

Ontario Launches Historic Long-Term Care Staffing Plan

Province to Invest up to \$1.9 Billion Annually by 2024-25 to Achieve Average of Four Hours of Daily Direct Care

NEWS

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TORONTO — The Ontario government is launching one of the largest recruitment and training drives in the province's history to deliver on its commitment to improve care for seniors in long-term care homes. The province released its long-term care staffing plan that sets out actions to hire more staff, improve working conditions for existing staff, drive effective and accountable leadership, and implement retention strategies.

Details were provided today at George Brown College's Waterfront Campus by Premier Doug Ford, Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care, and Effie Triantafilopoulos, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Long-Term Care.

"We want more people working in long-term care to love what they do and thrive in their careers," said Premier Ford. "That's why our new staffing plan will pursue innovative partnerships, like the one between George Brown College and the Re kai Centres, and more training opportunities for future nurses, personal support workers, and health care staff, so they can take pride in what they do and provide the care our loved ones need and deserve."

Acting on expert recommendations, and building on the government's [2020 Ontario budget commitment](#) to increase hours of daily direct care to an average of four hours per day for each long-term care resident, the new staffing plan focuses on six key areas of action to be delivered over four years:

- Investing up to \$1.9 billion annually by 2024-25 to create more than 27,000 new positions for personal support workers, registered nurses and registered practical nurses in long-term care to meet the direct care commitment; in addition, providing a 20 per cent increase in direct care time administered by other health care professionals such as physiotherapists and social workers.
- Accelerating and expanding education and training pathways in order to prepare and train the tens of thousands of new staff that will be required.
- Supporting continued professional development and growth of long-term care staff to improve retention.
- Improving working conditions for staff by coordinating with long-term care employers to increase full-time employment and promote innovative approaches to work and technology.
- Driving effective and accountable leadership in homes across the province to improve oversight, guidance and medical outcomes in long-term care homes.
- Measuring progress against key performance indicators.

"This staffing plan will make long-term care a better place for residents to live, and a better place for staff to work. It is a historic milestone as we continue to modernize the sector and ensure a sustainable and qualified workforce is in place to protect Ontario's most vulnerable," said Minister

Fullerton. “Our ambitious plan is part of our commitment to solving the long-standing and systemic challenges the sector has faced after decades of neglect and underfunding. By working closely with all of our partners, we will deliver on our promise to provide our loved ones with the quality of life they deserve.”

Fixing the challenges in Ontario’s long-term care system will require partnerships between professional associations, labour unions, regulatory bodies, long-term care homes, and education and training providers to recruit and educate tens of thousands of new staff over the next four years. The Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development currently facilitates partnerships and training opportunities, including opportunities in the health and long-term care sectors, through initiatives, such as the SkillsAdvance Ontario, the Ontario Bridge Training Program, and the Second Career program.

The province will also engage with residents and families to develop a quality framework based on what quality of life and quality of care means to them. The new framework will outline performance measures to guide oversight and quality improvement in long-term care homes.

[*A Better Place to Live; A Better Place to Work: Ontario’s Long-Term Care Staffing Plan*](#) is part of the government’s modernization agenda to create a long-term care sector that is resident-centred and provides the highest quality of care for our loved ones, when and where they need it.

In addition to launching this multi-year plan to ensure staffing Ontario’s long-term care sector is sustainable for years to come, the government has invested nearly [\\$540 million, announced earlier this fall](#), to ramp up surveillance, increase infection prevention and control personnel, increase PPE supplies, and build a strong health care workforce at long-term care homes across the province.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES

“Training people for in-demand health care jobs, like personal support workers, is paramount to defeating COVID-19 and building a strong resident-centred long-term care system in Ontario. It’s critical we develop and hire more health care professionals, so residents get the best possible care. Our parents, grandparents, and loved ones deserve nothing less.”

— Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development

“It has never been more important to make sure our frontline heroes can get the education and training they need to join the healthcare workforce, including those who are looking to start their careers in long-term care homes.”

