

September newsletter: New Ombudsman report about oversight of long-term care inspections, watch for our Annual Report on October 5, and more

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Watch for Ombudsman Paul Dubé's Annual Report, to be released on October 5! You can view the press conference and read the report live on our website at 9:30 a.m.

ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN NEWSLETTER



Ombudsman finds Ontario's long-term care inspections "collapsed" during first deadly weeks of COVID-19 pandemic

Franco-Ontarian Day 2023: Celebrating the province's diverse Francophone community

National Day of Truth and Reconciliation: Statement from the Ombudsman

New to Ontario? Learn more about how we can help you

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

How we helped

Careers

Ombudsman finds Ontario's long-term care inspections "collapsed" during first deadly weeks of COVID-19 pandemic

New report: All 76 recommendations accepted



Releasing his latest report on September 7, Ombudsman Paul Dubé called for an overhaul of Ontario's long-term care inspection system, after his investigation found it was completely overwhelmed during the first wave of COVID-19.

There were no inspections of long-term care homes for seven weeks in the spring of 2020 and no inspection reports issued for two months, the report, *Lessons for the Long Term*,

reveals. The investigation focused on the Ministry of Long-Term Care's inspection and enforcement-related activities. The Ombudsman made 76 recommendations to the Ministry and government to ensure the province is ready for the next public health emergency. All were accepted, and the Ministry has agreed to report back to our Office every six months on its progress in implementing them.

[Click here to read the full report](#)

In the news:

- [Living conditions 'like hell': Ontario Ombudsman reports on pandemic LTC inspection failures](#) (The Trillium)
- [Ontario government oversight of long-term care homes 'largely collapsed' during pandemic, Ombudsman finds](#) (CTV News)
- [Ontario Ombudsman urges stronger enforcement of LTC rules](#) (Global News)
- [Ontario's LTC inspection system fell apart during 1st COVID-19 wave: report](#) (CBC News)

[Franco-Ontarian Day 2023: Celebrating the province's diverse Francophone community](#)



Every September 25, Ontarians come together to recognize Franco-Ontarian Day by raising the Franco-Ontarian flag, an official provincial emblem, and celebrating the history, achievements and culture of the vibrant and diverse French-speaking community.

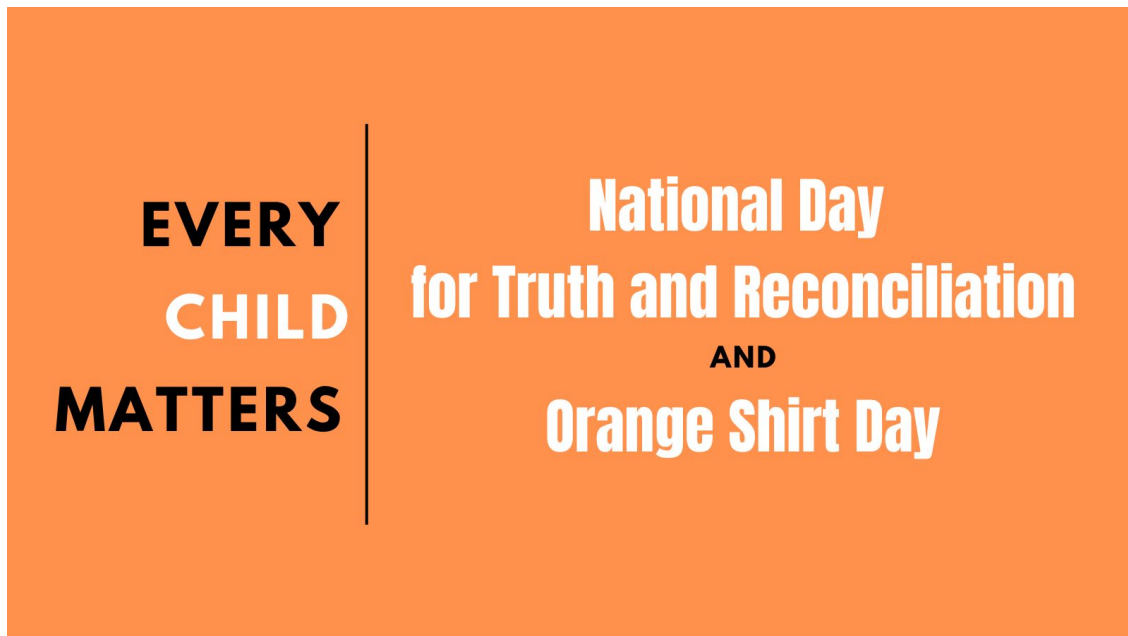
Interim French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard was honoured to attend several celebrations, including flag-raising events at the provincial legislature and Toronto City Hall on September 25, and at Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) headquarters in Orillia the following day. The latter event marked a commitment by OPP to its bilingual members and the francophone communities it serves.

