



# A better place to live, a better place to work

---

Ontario's Long-Term Care  
Staffing Plan (2021-2025)

# **Table of Contents**

<b>Minister's Message</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
Context for Change	8
A Resident-Centred Long-Term Care Sector	9
<b>A Better Place to Live, A Better Place to Work: Ontario's Long-Term Care Staffing Plan</b>	<b>12</b>
1. Increasing Staffing Levels	<b>14</b>
2. Disrupting, Accelerating, and Increasing Education and Training Pathways	<b>17</b>
3. Supporting Ongoing Staff Development	<b>21</b>
4. Improving Working Conditions	<b>23</b>
5. Providing Effective and Accountable Leadership	<b>25</b>
6. Measuring Success	<b>27</b>
<b>Working Together to Achieve Meaningful Change</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix: Progress to Date</b>	<b>30</b>

# Minister's Message



**As we launch** this historic staffing plan in December 2020, it is clear, now more than ever, that immediate and deliberate action is needed to improve Ontario's long-term care sector so that we can protect, provide appropriate care, and bring dignity to our most vulnerable today and into the future.

These have been challenging times, as the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the weaknesses and inadequacies within the long-term care system. These are issues that had been developing over decades of neglect and underfunding.

To those working in our long-term care homes, I would like to express my sincere gratitude. You are the frontline health care heroes who work tirelessly every day to support our loved ones. Our government knows that staff in long-term care homes are the backbone of the sector. Nurses, personal support workers, allied health professionals, and support staff all play a vital role in the quality of life that residents experience.

Since our government created a stand-alone Ministry of Long-Term Care in 2019, we have worked diligently to ensure that our most vulnerable have access to the care they deserve, when and where they need it. This is at the centre of everything we do.

While we have already begun to make real progress in creating a 21st century long-term care sector that is resident-centred, we know it is critical that we address the long-standing and systemic staffing challenges the sector has faced.

In our 2020 Budget, we committed to increasing the hours of direct care for long-term care residents to an average of four hours per day, making Ontario the Canadian leader in the provision of care. To achieve this new standard, based on guidance from

multiple partners, organizations, associations, residents and families, the Staffing Study Advisory Group, and the Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission, we are launching *A Better Place to Live, A Better Place to Work: Ontario's Long-Term Care Staffing Plan*.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to all sector partners who have helped develop this plan. It will take concerted effort, significant new investment and sustained collaboration to drive change.

Having worked as a family physician for almost three decades, and as a daughter who had a parent in long-term care, I deeply appreciate the difficult and rewarding work that frontline health care staff provide. I want to thank every single one of you for your commitment to making long-term care a place where our loved ones are safe and cared for. For those of you considering a career in long-term care, welcome, we need you, our most vulnerable need you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Fullerton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Dr. Merrilee Fullerton**  
Minister of Long-Term Care

# Executive Summary

**As part of our aggressive modernization plan,** the government has taken steps to create a long-term care sector that is resident-centered and provides the highest quality of care for our loved ones, when and where they need it. This includes a commitment to invest \$1.75 billion to create 30,000 modern long-term care spaces over ten years.

As the government builds capacity, it is critical that staffing challenges are addressed in Ontario's long-term care sector. The recommendations in the Long-Term Care Staffing Study released in July 2020, which were further confirmed through the interim recommendations from Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission, strongly suggest that the *conditions of work* for staff are closely tied to the *conditions of care* for residents.

The devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the long-term care sector further shone a light on the complexity of the staffing challenges in the sector. The government has invested over half a billion dollars to prevent and contain viral spread during the second wave, including educating, recruiting and retaining over 3,700 more health care workers.

While these actions are critical to address urgent staff shortages and support long-term care homes through the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing the long-standing and systemic staffing issues will take concerted effort, significant new investment and sustained collaboration with all sector partners to drive change. That is why the province is launching *A Better Place to Live, A Better Place to Work: Ontario's Long-Term Care Staffing Plan*, based on guidance from multiple partners, organizations, associations, residents and families, the Staffing Study Advisory Group, and the interim recommendations from Ontario's COVID-19 Commission.

At the centre of this plan is the government's commitment to increase the hours of direct care for residents to an average of four hours per day over four years. This will require the education and training of new professionals to fill the more than 27,000 full-time equivalent jobs which will be needed to reach this standard. To implement this plan, the government will be investing up to *\$1.9 billion annually by 2024-2025*.

## **Vision**

Enable a qualified and engaged workforce — working with effective and accountable leadership — to provide residents with a safe and supportive living environment.

### **Six key areas of action:**

1

#### **Increasing Staffing Levels**

- Increase the average amount of direct hands-on care provided by registered nurses, registered practical nurses and personal support workers to four hours a day per resident, with an increased focus on nursing care.
- An additional, per resident increase in the amount of allied health support provided by others such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers
- Issue guidance on staffing models to long-term care homes.

