



## **SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (ONTARIO)**

### ***Editorial***

# **LANCET GLOBAL HEALTH COMMISSION ON ANTI-CORRUPTION IN HEALTH CALLING FOR A NOVEL APPROACH**

**July 30, 2025**

They can start right here in Ontario where large long-term care companies, some owned or being operated in close proximity to financial asset management corporations, are being allowed to expand (Yorkville Asset Management, 2024), and are receiving billions in taxpayer funding to build more beds with no public transparency about why they are receiving these contracts in light of their poor care-related track records.

### **SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION ONTARIO IS SEEKING PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HEALTH SPENDING**

Seniors for Social Action Ontario (SSAO) has, for over a year, attempted to obtain information about why the Ontario government issued Minister's Zoning Orders (MZO's) attempting to override local municipal councils' objections to Southbridge Care Homes builds in their areas. SSAO has also asked for information about how much taxpayer funding is going to Southbridge for these builds, and has requested information about the contracts being awarded.

The Ontario Government has stonewalled SSAO on this for over a year. SSAO's access to information request is now being adjudicated at the Freedom of Information Commission.

At least four SSAO advocates across Ontario have filed for this kind of information related to the long term care industry and specifically, Southbridge, with little to no result, or largely redacted information. Those redactions are now being challenged by SSAO at the Commission.

Information is being withheld, the Ontario Government claims, based on "third party" information objections - obviously made by companies receiving the government's and Ontario taxpayer's largesse. The other main objection is based on "economic and other interests of Ontario".

SSAO is arguing that if those "economic interests" override the transparency and accountability rights of those paying the bills, then perhaps Ontario should re-consider awarding these private companies billions in taxpayer funding.

## **CORRUPTION IN PLAIN SIGHT**

“Corruption—commonly defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain—is a pervasive threat to health, health systems, and societies worldwide” (Hutchinson et al, 2020).

In Ontario we have seen companies like Extendicare given a red carpet welcome in spite of having been sued by the U.S. Department of Justice and forced to pay \$38 million to settle false claims allegations “relating to the provision of substandard nursing care and medically unnecessary rehabilitation therapy” (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

As the Lancet Commission points out “corruption compounds inequities, disproportionately harms marginalised populations, and undermines the right to health and the health system by diverting resources from their intended purpose and limiting access to essential services” (Balabanova et al, 2025).

## **GLARING HEALTH FUNDING INEQUITIES AND MASS INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF OLDER ADULTS IN ONTARIO RATHER THAN AGING IN PLACE SUPPORT**

Health funding related inequities are obvious as the Ontario government funnels over \$6.4 billion more (Ontario Government, 2024) towards the largely for-profit institutional long-term care system at the expense of non-profit community based agencies that are ready, willing, and able to provide both non-profit residential assisted living options and integrated care programs like PACE (Program of All Inclusive Care for the Elderly) where older adults live.

Total operating expenditures for Home Care in Ontario, according to the 2024/25 Health Estimates, is \$4,310,558,000.

For Community Support Services - \$808,611,000.

For Assisted Living Services - \$409,122,000 (Ontario Government, 2025).

Total operating expenses in 2024/25 for all three programs designed to keep older adults at home or in the community were \$5,528,291.

Operating expenditures for institutional long-term care homes is \$7,141,977,741. according to the Ministry of Long-Term Care Estimates for 2024/25 (Ontario Government, 2025). For 2025/26 the estimated operating expenditure for institutions is \$7,971,260,807 (Ontario Government, 2025).

The inequities in funding are glaringly obvious.

The Ontario government is spending almost two and a half billion more in operational expenditures to institutionalize older adults in Ontario's predominantly for-profit long-term care system than it is to keep them at home.

Please note, many of the companies that have received contracts for Home Care from the Ontario government are also operated for-profit (Ontario Health, 2025). So much of this combined funding for home care and institutions is going to private companies. The public has literally no access to information about this with the government citing "economic interests of Ontario" and "third party information" as the reasons.

