



Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario  
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers  
autorisés de l'Ontario

October 14, 2020

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street Ottawa  
ON K1A 0A2

Hon. Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Bldg Rm 281,  
Queen's Park, Toronto,  
ON M7A 1A1

Delivered by email

Re: Urgent: National Long-Term Care Standards

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Ford,

On the eve of your First Ministers' meeting, RNAO is urging you to move forward with haste on the commitment made in September's Speech from the Throne to set national standards for long-term care (LTC) across Canada.

To date, two-thirds of Ontario's 3,000 COVID-19-related deaths have been residents of Ontario's LTC homes. COVID-19 has overwhelmed Ontario's LTC sector once and threatens to do so again. For the protection of LTC residents, their loved ones and staff, the federal government has been asked to assist again – the first time with personnel from the Canadian Armed Forces and now, just this week, with the Red Cross.

Our experience over the last seven months has demonstrated that this is not only a problem in Ontario. COVID-19 swept through LTC homes across the country early, taking the lives of more than 5,000 residents. That number represents more than 80 per cent of all COVID-19-related deaths in Canada. To our shame, the average percentage of COVID-19-related deaths among nursing home residents across other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries was less than half of Canada's. This is a national failing that cries out for a national response.

Over the past two decades, in report after report, experts across Canada have identified fundamental issues with Canada's LTC sector and offered solutions. The standards set out in RNAO's [Nursing Home Basic Care Guarantee](#) reflect an emerging consensus among experts across the country of what needs to be done to protect LTC residents now and in the future. The guarantee calls for:

- a minimum of four worked hours of nursing and personal support care for each resident on each day – with adequate coverage of RNs, RPN/LPNs, NPs (or CNS) and PSWs;
- a dedicated RN for infection prevention and control;
- improved labour standards; and
- an appropriate complement of interprofessional staff.

For the protection and dignity of LTC residents across the country, these ought to be national standards.

Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Ford, as we confront a resurgence of COVID-19 across Canada, RNAO calls on you to lead the First Ministers to urgently establish national LTC standards. Every day that passes without such standards in place comes at the cost of lives and inconsolable grief.

RNAO is always here to help make changes to our health system in Ontario and across Canada that save lives, lead to healthier outcomes and preserve the dignity of those in need. Please call on us to be of assistance.

With warmest regards,



Doris Grinspun, RN, MSN, PhD, LLD(hon), Dr (hc), FAAN, O.ONT  
Chief Executive Officer  
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario

CC:

Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, MP

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, MP

Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, MP

Hon. Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, MPP

Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance, MPP

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care, MPP