

Champlain Region Family Council Network  
Panel Discussion Held in Conjunction with the  
Eleventh Annual General Meeting  
April 7, 2018

A panel of four LTC Administrators of LTC homes was invited to discuss current issues in long-term care and ways in which home administrations and Family Councils can work together to ensure the highest level of care for residents. The Administrators represented both non-profit and for-profit homes located in the Champlain Region.

- Lawrence Grant, Executive Director, The Glebe Centre, Ottawa
- Sue MacGregor, Administrator, Extendicare Starwood, Ottawa
- Shelley Sheedy, Director of Long-Term Care, Bonnechere Manor (Renfrew) and Mirimichi Lodge (Pembroke)
- Mary Boutette, Chief Operating Officer, Perley Rideau Veterans' Health Centre, Ottawa

The panelists were invited a) to describe the challenges facing their homes and b) to outline best practices implemented in their respective homes.

Several themes ran through the remarks of the four Administrators.

Provincial funding does not meet the needs of Ontario's LTC homes. The RAI-MDS (Resident Assessment Instrument), designed to ensure quality and appropriate care for residents has come to drive the funding of LTC. Through a process known as re-indexing, each home's care acuity level is reviewed annually and the results for all homes are compared to arrive at a funding level for the coming year. All four homes represented on the panel had experienced a decrease in funding despite higher resident acuity levels. It is assumed that acuity levels increase in all LTC homes province-wide every year given that residents are only admitted to LTC once every other option has been exhausted and LTC is the only answer. Most LTC residents have remained in the community much longer than was the case ten or fifteen years ago. They arrive in LTC needing much higher levels of care from the outset. This has had a dramatic impact on what is expected of frontline staff including PSWs, RPNs and RNs.

These outcomes are further exacerbated by the MOHLTC expectation of one-on-one care for residents with aggressive behaviour. This policy is costly but is expected to come out of the home's base funding. One of the homes had spent \$400,000 on one-on-one care since January 2018, cutting further into already tight funding. In addition, to meet the Ministry's expectations, this home draws the additional staff needed to address the policy from its casual pool; this has an impact on the home's ability to provide relief staffing for unplanned and planned absences of non-casual staff (illness, vacations etc).

**NOTE:** The CRFCN Executive found the discussion among the panellists regarding the funding formula, the CMI and the practice of re-indexing so compelling it is organizing a follow up discussion to become better informed on this matter and will

share that information with Family Councils in the Champlain Region later this summer.

Another common thread running through the four presentations focussed on staff. Colleges report having difficulty filling their training programs. As a result fewer PSWs are available to staff existing homes much less to meet the demand that will be created if the political parties follow through on their promises of large numbers of new LTC beds and refurbished homes.

The Administrators expressed concern that there has been a marked decline in pride in the work of a PSW. That work is physically and emotionally demanding and many PSWs are beginning to feel it is work that is not respected or rewarded. The significant number of recent reports about abuse of elderly residents by a few PSWs has resulted in a loss of pride in their work and dedication to the elderly. The stories also have an impact on the ability of homes to attract and retain well-trained and committed staff. It is small wonder that fewer individuals are prepared to make elder care a career choice.

A third thread was over-regulation. The LTC sector is subject to the Long-Term Care Act of 2007 and the regulations that support it. Application of the 300+ articles that make up these documents stifles innovation and new approaches to care. The majority of issues that arise in a home are self-reported and yet time, energy and money are still spent on investigating these matters. There is a 'blame and shame' approach to non-compliance without benefit of the ministry's former compliance advisory role. It is critical that homes and their staff be recognized and acknowledged for the things they do well and supported with Certified Quality Inspection initiatives.

The panellists emphasized that while the reputation of LTC has been damaged, the majority of staff and providers truly care about residents. The homes work closely with resident and family councils to ensure they understand resident needs and the opportunities for improvement. They invest in their staff and encourage them to buy into and take ownership of best care practices. They work with staff to ensure PSWs and nurses have the equipment and supplies to do their jobs, and that they feel valued by their supervisors.

In response to the question "how can Family Councils help?", the panellists noted the unique role of families and Family Councils. The provincial government wants to hear directly from stakeholders. The provincial election, which was on the horizon at the time of this discussion, presented an important opportunity to convey support for LTC and to raise questions regarding LTC funding and the need for more LTC capacity. All parties had committed to expanding the system and to rebuilding existing but aging residences. Ensure balanced coverage in the press. And support your homes, especially when bad things happen in good homes.