

For Immediate Release  
October 3, 2006  
2006/nr-112

**MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE CARE IN  
LONG-TERM CARE HOMES**

*Proposed Law Provides For Stronger Residents' Bill Of Rights And Whistleblower Protection*

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is enhancing the quality of life for residents of long-term care homes by introducing new legislation that, if passed, would strengthen enforcement and improve care and accountability, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“The McGuinty government is working to ensure our families and loved ones living in long-term care homes across Ontario are cared for safely and with dignity,” Smitherman said. “In Ontario, the only acceptable standard of long-term care is a high standard. This legislation would give families and friends the confidence that residents have the best possible quality of life.”

Highlights of the proposed *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2006*, include:

- Promoting zero tolerance of abuse and neglect of long-term care home residents
- Whistle-blowing protections for staff, residents and volunteers who report abuse or neglect
- Enshrining in legislation that a registered nurse be on duty in the home 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Restricting the use of restraints to limited circumstances where it is absolutely necessary and only with appropriate safeguards;
- Defining licence terms for long-term care homes of up to 25 years; licences can be revoked in cases of non-compliance.

“This is about improving the health and quality of life of people living in long-term care homes,” said Monique Smith, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health, who presented *Commitment to Care: A Plan for Long-Term Care in Ontario* in May 2004. “There are 618 long-term care homes in Ontario that are homes for our parents, grandparents, and other loved ones. They deserve the best possible care.”

“We are pleased that the LTC legislation is finally being introduced,” said Lois Dent, President of Concerned Friends of Ontario Citizens in Care Facilities. “We recognize that a lot of hard work has gone into developing this Act, a great deal of consultation took place, and it appears that the result reflects a resident-centred approach.”

The *Commitment to Care* Report formed the basis for legislative change. In the fall of 2004 the government released a discussion paper entitled *Future Directions for Legislation Governing Long-Term Care Homes*. The paper was distributed broadly across the province to stakeholders and more than 700 individuals and organizations responded to the paper in writing or through public meetings held in various locations around the province. This input is reflected in the proposed legislation.

Today's announcement is just one example of how the McGuinty government is on the side of Ontario families concerned about quality care in long-term care homes.

Other Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care initiatives include:

- Providing \$118 million to improve home care and community support services
- Investing over \$165 million for 21,897 additional hip and knee joint replacements as part of the Wait Time Strategy
- Putting together an integrated stroke care system that consists of nine regional stroke centres, 18 district stroke centres and 24 stroke prevention clinics

Today's announcement is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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