

Bringing Culture Change to Ontario's Long-term Care Home System

GOAL: To strengthen Ontario's long-term care home system through a transformative culture change.

OBJECTIVE: To engage organizations in Ontario to work with CARP in a grassroots movement to influence the results of the Independent Commission on the long-term care home system recently announced by the government of Ontario.

BACKGROUND: Over the last 35 years, many strategies have been tried to repair Ontario's long-term care home system such as stronger policies and more regulations, investments in staff training, support from specialists, and increased oversight by government. Despite some gains, the COVID-19 crisis has resulted in many horrific tragedies which have exposed the inherent weaknesses in the system.

RATIONALE: We believe that transformative culture change is needed to address these weaknesses. This kind of transformation has already taken place in many long-term care homes in the U.S., Europe, Australia and recently even a few in Ontario. Examples are the Eden Alternative, Green House Project, Butterfly Homes and Hogewey Villages. We do not need to reinvent the wheel. The main features of all these homes include: a relationship-based approach to care, person and family-centred care, small home-like environments, higher staff to resident ratio, full time staff who are well-trained in empathy and culture change, and an environment where residents, staff and families feel a part of a community.

If we cannot take advantage of this timeframe when the awareness of the needs for a reform are so evident, we may not get another opportunity for many, many years to come.

For more details on existing models: <https://talkingtransformationlongtermcarehomes.ca>

WHAT WOULD A GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT LOOK LIKE? Engaging the membership of collaborating organizations will be key in starting a grassroots movement. It will be important to get their feedback on our plan and obtain any new ideas they might offer. For those expressing support, we would subsequently ask for their action that could include, for example, spreading the word to all their contacts, and communicating with their local MPP's and municipal councillors. The best scenario for the biggest bang for our buck would be to have as many **collaborating organizations** in Ontario involved as possible.

WHAT ARE WE ASKING FOR? That the Independent Commission on Ontario's long-term care home system develop recommendations for transformative culture change. Staffing, physical environment, family involvement, education and training, and inspections are critical elements of transformative culture change.