2

#### **Disrupting, Accelerating, and Increasing Education and Training Pathways**

- Stabilize staffing through initiatives to recruit, retain, train and support more staff, such as the Ontario Matching Portal, increased infection prevention and control personnel, PSW Return of Service program, fast tracking PSW education, providing supports for new nursing graduates, and the Ontario Workforce Reserve for Senior Support Program.
- Accelerate and create new pathways to increase supply of workers. Immediate focus includes removing barriers to employment for internationally educated professionals, training personal support workers on the job, and supporting career laddering, including PSWs who want to become registered practical nurses and registered practical nurses who want to become registered nurses.
- Scale up traditional education and training streams to create new labour supply in partnership with educational institutions.
- Launch targeted awareness and recruitment campaigns to drive enrollment and employment.

3

### **Supporting Ongoing Staff Development**

- Provide enhanced Infection Prevention and Control Education and Training for new and existing staff.
- Invest \$10 million in an annual training fund to support staff education.
- Work with the sector to develop and implement initiatives that support career growth and satisfaction, such as mentorships, preceptorships, and communities of practice.

4

### **Improving Working Conditions**

- Partner with sector leaders to drive improvements to working conditions, including increased full-time employment.
- Reduce administrative burden by reviewing components of the province's funding formula for long-term care, including documentation and reporting requirements where they are unnecessary for resident care and resident outcomes.
- Promote innovative approaches to work and technology.

5

### **Providing Effective and Accountable Leadership**

- Increase the number of Attending Nurse Practitioners in long-term care and conduct an assessment of further needs.
- Support Medical Directors as they navigate their work and clarify the expectations, accountabilities and requirements of the role.
- Promote leadership onboarding and training
- Support development and education of home administrators.

6

### **Measuring Success**

- Enhance data collection to gather the necessary information to accurately measure plan's success
- Measure the plan's success against targets and indicators.
- Evaluate success and report publicly.

Overcoming the current, long-standing challenges in long-term care will require a sustained effort over the years ahead and close collaboration of all partners. Working together, this vision for long-term care residents can be a reality, ensuring that long-term care homes are a better place to live, and a better place to work.



# Introduction

## Context for Change

**The long-term care system** exists to support Ontarians with advanced care needs, who require frequent assistance with activities of daily living, and on-site care and medical supervision that can no longer be provided in their own homes.

### Diversity in Ontario's Long-Term Care Homes

Currently, 626 long-term care homes provide care to approximately 100,000 Ontarians annually, supported by over 100,000 long-term care staff. Each home is comprised of a unique resident population, with diversity of language, cultures, aspirations and interests. Homes create staffing plans annually to reflect their residents' needs. These plans also reflect the unique circumstances of a home, such as its size, regional workforce conditions, and the urban or rural community within which it is located. For our long-term care sector to be truly resident-centered, some flexibility in the approach to staffing is essential.

The staffing challenges facing Ontario's long-term care sector are well documented. Ontario's population is aging, and there is increasing demand for long-term care beds. As well, the medical complexity of residents has increased by more than 15 per cent over the past 15 years, requiring increasingly more qualified staff to provide appropriate care.

From the many reports, submissions and recommendations this government has received, the messaging has been consistent: more staff and better working conditions are critical to ensure residents receive quality care.

The Long-Term Care Staffing Study Advisory Group engaged with over 25 organizations representing care providers, residents and family, operators, nursing organizations, labour unions and training and research.

*The Long-Term Care Staffing Plan* is informed by reports and submissions from these organizations and additional long-term care partners, and by the formal recommendations outlined in the following reports:



- [Long-Term Care Homes Public Inquiry](#)
- [Long-Term Care Staffing Study](#)
- [Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission Interim Recommendations](#)

Details on how the staffing plan responds to specific recommendations is described in the pages that follow.

Considerable staff recruitment and retention efforts will be required to achieve the goals of the strategy. In addition, the government has committed to expanding long-term care capacity by building 30,000 spaces in the long-term care sector, addressing wait times and preparing for future demand. Thousands of new, qualified staff are required to support this increased capacity.

## **A Resident-Centred Long-Term Care Sector**

**Long-term care** provides a home for some of our province's most vulnerable residents. The province has taken steps to create a modernized sector where care needs are consistently met, residents enjoy a good quality of life, and the public has confidence knowing that their loved ones will have a safe place to call home. The government is taking action in four pillars to reach these outcomes:

- Integrating long-term care within the broader care continuum
- Improving quality of care
- Addressing concerns with performance, oversight, and accountability
- Developing new physical infrastructure

The government is investing \$1.75 billion to create 30,000 modern long-term care spaces over ten years. Progress has already been made to update aging physical infrastructure by redesigning the funding model that supports the development of new spaces for residents. The modernized model provides tailored incentives to drive building in different markets and introduces an up-front development grant to address high cost barriers to construction. This will allow the government to create close to 11,000 safe, modern spaces over the next four years for residents to call home.

