



## **Family Councils Ontario & Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission Interview Recap**

### **Background**

On July 29, 2020, the Ontario government launched an independent commission to investigate how and why COVID-19 spread extensively within Long-Term care homes, how residents, staff and families were impacted and the adequacy of measures taken by the province and other parties to prevent, isolate and contain the spread.

Family Councils Ontario met before the COVID-19 Commission to share insights on the experiences of those living, working and caregiving in homes throughout the pandemic. The following key topics and recommendations were shared and discussed with the commissioners:

### **Long-Term Care Funding**

Variances in LTC home funding resulting in substantial inconsistency in per-resident care funding, resource accessibility and overall resident experiences.

### **Staffing**

Exacerbation of numerous longstanding issues within the sector with one of the most significant being staffing. Numerous homes already facing challenges around recruitment, retention, training, wage parity and leadership permanence experienced greater shortfall when COVID-19 struck.

### **Resident Quality of Life**

Impact on quality of life for residents due to reduced frontline support, visitor restrictions, increased health risks and exposure to infection, social isolation and lack of access to positive stimuli.

### **Caregivers Recognition**

Recognition of the role families play in LTC as essential caregivers who provide hands-on support and personal care to residents and often lighten the workloads of frontline staff.

## Recommendations and Promising Practices

- Explore requests from concerned families to mandate 4 hours of direct care per resident per day
- Consideration of standardized approach to analyzing resident & family experience
- Growing need to address systemic barriers that impact homes of different sizes including land development, funding subsidies, design standards and unique capacity issues
- Increased measures to ensure a higher standard of training, competency and experience for new workers
- Addressing wage parity across health care sectors and creation of more full time PSW positions within LTC to lessen need for agency workers or for PSWs to work at several settings
- Recognition of foreign credentials and on-boarding to the Canadian Health System for foreign health care professionals who may be assets to LTC teams
- Consideration of models of care used in other parts of the world (e.g. The Green House Model & Eden Alternative) who have had positive results pre-pandemic and have experience lower risk and occurrence of outbreak throughout the pandemic
- Ongoing training and updating of IPAC procedures to ensure new and current staff are adequately equipped to enhance care and reduce outbreaks and frequency of infection and injury
- Increased attention to homes found in non-compliance and enhanced channels to follow up on plans
- More programming that will aid in recognizing diverse experiences and backgrounds and increase supports for bridging cultural and linguistic gaps

Family Councils Ontario will continue to share service user insights and evidence-based recommendations to further improve the resident and family experience, advance policy and system planning, and enhance overall quality improvement in Long-Term Care.

[Our service users can read the full transcript of our interview with the COVID-19 commission here](#)