



SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (ONTARIO)

Editorial

FUNDING A FAILING SERVICE SYSTEM INSTEAD OF THE PEOPLE WHO NEED HELP

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Post pandemic, most will now agree that long-term care institutions are a failing “service” system. Some have turned into [battlegrounds between staff and management](#), and residents have to live in these conditions.

If staff consider them to be toxic environments but can at least go home at night, imagine what residents are living through 24/7 with angry staff caring for them, and angry managers battling it out with staff?

Money Follows the Person is One Answer

What can be done? Empowering residents and their families to organize their own care in the community is one answer.

In the U.S. the [Money Follows the Person](#) program has helped tens of thousands of people leave these institutions and return to their home communities with the necessary help. It is a successful deinstitutionalization strategy that has empowered residents and their families to get the help they need without relying on inadequate or dangerous institutions because it ties funding to them, not to the institutions.

The Ontario Government Fails Again

Ontario has no such program even though SSAO has been advocating that it fund one for 5 years now.

It would rather continue to [funnel billions into a failing institutional long-term care system](#) and cover up the backroom deals it is making with companies like Southbridge by [ignoring Orders obtained by SSAO from the Information and Privacy Commission](#).

This government continues to embrace a regressive, outdated institutional policy dating back to the 19th Century poorhouse model.

Nursing Homes Are Closing

Because of Money Follows the Person, COVID, and the refusal of the Boomer generation to be institutionalized in these places, [occupancy rates in U.S. nursing homes have been dropping](#) significantly for four years now. That means nursing homes are closing, often leaving remaining residents stranded – [188 closed in 2023 alone](#).

Nursing homes, unable to meet structural requirements, are [also closing in Ontario](#). Money Follows the Person could be helping relocate residents left stranded and residents wanting to leave these facilities.

[At \\$200+ per person per day or \\$73,000 per year](#) – the amount Ontario pays this predominantly for-profit industry, elders and their families would have a lot of purchasing power. They could also pool their resources and staff their own group homes – consider \$438,000+ per year to rent and staff a neighborhood-based group home with 6 people.

If someone has dementia and ends up in a “specialized unit” that amount rises even higher.

So instead of investing in memory care homes located in people’s own communities, the government is [investing millions in institution-based “specialized units”](#).

The writing is on the wall with institutions closing across North America, but apparently the Ford government is unable to read, and is, once again, mismanaging the long-term care file.