New spaces will have better temperature control and will have no more than two residents per room, allowing for the phase out of rooms with three or four residents that have been so detrimental to fighting COVID-19 outbreaks.

To address another pillar of this aggressive modernization plan, the government has launched the Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care Program as an innovative way to integrate long-term care services within the broader continuum of care. This program will provide enhanced at-home supports for Ontarians waiting to be placed in a long-term care home. It will help more seniors stay safe while living in the comfort of their own homes for a longer period of time.

Work is also underway to address the performance, oversight, and accountability pillar through the development of a new quality framework. This framework will support quality assurance, continuous quality improvement and increased public transparency, and it will contribute to an improved culture within long-term care.

With *Ontario's Long-Term Care Staffing Plan*, the government is continuing the critical modernization work of ensuring residents receive the highest quality of care. This plan sets out actions and interventions to improve quality of care and quality of life for long-term care residents, while also making the sector a more desirable career destination.

# A Resident-Centred Long-Term Care Sector

## Vision

A 21st century long-term care sector that is resident-centred and provides access to the highest quality of care for our most vulnerable people where and when they need it.

## Pillars

<p><b>Integration of Long-Term Care within the Broader Care Continuum</b></p> <p><i>Define long-term care's role within a transformed health care system and the broader care continuum with a focus on Ontario's most vulnerable, and ensuring they are appropriately supported.</i></p>	<p><b>Quality of Care</b></p> <p><i>Implement, evaluate, and continuously improve innovative staffing and service models that meet the complex and diverse needs of long-term care residents, including Francophone and Indigenous residents.</i></p>	<p><b>Performance, Oversight and Accountability</b></p> <p><i>Improve quality assurance and foster quality improvement through a range of oversight, accountability and performance measurement approaches that incent continual improvement for residents and provide public transparency.</i></p>	<p><b>Physical Infrastructure</b></p> <p><i>Modernize, accelerate and improve the development process of long-term care spaces to create new beds and upgrade existing older beds to modern design standards.</i></p>
---	---	---	---

## Outcomes

- Care needs are met
- Residents have high quality of life
- Public has confidence in long-term care

## Enablers

- Moving towards a culture of effective communication and continuous quality improvement, supported by a comprehensive data strategy

# A Better Place to Live, A Better Place to Work:

## Ontario's Long-Term Care Staffing Plan

**The vision of this *Long-Term Care Staffing Plan*** is to support a qualified and engaged long-term care workforce with effective and accountable leadership to provide residents with a safe and supportive living environment. At the centre of this plan is the government's commitment to increase the hours of direct care for residents to an average of four hours per day over four years. This will require the education and training of new professionals to fill more than 27,000 full-time equivalent jobs which will be needed to reach this standard.

*Over the next four years, this government will increase investments in long-term care staffing annually, spending up to **\$1.9 billion** in 2024-2025 to support increased staffing levels. Additional investments will be required to educate additional qualified individuals to fill these new positions.*

The staffing plan focuses on six areas of action:

- Increasing the hours of direct hands-on care provided by nurses and personal support workers, to an average of four hours per day per resident - including a significant increase in nursing care to reflect the acuity of long-term care residents and expanding resident access to allied health staff like physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers
- Accelerating and expanding educational pathways to help recruit the tens of thousands of new staff that will be needed
- Supporting continued development and professional growth for long-term care staff, which will also improve retention
- Improving working conditions for staff
- Building effective and accountable leadership in homes across the province to improve oversight within homes, guidance, and medical outcomes in long-term care homes
- Measuring progress against key performance indicators

By addressing these staffing challenges, the government will improve resident quality of care, increase the ability of homes to recruit and retain high caliber staff, eliminate shortages, and provide an enhanced workplace experience.

However, the government cannot do it alone. The province recognizes many long-term care homes are already leading through innovation and best practices and calls on sector partners to work together to make the critical changes that can only

happen on the ground. The efforts of all partners – long-term care homes, professional associations, labour, regulatory bodies, education and training partners – will be needed to leverage the investments and initiatives in the staffing plan. Working together, the vision for a modern and safe long-term care sector can become a reality.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Focus on residents and improving resident outcomes
- Encourage and support continuous quality improvement and innovation to drive progress
- Drive systematic and long-term change across the sector
- Consider the impact on the broader health care system to avoid unintended consequences
- Be flexible to respond to the diverse needs of residents, including Indigenous and Francophone residents
- Share responsibility for solving long-standing challenges with sector leaders.

# 1. Increasing Staffing Levels

**Addressing resident needs** requires additional staff in homes to provide increased hands-on care. Through the *2020 Budget, Ontario's Action Plan; Protect, Support and Recover*, the government has committed to increasing direct care to an average of four hours per resident per day – making Ontario a leader in Canada by committing to this level of care. This is an increase of more than 45 per cent from the most recent estimate of hours worked per day – an average of two hours and 45 minutes by personal support workers, registered nurses and registered practical nurses.

