

**BETTER CARE.
SAFER WORK.**

#CareTakesTime

Unifor in the Health Care Sector

Unifor is Canada's largest private sector union, with more than 315,000 members across the country working in every major sector of the Canadian economy.

In Ontario, Unifor represents 160,000 active members, including more than 25,000 health care workers, 9,000 of whom work in long term care.

Among Unifor's broader membership and the thousands of Unifor retirees who are active across the province, many members have direct experiences with long-term care through their own families.

The union advocates for all working people and their rights, fights for equality and social justice in Canada and abroad, and strives to create progressive change for a better future. Unifor believes that every person of working age in Canada has a right to a good job, the benefits of economic progress and a strong social safety net.

On Long Term Care

Unifor believes the long term care system in Ontario is in crisis. Approximately 78,000 Ontarians live in long term care homes, most of who are over 85 years old and have mobility issues, dementia, and complex medical needs. Meanwhile, there are approximately 33,000 people on wait lists for long-term care beds. Currently, the ratio of staff to residents is extremely high and simply unsustainable if we want to provide adequate care for seniors.

To address this problem, the union is advocating for an evidence-based, minimum, measurable and enforceable standard of care within long term care homes. This includes a legislated daily standard of direct care of four hours per resident - as included in Bill 33 'A Time to Care Act,' which was supported by all parties in 2017 but failed to reach final reading.

The province needs to provide the funding to support this standard and ensure that homes maintain the proper staffing levels to provide this level of care. The problem has been further exacerbated by a widespread staffing shortage - in particular, long-term care homes have had difficulty recruiting and retaining Personal Support Workers (PSWs), along with other support staff.





**BETTER CARE.
SAFER WORK.**

#CareTakesTime

Unifor's priorities for the long term care sector

Establishing a minimum standard of daily care

- The Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, should be amended to include a legislated care standard of a minimum 4 hours per resident each day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.
- Such standard of care would be comprised of direct, hands-on care (e.g. nursing and personal support services in particular).
- The standard of 4 hours of care (for the purposes of the calculation) would exclude hours paid in respect to vacation, statutory holidays, leaves of absence, sick time, training time or time paid for other purposes which do not involve direct resident care.
- MPPs voted unanimously in favour Bill 33, Time to Care Act, second reading on November 2, 2017, which would have provided the standard of 4 hours of care for nursing home residents.
- In long-term care facilities, the ratio of personal support workers (PSWs) to residents is unsustainably high - PSWs have only six minutes in the morning to prepare residents for breakfast.
- Over the last year, Unifor issued the 6-minute challenge - a highly effective social media awareness campaign that challenged Ontarians and politicians to get ready in the morning within six minutes.

Provincial funding for long-term care

- The provincial government must increase funding in order for long-term care homes to achieve a staffing and care standard.
- Public funding for long-term care homes should be tied to the provision of quality care and staffing levels that meeting a legislated minimum care standard of 4 hours.
- Ontario must invest more in long-term care homes provided by municipalities and charitable organizations - versus for-profit corporations - which would ensure that funding dollars go to resident care instead of shareholders.

Addressing the staffing shortage

- Long-term care homes across the province are having difficulty recruiting and retaining staff. This staffing crisis has been especially relevant to Personal Support Workers (PSWs).
- PSWs are finding that they're working short all the time, on practically every shift they are at work.
- They are working tirelessly to do the impossible and keep up with resident care while constantly short-staffed.
- The staffing crisis has been caused by a combination of factors: under-compensation, poor working conditions, burnout, high risk of injury and workplace violence, among others.

Accountability and reporting

- The province must make public reporting on staffing levels at each long-term care home mandatory.
- Long-term care homes receive public funding for their operations, so transparent reporting and public accountability is a principle that must be upheld.

**BETTER CARE.
SAFER WORK.**

#CareTakesTime

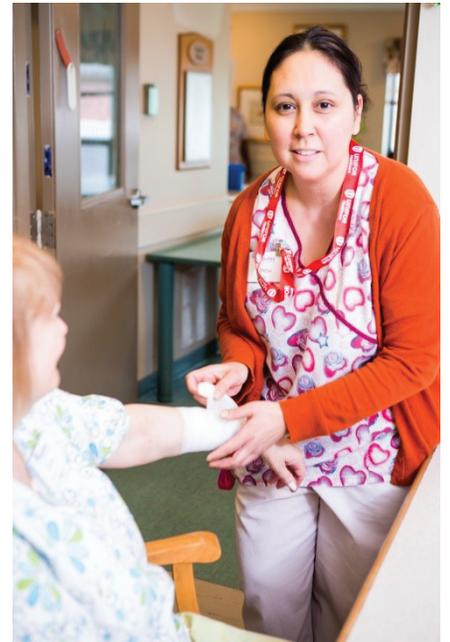
From frontline workers:

"I have worked in long term care as a frontline worker for 29 years and over those years I've seen our sector decline our residents are certainly not receiving optimal care that they so rightfully deserve. We have residents with mental health issues as young as 30 years old, sharing rooms with frail elderly residents. As frontline workers we have anywhere between 13 -15 residents to care for and most of them are total care. Our residents deserve better and as frontline workers we deserve better too!"

- Winnie Laffrenier, London

"I have worked in long term care for 30 years. Our residents need four hours of direct care per day so that they can have quality of care with dignity. We are working so hard on a daily basis to give quality care to our residents but it is extremely difficult when you have 13 plus residents to care for. Our residents desperately need more front line workers."

- Kelly Janes, Sault Ste. Marie



"No one deserves to die alone. I have been a personal support worker for 16 years. Imagine dying, with no family to comfort you but the PSW taking care of you. Now imagine dying alone because there is not enough staff to spare the time. We need a minimum of four hours of direct care because our residents need us."

- Beckie Maki, Thunder Bay



unifor
the Union | le syndicat