

## Report LTCR-SS-12-14

**To:** Chair Burley and Members of the Social Services Committee  
**From:** Lynne Johnson, Director of Long Term Care  
**Meeting Date:** August 13, 2014  
**Subject:** **UNIFOR Correspondence**  
**Status:** Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution SSC61-14; Endorsed by County Council September 2, 2014 per Resolution CC122-14;

### Recommendation(s)

**WHEREAS** correspondence has been received from UNIFOR requesting a letter, co-signed by the Warden and a representative of UNIFOR, be sent to the Minister of Health and Long Term Care recognizing the increasing acuity and complexity within long term care and requesting a multi-year funding commitment for front line staff;

**AND WHEREAS** challenges facing the long term care sector have been acknowledged;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** LTCR-SS-12-14 regarding UNIFOR Correspondence be received;

**AND THAT** a joint letter from Grey County and UNIFOR be sent to the Minister of Health and Long Term Care expressing the County's concerns facing the long-term care sector and requesting support in the development of a multi-year investment for front line staff.

### Background

During negotiations with UNIFOR Local 302 and Rockwood Terrace, discussion occurred on the challenges faced by staff in providing safe, optimal care. It was acknowledged that funding has not kept up with the demands placed on long term care

to support residents exhibiting responsive behaviours, or those with increasing medical needs.

As a result of our discussion, UNIFOR has requested a letter be jointly submitted to the Minister of Health requesting a commitment to multi-year funding for front-line staff.

This request coincides with the launch of the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA) advocacy campaign- *Better Seniors Care*. OLTCA has identified five priorities including:

1. Provide Safe High Quality Care
2. Support Mental Health and Dementia Care
3. Rebuild Older Long Term Care Homes
4. Support Small Homes
5. Reduce Administrative Burden

Residents, families, staff and the community at large are encouraged to visit [www.betterseniorscare.ca](http://www.betterseniorscare.ca) to learn more about the advocacy campaign.

## Current Status

Long term care homes are experiencing an increase in residents with complex physical and cognitive needs. There have been modest increases for direct care staff over the years however the shift in care is increasing at a rate greater than funding for staffing. Managers are responsible to monitor and adjust routines and staffing levels within established perimeters on a regular basis which may result in temporary or permanent staffing changes to address specific situations or trends.

Annual education modules for front-line staff include training in dementia and managing responsive behaviours. All incidents are reviewed and the data is used to support decision making.

Each of the homes participate in the Behavioural Supports Ontario initiative, with dedicated staff that support internal needs and engage with community partners to ensure that available resources are utilized and best practices are in place.

## Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

### Considerations

The changes and demands, placed on long term care, are happening quickly and funding for front-line staff is not keeping pace. Ageing at home strategies are supporting

seniors to live in their own homes longer and the medical and social needs of residents residing in long term care are more complex than ever.

Resident and staff safety are paramount and it is important that resources are available to support the provision of safe, effective care.

## Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

“Listening and working together” is goal 5 of the County of Grey Corporate Strategic Plan. Action 5.2 within this goal is to “Collaborate with the public, stakeholders, and other governments to improve delivery of county services”.

### Attachments

1. Letter from UNIFOR dated May 6, 2014 (pages 4-6)

**Kitchener Office**  
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Kitchener, Ontario N2P 2N4



JERRY DIAS  
National President  
Président national

MICHEL OUIMET  
Quebec Director  
Directeur québécois

PETER KENNEDY  
National Secretary-Treasurer  
Secrétaire-trésorier national

**VIA E-Mail and Canada Post**

May 6, 2014

Mr. Brian Milne  
Warden for Grey County  
595, 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue East  
Owen Sound, ON N4K 3E3  
[brian.milne@grey.ca](mailto:brian.milne@grey.ca)

Dear Mr. Milne:

During negotiations between Grey County (Rockwood Terrace) and Unifor Local 302 the parties discussed the issue of optimal care for residents and the relationship to funding received from the Ministry of Health to achieve that goal.

UNIFOR along with other partners is working with Staffing Alliance for Every Resident (SAFER). SAFER is a unique advocacy voice for the Long-Term Care sector comprised of service providers, unions, seniors' advocates and academics. These are individuals and representatives of organizations who have come together because they share a common view of the urgent need to protect the safety of residents and staff in the long-term care sector.

Members of the Staffing Alliance for Every Resident currently include:

- Tamara Daly, Associate Professor, York University, CIHR Research Chair in Gender, Work and Health
- Katha Fortier, Ontario Director, Unifor
- Kathy Kastner, Blogger
- Nick Manocchio, Board Chair, Villa Colombo, Toronto
- Beverly Mathers, RN, Labour Relations Manager, Ontario Nurses' Association
- Jane Meadus, Institutional Advocate, Advocacy Centre for the Elderly
- Paul Tuttle, President, Extendicare (Canada) Inc.
- Abdullah BaMasoud, Researcher Health Policy and Economics, SEIU Healthcare

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**Why This Group Was Formed**

As our population ages and becomes more ill and frail, elderly Ontarians enter long-term care homes with increased care requirements. It is essential that the staffing provided in homes meets the increasing needs of those who require care.

