

Long-Term Care Homes Program: A Review of The Plan to Create 15,000 New Long-Term Care Beds in Ontario

Media Statement

Good morning.

My name is Peter Weltman and I am Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer. Today, my office released a report reviewing the Province's plan to create 15,000 new long-term care beds in Ontario.

In 2018-19, there were nearly 35,000 Ontarians on the wait list for a long-term care bed, an increase of nearly 80 per cent since 2011-12. Ontario's growing and aging population, combined with a lack of new long-term care beds, led to the longer wait list.

Going forward, to address the wait list for long-term care, the Province plans to add 15,000 new long-term care beds over the next five years. This is the first significant increase in the number of long-term care beds in over 15 years and is the largest new health sector spending commitment in the 2019 Ontario Budget.

There is a lot of analysis in our report, but I would like to share a few of the key findings.

The 15,000 new beds is expected to cost the Province \$1.7 billion over five years, which is in-line with government estimates. Once all the new beds are in operation, the on-going cost will be approximately \$970 million each year.

The FAO projects that the wait list for a long-term care bed will continue to rise, peaking at over 40,000 Ontarians next year. Once all the new beds are in service, the wait list is projected to be close to 37,000, which is about 2,000 individuals higher than the wait list last year.

Beyond 2023, the growth rate in the population of Ontarians aged 85 and older is projected to accelerate, which will place increasing pressure on long-term care. The FAO estimates that an additional 55,000 new beds will be required by 2033 (not including the new 15,000 beds being built now), just to maintain the long-term care wait list at 37,000 individuals (roughly where it is today).

The plan to create 15,000 new long-term care beds is an important part of the government's goal to end "hallway health care". In 2017, patients waiting in hospitals for a long-term care bed occupied 340,000 hospital bed days. The FAO projects that the wait time for a long-term care bed will peak in 2020. This implies that, in the absence of other health sector changes, the problem of hallway health care will get worse over the next two years.

Thank you.

Jeff and I are happy to take questions.

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