AMO Association of
Municipalities Ontario

October 28, 2021

AMO Policy Update – New Long-Term Legislation, Additional Personal Support Workers' Wage Enhancements, New LTC Personal Support Workers and Nurses Training

New Long-Term Care Legislation Introduced

The Ontario government is introducing the *Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors, and Building More Beds Act, 2021*, which will repeal the current *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* and create the *Fixing Long Term Care Act, 2021*. The Bill also introduces proposed amendments to the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010*.

Measures proposed under the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act,* 2021 would fall under three pillars: improving staffing and care; protecting residents through better accountability, enforcement, and transparency; and building modern, safe, comfortable homes for seniors.

If passed, the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021* would:

- establish the commitment to provide an average of four hours of daily direct care per resident per day by March 31, 2025
- strengthen the Residents' Bill of Rights to align with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and recognizing the role caregivers play in resident health and well-being
- implement new requirements for annual resident, family, and caregiver surveys
- establish new compliance and enforcement tools, including doubling the fines on the conviction of an offense under the proposed legislation
- introduce a Minister's review of a director's decision in the licensing process.

It is expected that these legislative changes to the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010* would, if passed, increase transparency, and promote consumer choice and resident protection by modernizing the oversight of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority, improving quality of care, and enhancing consumer protection.

AMO will be analyzing the Bill to assess the impact on residents and municipal homes and looks forward to presenting a submission to the legislative committee reviewing the Bill.

Extending Personal Support Workers' Temporary Wage Enhancement

The province is providing an additional $373 million to extend the temporary wage enhancement for personal support workers and direct support workers who deliver publicly funded services in home and community care, long-term care, public hospitals, and social services. This increase will continue until March 31, 2022 and is expected to help attract and retain workers in these critical sectors.

This temporary wage enhancement includes:

- $3 per hour for approximately 38,000 eligible workers in home and community care
- $3 per hour for approximately 50,000 eligible workers in long-term care
- $2 per hour for approximately 10,000 eligible workers in public hospitals
- $3 per hour for approximately 60,000 eligible workers in children, community and social services providing personal direct support services to those who need assistance with the activities of daily living.

Additional Training for Long-Term Care Nurses and Personal Support Workers

The provincial government is funding up to $100 million to add an additional 2,000 nurses to the long-term care sector by 2024-25 by supporting the training of thousands of personal support workers (PSWs) and nurses who want to advance their careers in long-term care. This investment is to support the Long-Term Care Staffing Plan which was launched last year and sets out actions that will educate, train, and help recruit tens of thousands of new LTC staff.

This funding creates two programs. **The BEGIN initiative: Bridging Educational Grant in Nursing** will provide tuition support to PSWs and registered practical nurses so they can pursue further education to become registered practical nurses and registered nurses respectively. Applicants will be expected to commit to working in the long-term care sector through a Return of Service Agreement for a period equivalent to the time they receive these funding supports for their education.

The **Nursing Program Transformation in Ontario's Colleges** will increase access to nursing programs at publicly assisted colleges through:

- Introducing hybrid online and in-person learning models in practical nursing and Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs, to provide students the flexibility to learn as per individual schedules.
- Creating an additional 500 enrolments in bridging programs for the 2022-23 academic year, that are designed to give applicants the skills and credentials they need to move to the next stage of their career. Hybrid options will also be available for bridging programs.
- Providing up to $6,000 a year in financial support to internationally trained nurses to gain the credentials required to work in Ontario.
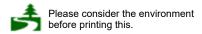
The Ontario government is also investing $1.2 million through the Learning Inter-

Professionally Healthcare Accelerator (LIPHA), a new program to support innovative and flexible training for current and future personal support workers (PSWs) and nurses.

The program is being made available for free to over 80,000 nurses and PSWs currently employed in Ontario's LTC homes and will provide a virtual space with simulated cases for teams and individuals in the sector to practice caring for virtual residents. The LIPHA app can be adopted by long-term care homes to enhance and accelerate their existing training and orientation processes for nurses and PSWs.

AMO's COVID-19 Resources page is being updated continually so you can find critical information in one place. Please send any of your municipally related pandemic questions to covid19@amo.on.ca.

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Association of Municipalities of Ontario
200 University Ave. Suite 801,Toronto ON Canada M5H 3C6

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