Due to a combination of policy decisions by the provincial government and the increasing life spans in our society, long-term care has become home to not only those who face physical health challenges, but also to those who face mental health challenges such as Dementia. The present funding model does not adequately address the unpredictable behaviors that can result in residents and staff members being put at risk for physical, verbal or emotional abuse.

Unpredictable behaviors are increasingly prevalent. Staffing levels have not kept pace with the pressures arising from the growing complexity of care needs.

**Violence in Long-Term Care**

There are an estimated 80,000 residents cared for in Ontario's long-term care homes and almost half (47%) of these residents demonstrate some form of aggressive behavior due to Dementia or mental health challenges.

Recent media reports have drawn attention to situations that providers and staff have long identified; the statistics confirm that violent incidents are increasing. There were 29 homicides in long-term care homes between 2003 and 2012, as reported by the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario; this rate is twice that of Canadian cities with a comparable population size;

City	Population (2011)	Number of homicides 2003-2012
Peterborough	78,698	11
Moncton	69,074	13
Long Term Care Homes in Ontario	77,747	29

**Increasing Disease Acuity and Complexity**

- Based on evidence reported by the Canadian Institute of Health Information, 93% of newly admitted residents have two or more chronic illnesses
- 77% of residents require extensive assistance, or are totally dependent on assistance with the activities of daily living
- In 2011, 83% of residents were reported to show "high" or "very high" care needs, compared to 72% four years earlier

**Inadequate Staffing Levels**

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) reports paid staffing hours of 3.43 per resident, per day in 2012. Resident to staff ratios vary widely throughout the sector and are known to be terribly inadequate on overnight shifts.

Research shows that violent incidents are more likely to occur when residents are not receiving direct care

**A Minimum Standard of Direct Care**

SAFER is calling for increased staffing in all classifications of direct care providers to a legislated, fully funded minimum of four hours of direct care per resident, per day. This minimum standard should be phased in over time and enforced by the MOHLTC, supported by a comprehensive staffing plan for all front-line caregivers.

**Why a Minimum Standard?**

In 2005, an inquest into the death of two residents following a violent attack at Casa Verde Nursing Home recommended 3.5 hours of care per resident, including RN hours

In 2008, the government commissioned a report by Shirley Sharkee, who recommended four hours of care per resident, per day, including allied health professionals  
In Ontario daycares, the legislated ratio is one staff member for every six children.

In long-term care, in the absence of any enforced minimum standard, the best ratio is approximately 1:8 and extremely dangerous ratios exist during night shifts.

To support the proposition that our parents, grandparents and all vulnerable residents, deserve to receive the best a safest possible care in the safest of environments and to ensure a safe working environment for front-line staff I ask that the County join with UNIFOR by signing the attached letter. This letter will be in turn forwarded to the Minister of Health.

Thank you for your time, and I await your anticipated positive response and support of those most vulnerable.

Regards,



Bill Gibson  
Area Director, Unifor Kitchener  
BG/br.cope343  
Att.

cc	Rusty Sproul	Financial Secretary, Local 302
	Nancy McMurphy	President, Unifor Local 302
	Katha Fortier	Ontario Director, Unifor
	Lynne Johnson	Director of Long Term Care, Grey County
	Grant McLevy	Director, Human Resources, Grey County

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2. Proposed letter to the Minister of Health and Long Term Care.

The Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins  
Minister of Health and Long Term Care  
Hepburn Block, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
80 Grosvenor St  
Toronto ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Hoskins,

This letter is to express our concerns with the challenges facing the long term care sector in the province of Ontario. In the past, your office has been approached by both facility operators and unions representing the workers in long term care. We are now joining together with a common goal to ensure that long term care residents are provided with safe, effective care that is appropriately staffed.

The present model of funding is not meeting the needs of residents or staff. The majority of residents in long term care have multiple health conditions. Additionally, long term care homes are experiencing an increase in dementia and chronic mental health conditions among the residents.

Ageing at home programs have resulted in seniors being admitted to long term care in a more advanced state of physical and cognitive decline. Other impacts on resident acuity are the closing of mental health beds and the shortage of assisted living facilities.

Funding for care has not kept pace with resident needs; investing in more staff would result in safer resident-centered, quality care.

It is our collective obligation to provide a system that protects our vulnerable citizens. We are jointly requesting that the Office of the Minister of Health provide an immediate multi-year investment in funding for front line staff in long term care homes, as well as a commitment that staffing will be funded in accordance with evidence based, minimum, measurable standards.

Respectfully,

Warden Brian Milne  
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Respectfully submitted by,

Lynne Johnson  
Director of Long Term Care