This commitment to a daily average of four hours of care per resident will include substantially increasing the amount of time that registered nurses, registered practical nurses and personal support workers have available for resident care. In particular, increasing nursing hours is needed due to the rising acuity of residents and will help to limit unnecessary, and potentially harmful hospital transfers.

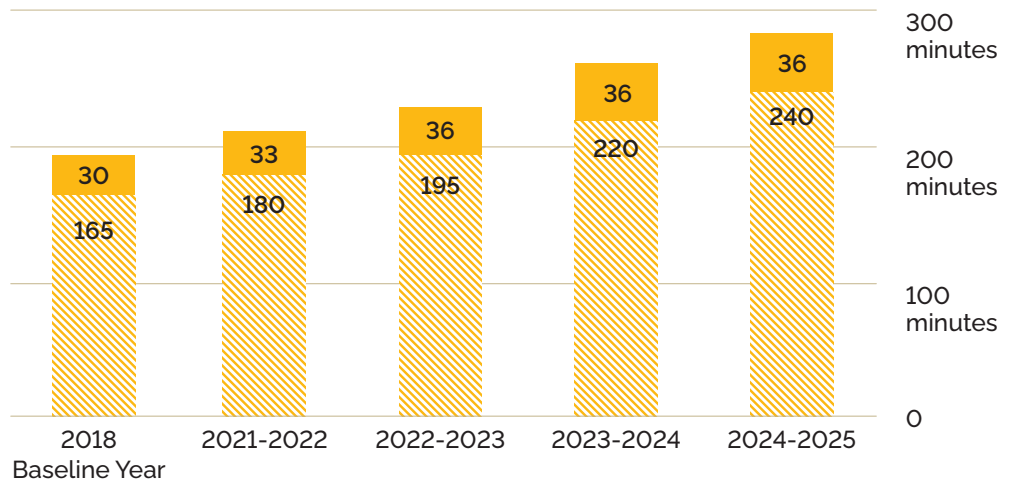
The government also plans to increase the hours of care provided by a broader range of staff who play a key role in supporting residents to achieve a higher quality of life and promoting good mental health. This includes supports provided by physiotherapists, occupational therapists, recreation therapists, social workers and others who can address physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of residents.

To achieve this level of care, tens of thousands of new staff will need to be educated, trained and hired.

As promised, the government has set clear targets in this staffing plan. Progress will be measured against these targets and other factors listed below, to achieve this outcome by 2024-2025.

**Increasing the Average Direct Care Provided to Residents Per Day: Implementation Targets**

- Allied Health
- Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses, Personal Support Workers



Increasing the hours of direct care provided to residents will improve health outcomes and working conditions, both of which will reduce stress and anxiety for staff and families. In addition, increasing broader supports will contribute to improved mental health and a higher quality of life for residents.

Further detail is provided below.



**Immediate Action:**

**Enabling an average of four hours of direct care in four years\***

Investments into nursing and personal support to enable an increase of combined direct care hours provided by registered nurses, registered practical nurses, and personal support workers from a daily average of two hours and 45 minutes worked per resident (2018) to a daily average of four hours. This will require hiring more than 27,000 registered nurses, registered practical nurses and personal support workers.

This investment will enable homes to increase their direct care hours, as well as increase their proportion of nursing professionals to reflect the rising acuity of residents.

**Implementation targets for direct care hours**

- By the end of year 1: 3 hours
- By the end of year 2: 3 hours 15 minutes
- By the end of year 3: 3 hours 42 minutes
- By the end of year 4: 4 hours

\* *Staffing Study recommendation*





Immediate Action:

### **Increasing therapy, social care and other supports for residents\***

Investment into allied health care workers such as physiotherapists and social workers to increase the average worked hours by 20 per cent. This will increase the homes' capacity to tailor care plans to individual resident needs and support a more mobile and fulfilled resident population. This additional care time is the equivalent to 2000, new full-time positions, which will be carried out by a variety of workers across province.



Further Action

### **Guidance to long-term care homes on staffing models<sup>\*,\*\*</sup>**

Each home needs some flexibility to recruit staff that meet each resident's specific needs, which are diverse and unique.

Guidance may include:

- Staff-to-resident ratios
- Linking the requirement for 24/7 oversight by a registered nurse to the size of the home

### **Partners in Care**

Long-term care residents are not cared for by staff alone. Residents' families, friends and loved ones are important partners in care and in supporting resident quality of life. In 2018, 4.6 million Canadians reported providing care for a family member, and 13% of them did so in a care facility. 20% of caregivers assisting someone in a care facility reported giving over 10 hours of care per week, and more if the individual was elderly or had severe health conditions like dementia. Working together, long-term care staff and other care partners can support residents with their needs and aspirations and help them to experience a high quality of life.

