



SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (ONTARIO)

INFORMATION BULLETIN

September 16, 2022

On Thursday, September 15, 2022, the Toronto Star reported on Bill 7's possible impact. There are several important takeaways in the article.

The first is the widespread fear the Ford government's actions are causing. There is a perception among old, sick people and their families that this government has weaponized hospitals to take action against them if they or their families dare to resist or speak out. Sue, the subject of the Star's report, asked that her last name be kept private over "fear of repercussions for speaking out on the new legislation..."

Bill 7 and its regulations allow alternate level of care patients (ALC) in hospitals who no longer require acute care, to be shipped 70 – 150 kilometres away from their preferred long-term care choice, depending on whether they live in southern or northern Ontario. They will also have to pay for being shipped. "In an 'appalling' development, hospital patients sent long distances to a nursing home not on their preferred list are 'responsible for arranging and paying for their transportation' according to new provincial guidelines..."

The regulations also allow hospitals to charge patients who refuse to leave after being designated for discharge, \$400 per day or over \$12,000 a month. This will force ALC patients and their families to either accept a bed in any long-term care facility that is available – often one where no one else wants to go - or face financial ruin.

The article also says that "between 10 and 30 per cent of [hospital] beds [are] devoted to alternate level of care patients [who] no longer require acute care but are waiting for beds in nursing homes, rehabilitation facilities, home care or community care".

The Ontario government has invested over \$6 billion in the first option – nursing homes (Ontario government, 2022), most of which are for-profit, but next to nothing in the other options – rehabilitation facilities, home care, or community care, many of which are non-profit.

This leads to the obvious conclusion that the government wants to drive people from non-profit hospitals into for-profit long-term care institutions, many operated by corporations that had the worst track records during the pandemic (Hains, 2020), and four times as many COVID 19 deaths as non-profit and municipally-operated facilities (Oved et al, 2020). This is occurring in the absence of these other largely non-profit in-home and community-based options that had far better track records during the pandemic, and for which Seniors for Social Action Ontario has advocated for over two years.

It raises the question – what and who are driving this callous and cruel policy that targets vulnerable elders and people with disabilities? There were other options to empty those hospital beds and allow people to go home or at least return to their own communities to be supported in smaller, non-profit residential settings.

Why force them into predominantly for-profit institutions with questionable track records, by failing to fund home and community care when these predominantly non-profit options would also have emptied hospital beds?

For the full Star article, please see:

Ferguston, R. (September 15, 2022). ‘It is grotesque to do this’: Critics slam Ford government’s plan for long-distance placements in nursing homes.

<https://www.thestar.com/politics/provincial/2022/09/15/it-is-grotesque-to-do-this-critics-slam-ford-governments-plan-for-long-distance-placements-in-nursing-homes.html>

Other articles:

Casey, L. (September 15, 2022). Families worry about loved ones’ fate under new Ontario hospital and nursing home law. [Families worry about loved ones’ fate under new Ontario hospital and nursing home law | The Star](#)

See also interview with Dr. Patricia Spindel, co-founder of Seniors for Social Action Ontario posted on Twitter by the CBC:

<https://twitter.com/BhugraSaloni/status/1570225342882906112?s=20&t=X9jrbWYojnl1DX3R14o2nw>

Hains, D. (April 6, 2020). 30 worst long term care homes account for almost half of Ontario’s coronavirus deaths. <https://www.qpbriefing.com/2020/06/04/30-worst-long-term-care-homes-account-for-almost-half-of-ontarios-coronavirus-deaths/>

References:

Ontario government. (April 21, 2022). Ontario on track to build 30,000 new long-term care beds. <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1002083/ontario-on-track-to-build-30000-new-long-term-care-beds>

Oved, M.C., Kennedy, B., Wallace, K., Tubb E., Bailey, A. (May 8, 2020). For-profit nursing homes have four times as many COVID-19 deaths as city-run homes, Star analysis finds. <https://www.thestar.com/business/2020/05/08/for-profit-nursing-homes-have-four-times-as-many-covid-19-deaths-as-city-run-homes-star-analysis-finds.html>