



## SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (ONTARIO)

### *ADVOCACY INFORMATION BULLETIN*

**July 29, 2024**

Members will be aware that SSAO Advocacy Committee members have been filing Freedom of Information (FOI) requests on various topics related to the provision of long-term care services to older adults.

On February 20, 2024, an FOI request was made to the Director of the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MOLTC) Inspection Branch seeking the following information:

- a copy of the current license for Southbridge Care Homes Port Perry Place, and any current documents related to the agreement for redevelopment of existing beds and expansion of existing beds in Port Perry.
- a copy of the current license for Southbridge Care Homes Hope Street Terrace, and any current documents related to the agreement for redevelopment of existing beds and expansion of existing beds in Port Hope.

Last week, after a more than 20-week delay, the Ministry sent 8 pages of information, while denying 84 more pages of information based on Section 17(1) of the Act – Third Party Interests – which we take to be Southbridge’s interests, and Section 18(1) – Economic and Other Interests – which we take to be the Ford government’s interests in negotiating these agreements.

The only interests not being served, since citizens of the province are not privy to how millions of tax dollars are being spent or why these decisions were made, are those of taxpayers, residents, and their families.

Here is what we do know.

#### ***Southbridge Licensing and Redevelopment of 20 Hope Street South, Port Hope***

On June 15, 2023 the MOLTC notified Ryan Bell, CEO of Southbridge that it had completed its licensing process review and granted Southbridge:

- The redevelopment and transfer of 97 beds from Hope Street Terrace (located at 20 Hope Street South) to the Replacement Home (proposed to be located at 20 Hope Street South).
- The redevelopment and transfer of 60 beds from Regency Long Term Care Home (66 Dorset Street East) to the Replacement Home.

- The development of 35 additional LTC beds allocated by the Ministry to be included in the 192 bed development.
- The term of the license is 30 years.

Southbridge is required to have signed the letter within 15 business days and to have met all other requirements set out in the letter from the Ministry or have the agreement cancelled.

No similar letter was provided for Southbridge Port Perry.

SSAO has asked the Commissioner to review this decision and render a judgement on whether or not the Ministry has the right to withhold information about millions of dollars in public funding provided to Southbridge [which currently has a \\$160 million lawsuit filed against its facilities alleging gross negligence by families of the dead.](#)

SSAO's position is that if a precedent is set in long-term care for the Ministry and a private company to be able to sign a deal involving millions of dollars in taxpayer funding, but not have to provide taxpayers with a rationale for the decision or details of the agreement, that it would pave the way for what amount to backroom deals to privatize any and all health care with no transparency or public accountability requirements.

All taxpayers in Ontario should be concerned when governments seek to make these kinds of backroom deals with private companies especially with respect to the provision of services to very vulnerable individuals.