\* *Staffing Report recommendation*

\*\* *Gillease Inquiry recommendation*

## **2. Disrupting, Accelerating, and Increasing Education and Training Pathways**

**Planned government investments** to increase staffing levels will create demand for tens of thousands of new jobs. The government knows some long-term care homes currently struggle to fill all their vacant nursing and personal support worker positions. While improvements to working conditions will help improve retention, traditional educational pathways at current enrollment levels will not be sufficient to create the supply of qualified health care professionals needed in long-term care.

That's why the government will be working with partners to significantly scale up traditional pathways while also implementing new and innovative approaches, such as on-the-job training models, to develop the qualified personnel needed.

The initiatives below build on current programs aimed at filling immediate needs for frontline staff and are aligned with and supported by the broader Health Human Resources Strategy. Each initiative will help meet the significant additional demand created by the government's commitment to increase care hours.

The government will work with partners in early 2021 to plan the education and training approaches needed for implementation, beginning in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

### **Personal Support Worker Residency Model**

Developed in response to the urgent need for new professionals, George Brown College and the ReKai Centre have teamed up to offer a new educational model for training personal support workers. A first of its kind, this approach provides intense, immersive clinical training, four days a week, eight hours a day, at the ReKai Centre by highly specialized clinical instructors. The first cohort of 46 PSWs will be prepared to begin working in early 2021.



Action Taken:  
**Stabilizing long-term care homes**

To urgently address the need for more staff, the following programs have been developed and/or implemented to immediately educate, recruit, and retain frontline staff in long-term care homes:

- Investment of \$52.5 million to recruit, retain and support an additional 3,700 frontline health care workers, including in long-term care, to meet surging demand. This includes the following initiatives:
  - » Personal Support Worker Return of Service Program to attract trained personal support workers into long-term care
  - » Supportive care worker program, which trains workers to provide basic home support services
  - » Personal Support Worker Fast Track, which will quickly train students with prior health care experience in a condensed personal support worker program
  - » Nursing Graduate Guarantee, which provides full-time salaries and benefits, with a focus on recruiting in areas of need, such as long-term care homes.
  - » Ontario Matching Portal, launched in April 2020, has helped make over 660 staffing matches for long-term care to-date
- Recently announced Ontario Workforce Reserve for Seniors Program will help recruit, train and deploy individuals seeking new opportunities into long-term care homes as resident support aides during the pandemic. These aides will assist residents with various activities, such as support with technology and recreation.
- Investment of \$20 million for additional infection prevention and control personnel.
- Additional “scale up” initiatives are planned and being developed for implementation. Together, these initiatives are intended to bring thousands of health care workers into the long-term care sector over the next few months.



Immediate Action:

### **Accelerating and disrupting education and training pathways\***

Building on current stabilization actions and other on-the-ground innovations, immediately create new, accelerated pathways to education. The ministry will bring together government and education, training and long-term care partners to drive change, including:

- Internationally trained professionals: Creating innovative pathways and removing existing barriers to enable more placements for internationally educated health care workers and students.
- An “Earn-as you-Learn” personal support worker pathway: Including on-the-job education, onsite training, and micro-credentialing, with an opportunity to include retirement homes.
- Registered practical nurse to registered nurse bridging: Accelerating supply of registered nurses by supporting registered practical nurses who wish to transition into the registered nurse role.



Immediate Action:

### **Scale up traditional education pathways\***

In addition to innovative and accelerated pathways, significant investments in traditional education and training streams will be needed in consultation with educational institutions to maximize potential supply for long-term care (e.g., sizeable scale up in the number of education seats at colleges and universities). This will also help mitigate impact on other sectors that continue to have a strong demand for the same qualified personnel.

\* *Staffing Study recommendation*



Further Action:  
**Awareness campaign\***

As new pathways and educational opportunities are created and working conditions in long-term care improve.

Targeted awareness and recruitment campaigns will be developed and aimed at high school, college and university students, employment centers, newcomers and second career seekers.

### **Micro-credentials Strategy**

Micro-credentials provide learners with rapid training opportunities to acquire in-demand skills. As announced in the *2020 Budget Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support and Recover*, the province is investing \$59.5 million over three years to support Ontario's first micro-credentials strategy. As part of the strategy, a fund will be created to incentivize the development of new micro-credentials that respond to regional labour market needs and strengthen partnerships between postsecondary institutions, training providers, and employers.

\* *Staffing Study recommendation*

### 3. Supporting Ongoing Staff Development

**The government is committed** to supporting ongoing staff development and professional growth to help current long-term care workers acquire new skills and expertise over their career. This initiative will help improve the desirability of careers in long-term care and contribute to increased staff retention.

