

2017-2018 Advocacy Committee Report to the Champlain Region Family Council Network 2018 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.

Committee members include: Rosemary Cavan, Janet Luloff, Mary Frances Taylor, Grace Welch (Chair) and Doreen Rocque (ex-officio). Jim Laplante resigned the committee in October; our thanks to him for his many contributions during his participation in the committee.

Our key priorities for action remain the same as in previous years: improving care by mandating a minimum care standard; 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 2017-2018 has been the promotion of 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 Gélinas, 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. Over 13,000 signatures were collected and presented in the Ontario Legislature. Bill 33 passed second reading in the Legislature on November 2, 2017 with the unanimous support of all parties. The work of the Network and family councils was acknowledged by Ms. Gélinas and John Fraser in their speeches in support of the bill. Ms. Gélinas asked that the bill be sent to the General Government Committee for review before moving to the final reading. In order to see the Bill move to this necessary review process, our committee drafted a sample letter asking for family councils and their members to write to their MPP to see that Bill 33 moved to the next step before final reading. Unfortunately, with the prorogation of the Ontario Legislature in advance of the June election, Bill 33 is dead as of March 15. France Gélinas will re-introduce the Bill at the earliest opportunity.

Meetings with MPPs:

As we have in the past, we have had several meetings with local provincial representatives to sensitize them to the chronic issues in LTC in the region. This year meetings were held with: Marie-France Lalonde, Grant Crack, Nathalie Des Rosiers and Yasir Naqvi. Informal discussions were held with John Fraser at the time of our presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Thank you notes were sent to the local politicians who voted for Bill 33 at its second reading in the Legislature.

Presentations:

As in previous years, Grace Welch, on behalf of the committee, made a presentation to the 2018 pre-budget consultations of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. A copy of our submission was also sent to the Minister of Finance. Our submission is available on the CRFCN's website.

Letters Sent:

We have written a number of letters over the past year to raise LTC issues or respond to requests for feedback:

- To Honourable Justice Eileen Gillese, Commissioner leading the Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in Long Term Care Homes System (Wefflaufer inquiry) to raise the issue of

- systemic problems in LTC (chronic understaffing, violence) that need to be addressed during the inquiry.
- To Sandy Rinaldo thanking her for the W5 report on abuse and the class action suit against Revera (spring 2017).
 - To each Liberal MP in the Champlain Region as a follow-up to the post-election letter sent after their election emphasizing the need for infrastructure funding for LTC. The local MPP and Chantale LeClerc, CEO of the LHIN were cc'ed on the letters.
 - To the Ottawa Citizen in response to an article about the long waiting lists for LTC. Our letter to the editor asking why the government won't build more LTC beds was published on June 9 and generated two other letters supporting our comments. Another letter was printed on December 9 thanking the Citizen for their series of articles on issues in LTC and asking that readers follow the Citizen's editorial advice and make LTC an election issue. Grace was also interviewed by Elizabeth Payne about LTC.
 - To Premier Wynne in October and November to indicate our support for Bill 33 and remind her of her government's promise "to improve the safety and quality of life" of LTC residents. The second letter was sent to her asking that Bill 33 be combined with Bill 160 another health related bill.
 - To Diane Deans, City of Ottawa Councillor and Chair, Community and Protective Services Committee who is leading the review of the 4 city-run homes. We indicated that while we still had confidence in the homes, we felt that the abuse incidents were systematic of chronic issues of understaffing and insufficient training across all homes.
 - To MOHLTC in response to their feedback about the proposed construction of a new LTC Extendicare home in Stittsville to replace West End Villa. We used the opportunity to underline the need for new beds to address the long waiting lists.
 - To MOHLTC to provide feedback on the proposed new regulations that would impose financial penalties on those LTC repeatedly failed inspections and orders of compliance.
 - To the new Minister of MOHLTC, Dr. Helena Jaznek, to congratulate her on her appointment, introduce our network and let her know our priorities for action in LTC.

Liaison/Outreach:

The Committee regularly liaises with AdvantAge Ontario (formerly the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes & Services for Seniors). Grace Welch has replaced Doreen Rocque on the LHIN's LTC Liaison Committee which meets 4-5 times per year. She has also been asked to sit on an ad-hoc committee of the Council on Aging that is looking at long-term care in the area.

Future:

The upcoming provincial election provides us with an opportunity to advocate for better care with potential candidates and sensitize them to the concerns of families. We will also continue to monitor key initiatives that are of importance to families and friends in the Champlain LHIN and develop responses. As we have in the past, we will continue to seek out new partnerships.

I am fortunate to be able to work with such a committed team and 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
April 7, 2018