton, presented 4,000 signatures in the Legislature in December on our behalf.

We have learned from the office of France G elinas, that Bill 33 will not receive second reading before the fall. As a result, we will continue to gather signatures until we have a date for the second reading.

Meetings with MPPs:

Representatives of the Advocacy Committee regularly meet with local provincial politicians to inform them of our concerns and issues. This past year meetings were held with: Lisa MacLeod, John Yakabuski, Nathalie Des Rosiers and Yasir Naqvi. A planned meeting with Marie-France Lalonde has been postponed but we hope to meet with her later in the spring.

Presentations:

As in previous years, Grace Welch, on behalf of the committee, made presentations to the 2017 pre-budget consultations of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and to the Minister of Finance. As noted, the priorities for action remain the same as in previous years. Copies of the eight-page brief are available on the CRFCN's blogsite. Many local MPPs attend these consultations so they also provide excellent opportunities to raise awareness of on-going issues in the LTC sector.

Letters Sent:

Following the tabling of the 2016 Ontario budget, the Advocacy Committee wrote to all MPPs in the

Champlain region noting that, while we were pleased at the announcement of additional funding for the Behavioural Support Units, we were still very concerned that there was no new money for staff. We also raised the issue of care-giver burnout and the need for palliative care training in LTC.

In August the Ontario Ombudsman released a report entitled “Nowhere to Turn”; it discussed the plight of adults with developmental disabilities. The Advocacy Committee wrote to both the Minister of Health and Long Term Care and the Minister of Community and Social Services endorsing the report’s recommendations related to the inappropriate placement of adults with development disabilities in LTC homes. The Minister of Community and Social Services has committed to implementing all the recommendations in the report.

A letter was written to the CEO of the Ontario Long Term Care Association in response to their own letter in regard to our petition in support of a mandated minimum care standard. While OLTCA acknowledges that more care hours are needed, they are concerned about the cost of a 4 hour minimum.

As a result of a new mandate letter to the Minister of Health and Long Term Care, a letter was written to Premier Wynne to indicate our support for one of the key tasks assigned to the Minister: “Improving the safety and quality of life for those living in long-term care homes today and in the future, by considering necessary investments, including staffing...”

Two letters to the editor were written in response to articles related to Long Term Care: one to the Globe and Mail and a second to the Ottawa Citizen. Unfortunately neither letter was published.

Liaison/Outreach:

Through the efforts of the Committee, the CRFCN has been invited to sit on the Champlain LHIN’s LTC Liaison Committee. Doreen Rocque represents the Network.

The Committee regularly liaises with the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes & Services for Seniors (OANHSS). As a result of our request, OANHSS has introduced a reduced registration fee for families of residents in LTC who wish to attend the organization’s annual conference.

In November, I spoke about advocacy initiatives at a meeting of the Renfrew District Family Councils organized by Eleanor Ryan. I was also invited to speak on advocacy issues at a Kingston area network meeting; however that meeting was postponed to spring 2017.

Future:

The Committee will continue to monitor key initiatives that are of importance to families and friends in the Champlain LHIN. We hope to build on the channels of communication that we have established with MPPs and organizations such as OAHNSS even as we seek out new partnerships.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Committee for all their hard work and support during the past year.

Respectfully submitted by:

Grace Welch

Chair, Advocacy Committee, CRFCN

April 8, 2017