

RE: ERO number 019-0279  
Proposed Changes to the Provincial Policy Statement

We are pleased to provide the following submission commenting on changes directly affecting long-term care homes in the Proposed Provincial Policy Statement.

The Ontario Long Term Care Association (“OLTCA”) is the largest association of long-term care providers in Ontario, the only association that represents the full mix of long-term care home operators – private, not-for-profit, charitable, and municipal. We represent nearly 70% of Ontario’s 626 long-term care homes, located in communities across the province. Our members provide care and accommodation services to more than 70,000 residents annually.

Long-term care is often the only affordable, low-cost option for seniors who require care and cannot afford private care in their own homes or retirement home accommodations.

Access to long-term care remains a very significant issue in Ontario. Wait lists are growing at an astounding rate. As of August 2019, 36,587 Ontarians were waiting for a long-term care bed and the average time for placement was up to 138 days. Where seniors are unable to find a bed, they are cared for at home or in hospital or in many cases unfortunately they are not properly cared for. And that makes our problem a system problem. On top of this current demand the Ontario Government projects the Provincial senior’s population (those 75 and older) to grow by 25% over the next five years and 138.6% over the next 20 years compared to a 23.8% increase in the total population.

In addition to the growth in the Senior’s population, many of Ontario’s long-term care homes are 40 or more years old nearing the end of their functional lives. These older long-term care homes feature three- and four-bed wards that do not meet the needs of residents, particularly those with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias – a core population in long-term care. Ontario’s long-term care homes are getting older and we are not rebuilding them fast enough.

Almost 50% of Ontario's 626 long-term care homes, encompassing roughly 30,000 beds, are required to be redeveloped by June of 2025 to meet current design standards and provide greater comfort and safety for residents. In addition to the long-term homes requiring rebuilding, the Government of Ontario has announced plans to add an additional 15,000 beds over the next five years (and a total of 30,000 beds over the next 10 years) to meet the existing and growing demand for Senior's care.

The Ontario Long Term Care Association is committed to working collaboratively with Government to build and renew long-term care homes across the province. The Association supports the proposed amendments including long-term care homes in the definitions of Special Needs housing and Public Service Facilities. Most municipalities in Ontario do not explicitly address the need for long-term care homes in their Official Plan's and Zoning By-Laws. Navigating the current planning and municipal approval processes has been a challenge for many long-term care homes.

The OLTCOA has established a special task force consisting of its members who are actively involved in efforts to redevelop and/or develop new long-term care homes. The Task Force is currently finalizing recommendations to Government to improve the existing capital program and approvals processes. We expect the Task Force will have recommendations on how to further strengthen municipal planning and approval processes to ensure timely redevelopment and development of new long-term care homes. We would welcome the opportunity to engage with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing again upon the finalization of the recommendations.