

Long Term Care Reform

The new sub-committee on Long Term Care was launched and got under way with four meetings, before taking a break for the summer. Two Members who have worked in LTC, gave members valuable insight into the workings behind the scenes. Members looked at and identified the main areas of concern and reform:

- Lack of training for staff
- Underpaid and over worked staff
- Staff need to be paid enough to avoid movement from home to home
- PPE (protective equipment) for frontline workers
- Patient/staff ratios
- Accessible buildings
- Conditions - i.e. air-conditioning, maintenance and cleanliness in buildings
- Single rather than shared rooms etc.
- Regular and unscheduled inspections
- Profit and non-profit homes

Lisa Levin of AdvantageAge and Samantha Beck of Family Councils Ontario made presentations to the committee and answered their questions. The meetings were highly informative and spurred the group to continue to advocate for reform.

In May, letters were sent out to MPs and MPPs expressing the club's concern about the status of our long-term care homes for older adults. The letter suggests a thorough examination of the staffing, structure of the homes and need for annual inspections. Perhaps the availability of more comprehensive home care might also be included in such a study.

We commended them on the recent temporary \$4/hour increase for healthcare workers. However, the government needs to address the disgraceful practice of paying extremely low wages to personal care workers and limiting hours of work to avoid payment of benefits. These workers need permanent full-time jobs that pay benefits and encourage them to work for a single employer. The staff need personal protection equipment, not only for this pandemic but as an on-going practice.-As a result of this letter a few UWC members met with MPP Vincent Ke who promised to take our concerns to the Health Minister and the Minister of LTC. We also met MP Mike Levitt to discuss the matter and wondered if LTC homes could become part of the Canada Health Act. He could not respond to this, as healthcare is a provincial matter.