The government recently provided \$10 million for infection and prevention control training for staff and has established a training fund to start in 2021-2022, to help homes back-fill staff while they attend professional training. Addressing staff preparedness and growth will contribute to improved retention by highlighting long-term care as a career destination – not a point-in-time job.



Action Taken:

#### **Providing IPAC education and training\***

The government has invested \$10 million to implement Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) training for all new and current staff.



Immediate Action:

#### **Supporting staff education and training\*\***

Beginning in 2021-2022, the government will make a \$10 million training fund available to support long-term care homes in back-filling positions for staff that attend in-person training sessions.



**Further Action:**

Working with sector leaders to build on existing innovations, the government will develop and implement initiatives that help new workers successfully transition into employment, and help continuing employees experience career growth and satisfaction. This could include mentorships, preceptorships, and communities of practice.

\* *Staffing Study recommendation*

\*\* *Gillease Inquiry recommendation*

## **Excellence in resident-centred care**

Schlegel-University of Waterloo Research Institute for Aging and Conestoga College have come together to provide training for long-term care professionals on topics such as person-centered care, infection control, and safety and mobility mental health. Using a train-the-trainer model, long-term care team members are equipped with the skills to deliver the course to their colleagues to enhance knowledge and skills in homes across the province.



## 4. Improving Working Conditions

**Improving working conditions** is integral to addressing issues of staff retention and improving the conditions of care for residents.

The government's commitment to significantly increase the level of direct care provided to residents through increased staffing will help address workload and burn-out issues for long-term care staff. Homes will be better resourced with more staff to share and complete tasks, leading to more timely, less rushed care.

As the government makes significant investments to increase staffing levels, sector partners need to help lead change in critical areas. While the province recognizes the scheduling challenges of a 24/7 environment, this change must include exploring and sharing best practices to increase full-time positions, and employee retention.



### Immediate Action: **Sector-led improvements\***

As an initial focus, the Ontario Long Term Care Association and AdvantAge Ontario will lead a working group to identify opportunities, best practices and potential barriers to enhance scheduling methods and increase full-time positions.

The government will also work with our sector partners, including employers, associations and unions, to further address working condition issues.



### Immediate Action: **Reducing administrative burden\***

The government will launch a technical working group with sector partners to review components of the long-term care funding model, focusing on two aspects of the funding formula:

- Case Management Index (CMI)
- High Intensity Needs Fund (HINF)

\* *Staffing Study recommendation*

This funding model review would include understanding the impact of the funding formula, and resulting documentation requirements, on staff at a day-to-day level with the aim to return as much time as possible to direct care.

The short-term goal will be to identify concrete improvements that modernize the long-term care funding formula and reduce administrative burden, without reducing record keeping necessary for appropriate resident care. The review will also identify alternative approaches and longer-term strategies that may be appropriate from a clinical, funding and performance measurement perspective, as well as cost implications for the province.

Results of this review are expected to be available by the end of August 2021.



Further Action:  
**Working smart\***

The Ministry of Long-Term Care will work with the sector to better enable staff to spend more time on direct resident care, including through digital health tools and further opportunities to modernize the workplace.

### Sector Perspective

“The backbone of our long-term care system is the thousands of dedicated staff who devote themselves to caring for residents who call it home. We can – and must – give them the support and time for more personalized care and meaningful engagement with residents. Enormous workloads and increasingly complex care needs place a huge mental, emotional and physical strain on front-line workers and make it very hard to attract and retain the right mix of qualified people. This commitment to achieve an average of four hours of care will mean more staff delivering more care, and that is what truly matters.” **Jane Sinclair**, *General Manager, Health and Emergency Services, County of Simcoe*

\* *Staffing Study recommendation*

## 5. Providing Effective and Accountable Leadership

**Local leaders** — such as Administrators, Medical Directors and Directors of Care — play a crucial role in shaping workplace culture and fostering a collaborative, team-based environment built on a coherent philosophy of care. Many homes are part of a larger organization that owns multiple homes and sometimes other related services, such as a broader campus of care. In these cases, there are additional leaders – such as boards of governors, corporate or head office leaders – who also have an important impact at the local level. Effective and accountable leadership across long-term care is critical to supporting the staffing plan initiatives, achieving necessary culture change, and ensuring residents receive a higher quality of care and life.



Action Taken:

### **Increasing nurse practitioners\***

The government is implementing the third phase of the Attending Nurse Practitioner in Long-Term Care Homes program, which provides annualized funding for up to 15 additional nurse practitioners to the sector.



Action Taken:

### **Supporting Medical Directors**

The Ministry has worked with stakeholders to develop a Guidance Document to provide clarity on the role and responsibilities of existing Medical Directors and support them in preparing and responding to future waves of COVID-19.



Further Action:

### **Clarifying the role of Medical Director and assessing need for nurse practitioners\***

The Ministry will work with sector partners to clarify the role of key leadership positions, including Administrators and Medical Directors, and to consider the further need for nurse practitioners.

