

# Presentation on Bill 175: Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act 2020

Toronto Seniors' Forum  
Janet Maher, Chair  
June 15, 2020

# Toronto Seniors' Forum (TSF)

Consists of Toronto residents who volunteer their time and knowledge to ensure that the City:

- Provides services equitably to all senior residents as part of the City's commitment to be an Age-Friendly City
- Adheres to the values and planning principles of the Toronto Seniors' Strategy—Equity, Respect, Inclusion, and Quality of Life—by applying a seniors' lens to all City services and activities

# Seniors' Lens

A seniors' lens is a critical perspective to guide and audit policy, planning, health and social development for seniors, typically at the end of their working lives, who can be living with multiple conditions that limit their mobility or otherwise affect their ability to participate fully in the community at the same time as they generally must contend with a fixed income.

*We know that about 1 in 6 seniors do not have adequate income to support life in an expensive community like Toronto—some have survived long-term or irregular employment in low wage sectors like the caring professions, service and retail sectors and/or have contributed to workplace pensions which disappeared with the organizations that employed them—so they are left with inadequate income and access to housing and other supports through no fault of their own.*

Our positions emphasize supports focused on the most vulnerable.

# Ageing in Place

Ageing in Place is a strategy that has been very successful for most of the past 20 years in maintaining healthy older adults in the community. It has also been a critical element in slowing the demand for effective long-term care which provides more consistent, continuous, and specialized care for frailer adults than is feasible in community settings.

*The demographics of the boomers who began to reach age 65 in 2011 will only increase that pressure, and so the need for high quality home care, community care, and post-acute supports will be central to avoiding the so-called 'grey tsunami'.*

*6-10% of older adults currently use some home and community care to maintain Ageing in Place. For the 1 in 6 Ontarians over 60 who need it, robust home care is cost-effective, especially in delaying need for alternate levels of care.*

# Objective of Bill 175: Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act:

To provide for the integration and coordination of home and community care in Ontario Health Teams overseen by Ontario Health

We support this objective, with the following cautions/considerations, which come, among other things, from our very recent and continuing experience with COVID in long-term care settings. We therefore advocate principles to ensure that:

- the system must first and foremost be centred around meeting human needs (with respect, dignity, and supporting seniors to remain healthy), **not** ability to pay, and to live independent and connected lives with staff adequately trained and remunerated to deliver those supports;

# Considerations (continued)

- this is the time to eliminate, **not** repeat, the failures of the current system, including its over-reliance on large private sector entities that give priority to investment returns at the expense of service quality;
- the new integrated system build on what we can learn from other sectors such as developmentally delayed, physically challenged and other health care advocates in delivering community solutions with strong consumer input into how services are designed and delivered;
- we recognize that the delivery of care to frail, vulnerable, and often isolated people through Real Estate Investment Trusts and other profit focused investment vehicles too often short-changes residents and staff in terms of both the quantity and quality of care received and given.

# Our Approach: Recommendations

We support the coordination of home and community care services in an integrated health system using the following principles:

- Ensure that a consumer Bill of Rights reflecting Age-Friendly principles is included as part of the legislation itself and not something that can be diminished or eroded through rule changes that have no effective political oversight
- Focus on non-profit, publicly accountable, and person- and community-centric models that build on local service integration and community partnerships and meet enforceable standards of care

# Our Approach (continued)

- Expand home and community care to include a focus on rehabilitation programs designed to improve balance, prevent falls, and improve range of motion for those Ageing in Place
- Actively promote the effective embedding of home care staff within primary care teams and partnering community agencies in a circle of support approach
- Funding should only cover the costs associated with provision of direct services and direct operating expenses, with caps on management and administration

Thank you.

I would be pleased to answer your questions or provide additional information as needed.

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