“This year has been a momentous one for Francophones in Ontario,” Mr. Bouchard said. “My team and I are proud to be part of this growing, joyful Franco-Ontarian community and celebrate its incredible contributions to our province.”

Read Interim [Commissioner Bouchard's Franco-Ontarian Day statement](#).

You can also listen to his [interview with CHOQ-FM](#) about his role and mandate, and the importance of Franco-Ontarian Day (in French only).

National Day of Truth and Reconciliation: Statement from the Ombudsman



“On September 30, the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, it is essential that as a province, and as a nation, we continue to recognize the tragic effects of residential schools on the Indigenous children who attended those schools, and on the survivors who continue to live with those experiences,” Ombudsman Paul Dubé said in a statement declaring our Office’s commitment to reconciliation.

“September 30 is also known as “Orange Shirt Day”, a day to publicly recognize the history and legacy of residential schools and to honour the children who never returned home, the survivors, and their communities. The day originated with the story of one former student, Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, who had her new orange shirt taken away from on her first day at the St. Joseph Mission Residential School in British Columbia when she was just six years old.

“Ombudsman Ontario is providing educational opportunities to help our staff learn more about our shared history and the harms that have been inflicted on Indigenous peoples. We are working to establish mutually respectful relationships with Indigenous people across the province and will continue to incorporate recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls into our work.”

[Read the Ombudsman’s full statement here.](#)

Please note, our Office will be closed on Monday, October 2 in honour of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.

New to Ontario? Learn more about how we can help you



On September 21, 2023, we had the opportunity to speak to [Toronto Public Library settlement workers](#), who provide free services to help newcomers to Canada get started in Ontario.

We helped them better understand how our Office can tackle obstacles that newcomers may run into when dealing with Ontario public sector bodies – such as issues they might have with driver’s licences, health cards, social services programs such as Ontario Works or ODSP, issues with post-secondary education or school boards, and more.

We discussed how we have, for example, resolved several complaints about the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program, which nominates skilled immigrant workers for permanent residency. Our intervention in one case where a couple faced a long wait and multiple fees for language tests prompted officials to improve the application process.

In the past year, we also helped several people who had fled the war in Ukraine obtain driver’s licences, by facilitating communication with the Ministry of Transportation and DriveTest.

Are you an organization interested in hearing more about the types of problems we can solve? [Reach out to us today](#) to schedule a virtual presentation or request brochures!

You can also contact us directly if you have a complaint or concern. Email us at info@ombudsman.on.ca, call us at 1-800-263-1830, or [fill out a form on our website](#).

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE



Ontario leads investigator training for United States Ombudsman Association members

More than 30 participants from ombudsman offices across Canada and the United States attended a one-day investigative training course at the United States Ombudsman Association's annual conference on September 12. The training was delivered by Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé and Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay, who shared our Office's proven techniques for conducting systemic investigations, report writing and developing robust recommendations to improve governance.



“The Ombudsman, Bridge Between Citizens and Local Authorities”

Ombudsman Paul Dubé was invited to speak on September 19 at the International Conference of Ombudsmen in Rome, hosted by the ombudsman for the Lazio region of Italy. His session, “The Ombudsman, Bridge Between Citizens and Local Authorities,” featured an international panel, including Dmytro Lubinets, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as his counterparts from South Africa, Ethiopia, Angola, Pakistan, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In his remarks, he noted that Ombudsman offices around the world must remain vigilant in the face of “forces that seek to undermine democracy by attacking its processes and debilitating vital institutions like the Ombudsman.”