– Ross Romano, Minister of College and Universities

“Training Ontario’s frontline workers is a vital part of what we do at George Brown College. We prepare personal support workers, nurses, healthcare and social service providers with workplace-ready skills. Throughout the pandemic, we’ve all seen the essential role that personal support workers play in caring for seniors, people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations – but we’ve also heard about critical staffing shortages. I applaud the Ontario government for its commitment to expanding education and training opportunities so that more students can acquire qualifications and professional skills at a time when they are needed most.”

— Anne Sado, President, George Brown College

“The Re kai Centres, a non-profit, charitable corporation, is very proud of the pilot PSW Residency Model that we have developed in collaboration with George Brown College. The Re kai Centres have hired a number of PSWs, who will also receive the \$5,000 incentive after completion of six months of employment, that the Ministry of Health is offering. We have also facilitated the hiring of George Brown PSW graduates with other colleagues in Long Term Care, who are unfortunately experiencing an outbreak in the Peel Region. We are very pleased to welcome a further 85 PSW students for their clinical placement commencing in January.”

— Sue Graham-Nutter, CEO, The Re kai Centres

“Our members applaud the province for its promise to ensure four hours of hands-on care per resident per day. Staff in long-term care are called to provide dignified support for their residents, but for too long they’ve been run off their feet and forced into unreasonable compromises. There’s no instant fix to problems that were decades in the making, but today’s announcement offers realistic, achievable solutions and represents a momentous shift in the funding formula. We are very relieved that Minister Fullerton and Premier Ford are taking action and we’re grateful that with this promise we can trust the conditions in long term care will improve.”

— Ian DeWaard, Ontario Director, Christian Labour Association

“FCO is pleased to see the historic investments being made in long-term care. The investments announced will help improve the experiences of today’s residents and families while building a long-term care system of the future. We know that these changes will take time to come into effect and are committed to working with the Ministry of Long-Term Care and other partners to create homes that are vibrant, high-quality places to live work, visit, volunteer, and provide care.”

— Samantha Peck, Executive Director, Family Councils Ontario

“The Ontario Personal Support Workers Association applauds Minister Fullerton and the Ministry of Long-Term Care in their newly released staffing plan. This is a historical move in long-term care with \$1.9 Billion dollars being invested into the sector, with a razor focus on hiring and training 27,000 Personal Support Workers and nurses over the next four years. Our long-term care residents deserve quality care and their families deserve peace of mind. We believe this is just the beginning to positive change and look forward to continue working with the Ministry towards these goals.”

— Miranda Ferrier, President, Ontario Personal Support Workers Association

“WeRPN applauds this historic investment and the government’s plan to create a modern, long-term care (LTC) system that delivers the best care possible to Ontario seniors. Ontario’s dedicated Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) working on the frontlines of care have sounded the alarm about the frailty of our LTC system for many years. Over the past several months, COVID-19 has further highlighted many of these longstanding issues. Today’s announcement is an important step in the right direction towards building a more robust LTC system with appropriate staffing levels to provide seniors with the quality of care and dignity they need and deserve. RPNs look forward to working with the government to realize this vision for care.”

— Dianne Martin, CEO, WeRPN

QUICK FACTS

- The long-term care staffing plan responds to recommendations from [Justice Gillese’s Public Inquiry Report on the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System](#), the [Long-Term Care Staffing Study](#) released this past July, [interim recommendations from the Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission](#), and submissions and reports from long-term care organizations and other partners.

- Through the [COVID-19 Fall Preparedness Plan](#), the government is investing \$52.5 million to recruit, retain and support over 3,700 more frontline health care workers and caregivers. This includes adding 800 more nurses and 2,000 more personal support workers.
- [Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover](#) makes \$15.2 billion available to support Ontario's frontline healthcare heroes and protect people from COVID-19. This includes supporting 141 hospitals and health care facilities and 626 long-term care homes since the beginning of the pandemic.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[A Better Place to Live; A Better Place to Work: Ontario's Long-Term Care Staffing Plan](#)

[2020 Ontario Budget/Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover](#)

[Province Launching Recruitment Program to Support Long-Term Care Sector](#)

[Read the Ministry of Long-Term Care's plan, COVID-19: Long-Term Care Preparedness.](#)

Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect the people of Ontario from COVID-19.

For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOLine at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

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