\* *Staffing Study recommendation*



Further Action:

### **Leadership onboarding, training, and ongoing support**

The government will work with sector partners to improve the training and onboarding that long-term care leaders (medical and otherwise) are required to complete. Topics could include infection prevention and control, emergency planning, philosophy of care, geriatric principles, and human resources.

#### **Sector Perspective**

“With more than 20 years of experience in delivering training for new and aspiring long-term care leaders through our Administrator Leadership Program, we know that effective administrative and clinical leadership is integral to making long-term care a better place to live and work. Well prepared leaders can harness opportunities to tackle the challenges of today, while inspiring their teams to envision and embrace the future of seniors' care.” **Lisa Levin**, *CEO, AdvantAge Ontario*

## 6. Measuring Success

**Successful implementation** of this staffing plan will require an ongoing, concerted effort, as well as an ability to adjust course as needed. To ensure that the province achieves its targets, regular measurements will be required to track progress across the sector. As needed, the government will develop new tactics and 'course correct' along the way.



Immediate Action:  
**Enhanced data collection**

The ministry will review and enhance the current staffing survey of long-term care homes and encourage stronger participation. Currently, an annual staffing report is a requirement in the service agreement between long-term care homes and the Local Health Integration Networks and Ontario Health.



Immediate Action:  
**Measure plan outcomes**

The ministry will work with the sector to finalize outcomes and indicators to measure the success of the plan. This could include the amount of direct care provided by profession and resident, family, and staff satisfaction.



Further Action:  
**Evaluate the plan's success and report publicly**

The ministry will report publicly against targets and outcomes annually, and formally evaluate progress in later years of the plan.

## Quality Framework

Increasing staffing levels is one crucial input into improving long-term care. Broad, sustainable improvements in resident outcomes require *creating a systemic culture of continuous quality improvement focused on resident outcomes*. To build this culture, the Ministry will engage with residents and families to understand what quality of life and quality of care means to them. Building on their perspectives, the government will engage with the sector and other experts to develop a new quality framework and performance measures to guide oversight and quality improvement in long-term care homes.

# Working Together to Achieve Meaningful Change

**To achieve the government's vision**, it is important to know what success looks like. Success is a 21st century long-term care sector that is resident-centered and provides access to the highest quality of care for our most vulnerable, when and where they need it.

*The Long-Term Care Staffing Plan*, with its interrelated initiatives, will lead to historic improvements in quality of life and care for residents, greater staff recruitment and retention in long-term care, and increased public confidence that long-term care homes are helping residents live safely and comfortably.

Overcoming the current, long-standing challenges in long-term care will require a sustained effort over the years ahead and close

collaboration of all partners.

The province calls on these partners to work together and make the critical changes that can only happen on the ground.

The government knows these issues existed and started to address them before the COVID-19 pandemic, however, resolving them will take a sustained, collective effort over time.

## **Sector Perspective**

"The staffing crisis is a multi-faceted, cross-sectoral challenge that will take all of us - long-term care and government, as well as health system, labour, and higher education partners - working together to ensure we can meet the needs of Ontario's long-term care residents today and in the future"

**Donna Duncan**, CEO, Ontario Long Term Care Association

The ambitious plan that the government has put forward targets deep-rooted, and systemic issues. By addressing these staffing challenges, the province will improve resident quality of care, increase the ability of homes to recruit and retain high caliber candidates and eliminate shortages, and provide an enhanced workplace experience for staff.

Working together with all partners, this vision for long-term care residents can be a reality, ensuring that long-term care homes are a better place to live, and a better place to work.



# Appendix: Progress to Date

**Ontario is the only province** in Canada that has a dedicated Ministry of Long-Term Care, established in 2019 to address long-standing and systemic issues that have existed for decades.

The government is taking action to create a 21st century long-term care sector that includes investing \$1.75 billion to create 30,000 modern long-term care spaces over ten years, providing residents with a country-leading average of four hours of daily direct care, and ensuring that long-term care homes provide our most vulnerable with a comfortable and safe environment to call home.

COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges across long-term care and other health sectors. It has disproportionately affected residents and staff at long-term care homes. The government's top priority from the beginning of this pandemic was, and remains, to protect the health, safety and well-being of our most vulnerable residents and the heroic staff who care for them.

Ontario declared the province in a state of emergency on March 17, 2020. The government has acted swiftly and urgently address outbreaks and to support all long-term care homes, residents, and staff – issuing several emergency orders, guidance documents and provincial directives, which have played a vital role in responding to this rapidly changing situation.

Specific actions include:

- Issued the first guidance to the long-term care sector on January 31, 2020 and it has been continuously updated since.
- Enhanced measures to enforce physical distancing and implemented a temporary order that gives homes the flexibility they need to deploy staff when and where they are most needed.
- [Introduced directives](#) that focused on keeping residents safe, which meant quickly and decisively limiting the flow of people in and out of homes.

