



SSAO INFORMATION BULLETIN

NATIONAL STANDARDS? FOR WHAT? December 10, 2020

Ontario has one of the strongest pieces of legislation in Canada when it comes to long term care institutions. A quick check of the Resident's Bill of Rights alone with its 27 provisions that cover every aspect of resident care shows just how strong this Act is.

The problem is it is not being enforced...at all. Not the care standards, not the Bill of Rights, not the mandatory reporting of abuse and neglect – no part of it. And therein lies the problem.

This morning a disappointing Op Ed was printed in the Toronto Star by the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario - disappointing in its vagueness, calling for “national standards”. It does not say national standards for what. On the surface it all sounds great, but let's look deeper. Repeated calls for more Federal and Provincial funding for more hours of care and the hiring of more staff disguise the real agenda – continue to force old people and people with disabilities to live in institutions so that professionals can have good paying jobs.

No one begrudges professionals decent pay and working conditions, but it should not be at the expense of vulnerable people.

Why are these professional organizations not calling for humane, non-profit, community-based alternatives to these institutions? Things like staffed condo and apartment programs? Group homes with safe gardens in which to wander, smell food cooking, and have personalized rather than assembly-line care? These would provide better living and working conditions, and yet these organizations have not put their considerable political clout behind calls for these more progressive models of long term care –models available to every other age group and in many other jurisdictions.

This is what John McKnight has referred to as “disabling help”. **OLD PEOPLE DO NOT WANT TO BE INSTITUTIONALIZED!** And it is time professionals got that. They do not want their conditions medicalized and themselves warehoused in corporate controlled facilities where their needs are exploited for-profit and they are not provided with even adequate care.

It is time to blow the whistle on the real agendas here. We need national standards all right – but for non-profit in-home and community residential care, not for-profit institutional care where all the standards in the world cannot be enforced.