



December 28, 2021 via email

The Honourable Rod Phillips - Minister of Long-Term Care
The Honourable Christine Elliot - Minister of Health

Re: Emergency Plan to Protect Long-Term Care Residents

Dear Ministers Phillips and Elliott,

I am writing on behalf of Concerned Friends, a registered not-for-profit organization, with a mission to advance the health and wellbeing and enrich the experiences of those living in Long-Term Care (LTC) homes.

This is an urgent call to action. Your Ministry must immediately and proactively develop and disseminate a plan to address expected, critical staff shortages at all levels of LTC homes.

With the record-breaking and alarming rise of the Omicron Variant, LTC homes are facing the most critical staff shortages ever. During previous waves, homes have been able to find relief staff through employment agencies and/or with the support of local hospitals. Given the widespread nature of the current pandemic wave, these options will likely be foreclosed, especially given the heightened pressures on the hospital sector and ICU beds. Reliance on community volunteers or essential caregivers could actually increase the risk to vulnerable LTC residents, given volunteers' lack of training and expertise in infection control.

To avoid a catastrophe, immediate action is needed. Your Ministry, working in consultation with service providers and associations, have the legal authority and knowledge to avert a crisis.

We urge your Ministry to arrange for military and Red Cross assistance, given that these sectors are trained in infection control and provision of health care. Let us not wait until the situation is dire and thousands of LTC residents are in peril. As well, we urge your Ministry to consider all other options for averting the staff shortages, including expediting the licensing of foreign-trained nurses.

Thank you for considering this urgent matter and for committing to proactive intervention. We all owe this level of care to our vulnerable seniors and others in long-term care.

We remain, as always, willing to work with the government of Ontario to ensure quality care for those in LTC homes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie Nicol".

Laurie Nicol
Concerned Friends President

cc: The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health