

February 18, 2020

Honourable Premier Ford  
Premier's Office, Room 281  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

e-mail: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

**Subject: Caring in Crisis; Ontario's Long-Term Care PSW Shortage**

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Dear Premier,

On December 9, 2019 Unifor held a lobby day at Queen's Park with the intent of raising awareness of the critical shortage of Personal Support Workers (PSWs) across Ontario.

Unifor commissioned the Ontario Health Coalition to prepare a report as a direct result of hearing from our front-line members about the inability of long-term care operators to attract PSWs to work in long-term care facilities. While we were not able to secure a meeting with you during our lobby day, my Assistant Katha Fortier met you briefly in the hall and gave you a copy of the report. You committed that Minister Fullerton would meet with Unifor representatives and that meeting has finally been set for February 27, 2020.

I can say with certainty that almost every single nursing home in the province is "working short" on a daily basis, which presents significant risk to residents and long-term care workers alike.

"Working short" is the inside term for not having enough staff scheduled to cover the required shifts. This could mean that instead of one PSW caring for ten to twelve residents on a normal day shift, they may be caring for sixteen or even more. It is almost impossible to attract anyone to work in such circumstances, and is in fact, nothing short of dangerous. The report, which had input from long-term care owners and managers, family councils, PSW educators and front-line PSWs, has outlined many well thought out solutions to this problem.

We would like to express our disappointment that no worker representatives were included in the recently-announced Long-Term Care Staffing Study Advisory Group, and hope there will be open and meaningful consultation with Unifor and other labour representatives.

I'm sure you agree that ensuring long-term care homes are staffed appropriately is a moral responsibility of government, especially since so many of them are operated by for-profit corporations. These same corporations spend taxpayer dollars on overtime and use of higher paid agency workers (who are unfamiliar with residents) instead of creating decent, fairly compensated work with full-time hours. These corporations simply don't have a plan, and you cannot rely on them to put residents ahead of their profits.

I would like to again request a meeting with you directly on this critical issue.

On December 9, with respect, I issued a challenge to you. I asked you to spend one shift in a nursing home with me. That challenge stands to this day. It's only by seeing first-hand what life is really like for those who need care and those who are tasked to provide it, that we will be able to find a solution.

On behalf of our 15,000 long-term care workers in Ontario, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



**JERRY DIAS**  
**NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

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cc: Lana Payne, Naureen Rizvi, Katha Fortier, Andy Savela, Unifor Health Care Local Presidents