

LONG-TERM CARE ADMISSION PRESSURES IN RENFREW COUNTY

Overview

Long-term care (LTC) homes in Renfrew County are experiencing growing pressures to admit residents whose clinical and behavioural care needs exceed available staffing levels, physical infrastructure, and resource/skill set capacity. This situation is creating significant operational and ethical challenges for care providers who are committed to resident safety and quality of care.

Current Context

Both County-operated LTC homes – Bonnechere Manor and Miramichi Lodge – are receiving increasing admission requests for individuals with highly complex medical and responsive behavioural needs. These needs often require pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions, specialized environments and multidisciplinary supports not currently available within standard LTC settings.

Despite the homes' efforts to collaborate with hospitals, Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS), and Ontario Health, the system-wide lack of alternative care options and transitional beds has resulted in escalating pressure on LTC homes to accept admissions that may compromise resident safety.

In some instances, homes have received Ministry compliance warnings for refusing unsafe admissions—despite legitimate clinical and operational concerns. These circumstances have strained relationships with hospital partners, contributed to moral distress among staff, and risked destabilizing safe home environments for existing vulnerable residents.

Actions Required

To ensure the ongoing safety and sustainability of our LTC residents in Renfrew County, the following actions are recommended:

- Establish a clear provincial framework for complex care admissions, with clinical suitability criteria and accountability shared across system partners;
- Increase access to Behavioural Specialized Units (BSUs) and transitional care beds within the region;
- Provide targeted funding for staffing, equipment, and training to support high-acuity residents within LTC settings;
- Promote regional collaboration to develop person-centered transition plans that prioritize both safety and quality of life.
- Review Health Quality Ontario performance indicators and current legislation under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 around restraint use and medication management.

Conclusion

Renfrew County's long-term care homes are dedicated to providing high-quality, compassionate care to every resident. However, the current admission pressures place both residents and staff in untenable positions. Addressing this issue through coordinated system planning, specialized supports, and fair accountability mechanisms will strengthen the continuum of care across the County and ensure that every admission is both clinically appropriate and safe.

