



Ontario Society (Coalition) of Senior Citizens' Organizations

December 29, 2008

Honourable David Caplan
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
80 Grosvenor Street
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Caplan:

Re: Ontario Seniors and Health Care

We are writing to you on behalf of The Ontario Society (Coalition) of Senior Citizens' Organizations (OCSCO). We are a provincial not-for-profit organization with more than 160 group members that represent over 500,000 seniors across Ontario. We encourage seniors' involvement in all aspects of society, by keeping them informed on current issues, and by focusing on programs to benefit an aging population.

At our Annual General Meeting held November 26, 2008 in Toronto, we approved three resolutions around current provincial legislation affecting seniors in Ontario and the health care they receive. You will find the resolutions attached in full; here is a synopsis of our concerns:

1. Staffing in Long-Term Care Homes

The *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* includes many improvements in standards of care; however, none of these improved standards can be made effective without adequate staffing levels. The Government promised that Regulations regarding staffing levels would be forthcoming. The Government needs to institute required staffing ratios at a minimum level of an average 3.5 hours per day per resident and we urge that they fund each Long-Term Care Home on the basis of its current case mix (acuity level).

2. Regulation of Retirement Homes

14 months have elapsed since the Government acknowledged recommendations developed during public consultations (in which we participated) and we are deeply concerned about protecting seniors now living in retirement homes. The Government needs to proceed to the next steps by appointing a tri-partite commission to set and enforce the new standards and to prioritize the establishment of consumer protection legislation for residents of retirement homes and introduce such legislation in the Ontario Legislature during its next session. In addition, we urge the Government to establish a graduated licensing system for all retirement homes and fund an inspection regime for enforcing the new standards with unannounced inspections as is now the law in Long-Term Care Homes.

3. Managed Competition for Community Care Access Centres Contracts

We call upon the Provincial Government to make the moratorium on competitive bidding permanent and establish a home-care system where the Access Centres determine a reasonable cost for each service and ask non-profit agencies to provide services at these rates that for-profit providers be called on only for services in excess of what the non-profit agencies are unable to provide.

As an organization dedicated to sustaining and improving the quality of life for Ontario's seniors, we urge you to move forward with these issues and act upon our recommendations.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Shirley Barnes and Paul Delahanty
Co-Chairs, Ontario Society (Coalition) of Senior Citizens' Organizations

c.c. Premier Dalton McGuinty
Hon. M. Aileen Carroll, MPP, Minister of Culture and Minister Responsible for Seniors
Geoff Quirt, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ontario Seniors' Secretariat

660 Briar Hill Ave., Suite 207 Toronto, Ontario M6B 4B7
Tel: 416-785-8570 Fax: 416-785-7361 Toll Free: 1-800-265-0779
E-mail: OCSCO@web.net
Charitable Registration Number: 88502 6351 RR0001