



February 14, 2023

**Letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister of Health Jean-Yves Duclos, and Minister of Seniors Kamal Khara**

***LTC National Standards must be mandatory to make a difference***

The National Long-Term Care Standards are comprehensive and have incorporated important person-centered quality of life elements that are the product of extensive input from professionals and individuals with lived experience with long-term care. The Standards have the potential to be the national touchstone for excellence of care for decades to come. Their implementation can ensure that we will never again see the suffering and deaths experienced during this pandemic. However, the Standards will not make a difference unless federal/provincial/territorial governments allocate sufficient resources and align inspection and accountability systems with the national standards.

The Ontario Association of Councils on Aging (OACA) Board of Directors, which reflects the perspective of thousands of older adults across Ontario, requests that the National Standards for Long-Term Care not be kept voluntary; rather, we urge that the Standards be mandatory and be supported with sufficient federal/provincial/territorial funding and by inspection/accountability systems that align accordingly.

Although the achievement of all the standards is predicated on the necessity of a mandate and funding/inspection/accountability alignment, we will provide additional clarity with one standard related to governance, and one standard related to operations to demonstrate our point:

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Ontario Association of Councils on Aging (OACA)  
c/o Toronto Council on Aging, 130 Merton St. Toronto, Ontario M4T 2C5  
www.ontariocouncilsonaging.ca      info@ontariocouncilsonaging.ca

## **Governance**

*1.1.4 The governing body cannot meet this criterion if the provincial/territorial authority responsible for their respective LTC system does not allocate resources. A national standard for a LTC Home is not possible without corresponding sufficient federal/provincial/territorial funding allocations that are systemic and sustainable.*

*Similarly, many of the standards and criteria relating to other identified objectives in the National Standards (e.g., resident quality of care and quality of life, appropriate technology, equipment, and supplies) will not be met without the assurance of these funding allocations.*

## **Enabling a Healthy and Competent Workforce**

*9.1.1 The organizational leaders cannot meet this criterion if the provincial/territorial authority responsible for their respective LTC system does not set the staffing standard and allocate sufficient resources to enable a home to meet "appropriate and sufficient evidence-informed staffing levels". A national standard for a LTC Home will not be effective without corresponding sufficient federal/provincial/territorial funding allocations that are systemic and sustainable to support an identified sufficient staffing level standard, as defined by average hours of direct care per resident per day, staffing mix, and staff qualifications.*

There is currently a pivotal opportunity for the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to agree on transformational health care improvements as long-term funding agreements are being developed. Much like the federal government successfully rolled out a national childcare system, we recommend the federal government seize this opportunity and roll out a similar effort to develop a national long-term care system.

Anything less than a national mandate will relegate the National LTC Standards to another well written document, like existing Accreditation Standards, statements on the rights of LTC residents and many other commendable standards documents, without making a difference in the safety and quality of care of residents and the quality and sustainability of the long-term care system infrastructure.

With an increasingly aging population, and the ongoing need for a responsive long-term care system, governments must address this issue for the benefit of today's and tomorrow's older adults and others living in long-term care, irrespective of anticipated improvements in home and community care and access to primary care.

We hope we have your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lilian Wells". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lilian" written in a more stylized, connected script, and the last name "Wells" written in a simpler, more legible cursive.

Lilian Wells  
President  
Ontario Association of Councils on Aging

cc: Ontario Party leaders  
Minister of LTC  
Minister of Seniors and Accessibility  
Minister of Health