[Read his full remarks here.](#)



By-laws and beyond

From September 6-7, Ombudsman staff connected with municipal council members and staff at the Ontario East Municipal Conference in Ottawa. We offered delegates information about our complaint resolution processes, shared examples of municipal cases, and distributed resources, including our new best practice guides on integrity commissioners, and “tip cards” on by-law enforcement and trespass notices. [Download all of our tip cards here](#), or [contact us](#) if you’d like hard copies!

On September 13, Ombudsman senior counsel Robin Bates spoke to delegates at the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers’ Association Annual Training Seminar in Niagara Falls. She answered a wide range of questions about how we handle issues related to by-law enforcement, and explained how our Office works collaboratively with municipalities to solve problems. [Click here to read examples of the municipal issues we address.](#)



Primary care in French in the Niagara region

On September 18, Interim French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard virtually addressed the annual general meeting of the Centre de santé communautaire (Francophone regional community health centre) Hamilton Niagara. He highlighted the key

role the Centre plays for the French-speaking population as the only health organization in the area designated under the *French Language Services Act*.

HOW WE HELPED



Clinical error

A Francophone woman complained to us that a dermatology clinic at an eastern Ontario hospital did not provide services in French when she booked her appointment on the phone, at reception or during the medical examination. She only received results in French after the examination.

After conducting an internal investigation, the hospital issued a reminder to clinic staff about its procedures and committed to organizing an awareness campaign on the importance of actively offering services in French across all clinics. The patient told us she was satisfied and touched by the measures taken by the hospital in the wake of her complaint.

Learn more about the French Language Services Unit which answers questions and takes complaints about services in French



[Repairing wrongs](#)

A woman sought our help after her two foster children disclosed to her that their former foster parent had been physically and verbally abusive toward them. She had already reported this to the responsible children's aid society (CAS), but she complained that the CAS had not informed her or the foster children of the outcome of their investigation.

We contacted CAS staff, who confirmed that the youths' disclosures had been verified, and criminal charges were pending against the former foster parent. They agreed they had an obligation to provide this information to the youth to acknowledge they were heard and understood, and they contacted them.

[Click here to learn more about how we helped with issues or problems concerning children and youth](#)



[Tuition restitution](#)

A student from outside of Canada, who was married to a Canadian citizen, chose to enter the country on an international student visa because it would be processed faster than her spousal visa. She enrolled at a college of applied arts and technology in fall 2013, and was enrolled during the fall and winter 2013 and winter 2014 terms. For each term, she was charged tuition based on international student rates, which were much higher than domestic student fees – about \$7,000 per term. She didn't realize that dependents of Canadian citizens, including spouses, are eligible to pay domestic fees.

Ombudsman staff asked that the college's financial services department review the file. The college explained that the woman hadn't declared she was married to a Canadian when she enrolled. Recognizing this, the college adjusted her fees to match domestic fees, and refunded her \$11,151.60.

[Click here to learn more about how we helped Ontarians with their problems](#)

[Careers](#)



We continue to hire new staff. [Check out all of our open positions in the Careers section of our website.](#)

We offer:

- Collaborative, exciting work with exceptional colleagues passionate about public service
- Comprehensive health, dental and vision benefits
- Generous paid maternity and parental leave
- Hybrid working environment with an office centrally located on the subway line
- A commitment to work-life balance
- Defined-benefit pension plan
- Ongoing training and professional development opportunities

APPLY NOW!

File a complaint or contact us here



The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who conducts oversight of provincial government agencies and municipalities, universities and school boards, as well as child protection services and

French language services. The Ombudsman's investigations have benefited millions of Ontarians and prompted widespread reforms, including improved newborn screening, a more secure lottery system, and better tracking of inmates in segregation.

The Ontario Ombudsman's work takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province we now call Ontario, and we are thankful to be able to work and live on this land.

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