## **THE HUMAN COST IS INESTIMABLE**

The Lancet Commission is right: "although comprehensive estimates are unavailable, the cost—in lives and in money—is undoubtedly immense" (Balabanova et al, 2025).

"...one-third of all COVID-related deaths in Ontario (4,446 of 13,361) were elderly people living in long-term care facilities" (Cutts, 2022).

Let that sink in. They would have been much safer in their own homes and communities.

Instead of recognizing the inherent danger of continuing to institutionalize frail older adults, the Ontario Government doubled down and funded bed expansions by some of the worst long-term care companies in Ontario (Pedersen & Mancini, 2023).

As the Lancet says:

***"In an era of constrained financing, the imperative to spend money wisely has never been stronger. The Lancet Global Health has called for a decade of anti-corruption. Reaching this goal will require more than political will, demanding tools, solutions based on evidence and circumstance, and strategies to dismantle the structural roots of corruption".***

It would be nice if a global anti-corruption in health care investigation finally revealed why the Ontario Government is really making the health care funding decisions that it is.

## REFERENCES

- Balabanova, D., McKee, M., Hutchinson, E., Stoeva, P., Spicer, N. (August, 2025). Announcing the Lancet Global Health Commission on anti-corruption in health: a call for a novel approach. *The Lancet Global Health*, 13(8).  
<https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X%2825%2900215-3/fulltext>
- Cutts, J. (June 10, 2022). THE BIG READ: On a mission to save seniors from nursing home horrors. *Orillia Matters*. <https://www.orilliamatters.com/the-big-read/the-big-read-on-a-mission-to-save-seniors-from-nursing-home-horrors-5461296>
- Hutchinson, E., Naher, N., Roy, P., McKee, M., Mayhew, S.H., Ahmed, S.V., Balabanova, D., (December, 2020). Targeting anticorruption interventions at the front line: developmental governance in health systems. *BMJ Global Health* 5(12).  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33272939/>
- Ontario Government. (April 23, 2024). Ontario providing more funding to build long term care homes. <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1004471/ontario-providing-more-funding-to-build-long-term-care-homes>
- Ontario Government. (2025). Expenditure Estimates for the Ministry of Health (2024/25). <https://www.ontario.ca/page/expenditure-estimates-ministry-health-2024-25#section-8>
- Ontario Government. (2025). Expenditure Estimates for the Ministry of Long Term Care (2024/25). <https://www.ontario.ca/page/expenditure-estimates-ministry-long-term-care-2024-25>
- Ontario Government. (2025). Expenditure Estimates for the Ministry of Long Term Care (2025/26). <https://www.ontario.ca/page/expenditure-estimates-ministry-long-term-care-2025-26>
- Ontario Health. (2025). Summary of 2025 Prequalified Home Care Service Providers. <https://www.ontariohealth.ca/content/dam/ontariohealth/documents/prequalified-home-care-service-providers.pdf>
- Pedersen, K., Mancini, M. (July 10, 2023). Ontario long term care homes with poor records are getting tax dollars to expand. *CBC News*.  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/investigates/long-term-care-homes-expanding-1.6900293>
- The Lancet Global Health. (January, 2020). 2020-2030: the decade of anti-corruption.  
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(19\)30500-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(19)30500-5/fulltext)

U.S. Department of Justice. October 10, 2014. Extendicare Health Services Inc. Agrees to Pay \$38 Million to Settle False Claims Act Allegations Relating to the Provision of Substandard Nursing Care and Medically Unnecessary Rehabilitation Therapy.  
<https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/extendicare-health-services-inc-agrees-pay-38-million-settle-false-claims-act-allegations>

Yorkville Asset Management. (November 25, 2024). Yorkville Health Care Fund and Southbridge Health Care Announce the Acquisition of 21 Long-Term Care Homes from Revera.  
<https://www.yorkvilleasset.com/images/2024/Articles/Press%20Release%20-%20Revera%20Acq%20-%20Final.pdf>

*If you would like to comment to SSAO on this editorial, please e-mail  
[seniorsactionontario@gmail.com](mailto:seniorsactionontario@gmail.com)*