- Enabled hospitals, public health units and the home care sector to deploy health professionals to homes experiencing critical staffing shortages.
- February 3, 2020 — the Ministry of Health released guidance on COVID-19 prevention and screening in long-term care.
- March 9, 2020 — the Ministry of Long-Term care issued guidance to all long-term care operators to actively screen all visitors, residents, re-admissions and returning residents to long-term care homes.
- March 16, 2020 — [The Chief Medical Officer of Health issued guidance](#) to all Ontario long-term care homes to allow only essential visitors until further notice. Essential visitors are people visiting residents who are very ill or require end-of-life care.
- March 20, 2020 — [The Ministry of Long-Term Care amended regulations](#) to allow for increased flexibility in staffing, making it easier for qualified staff to be hired and for homes to prioritize skills where they are needed most. These measures allowed for homes to quickly bring in more and new staff, to prevent potential staffing shortages, and to allow staff to spend more time on direct care to residents.
- March 22, 2020 — The Chief Medical Officer of Health issued a directive to long-term care homes to immediately implement precautions and procedures for short stay absences to visit family and friends. Under this directive, to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19, residents are not permitted to go outside of the home (except on the property of the home), and wherever possible, measures are put in place for staff to limit their number of different work locations.
- March 23, 2020 — [The Ministry of Long-Term Care issued a temporary order](#) for long-term care homes to support increased staffing flexibility, enabling homes to be able to respond to, prevent and alleviate an outbreak of COVID-19.
- March 30, 2020 — The Chief Medical Officer of Health issued a directive for long-term care homes to immediately begin more aggressive screening — upgraded to twice daily — of staff, essential visitors, and residents. The directive includes rigorous direction for staff and resident co-horting, the limitation of staff workplaces, COVID-19 testing, and the latest protocol for outbreak management, among other critical guidance.

- April 15, 2020, the Ministry of Long-Term Care issued a third emergency order that ensures that long-term care home employees only work in one health care setting, whether that is a long-term care home, retirement home, or other health care setting to help limit the spread of COVID-19. [Additional resources and timeline.](#)
- Invested \$243 million in emergency funding, in the March [Spring Economic Statement](#), to cover the costs associated with screening, more staffing to support infection control, emergency capacity, and supplies and equipment to help the sector tackle COVID-19 and protect our most vulnerable.
- [The COVID-19 Action Plan for Long-Term Care Homes](#) was implemented to create a roadmap and ramp up the protection of long-term care residents and staff. The Action Plan included aggressive measures for more extensive testing, screening, and surveillance – leading to virtually all residents and staff in long-term care homes being tested for COVID-19.
- Called on the Canadian Armed Forces to provide temporary support at seven long-term care homes to ensure the ongoing safety of residents and maintain effective staffing levels.
- Introduced temporary pandemic pay on April 25, 2020 to help frontline staff who experienced severe challenges in the workplace and were at heightened risk during the COVID-19 outbreak. Eligible workers in long-term care received additional payments of \$4 an hour on top of their regular wages. In addition, eligible workers that worked 100 or more hours in designated four-week periods received \$250 per four-week period, up to \$1000. This benefited approximately 100,000 full-time, part-time, casual, clinical, and support staff and was effective for 16 weeks, from April 24, 2020 until August 13, 2020.
- In May, implemented alternative management support from local hospitals at 20 long-term care homes to help them respond to and manage COVID-19 outbreaks. Homes are also partnered with local hospitals so that in the event of an outbreak, there is additional support to help them contain the spread of COVID-19 and return them to normal operations.
- Carried out sector preparedness assessments to help long-term care homes with emergency and outbreak prevention and

management planning in anticipation of future COVID-19 waves. Long-term care homes were encouraged to work with their partners (e.g., hospitals, public health units) and Ontario Health regions to conduct preparedness assessment exercises to help identify any gaps in preparedness planning.

- Invested over half a billion dollars in additional funding to protect our most vulnerable seniors and those who care for them during the second wave of COVID-19. This was part of the provincial COVID-19 fall preparedness plan - [\*Keeping Ontarians Safe: Preparing for Future Waves of COVID-19\*](#) – and informed by key themes that emerged from the sector preparedness assessments – such as staffing challenges, the importance of infection prevention and control, and strengthened partnerships.
- [Established an independent commission](#) to investigate how COVID-19 spread within long-term care homes, how residents, staff, and families were impacted, and the measures taken by the province and other parties to prevent, isolate and contain the spread. The commission will offer guidance on how to better protect long-term care home residents and staff from any future outbreaks.
- Introduced a temporary wage increase of \$3 per hour for approximately 50,000 eligible workers who deliver publicly funded personal support services in long-term care, effective October 1, 2020.



**A Better Place to Live,  
A Better Place to Work**  
Ontario's Long-Term Care  
Staffing Plan 2021-2025