

October 27, 2021

On Monday, October 25th, the Ministry of Long Term Care's inspection report for Hawthorne Place Care Centre was publicly posted, and as the Globe & Mail reported, there were no findings of neglect, including malnourishment or dehydration. Furthermore, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has also "dismissed" comments made by their staff as "unsubstantiated allegations", made by "emotionally charged" witness statements.

Any report or suspicion of abuse or neglect must be filed with the Ministry of Long-Term Care and is investigated. We have zero tolerance for any conduct that puts the safety of our residents at risk. The initial CAF reports triggered inspections at both Hawthorne Place and Eatonville Care Centres by the Ministry of Long-Term Care, and the resulting inspection reports could not corroborate several of the CAF's findings.

The Long Term Care Commission confirmed decades of neglect in the long term care sector and their report released earlier this spring laid out several recommendations to ensure that we can avoid the impact that this pandemic has had on long-term care homes across Ontario. It also acknowledges that the homes hit earliest in the pandemic were impacted most significantly because of the slow manner that effective infection control measures were put in place by Public Health like masks and testing of asymptomatic individuals.

Eatonville had its first COVID-19 case reported on March 31ST, 2020, and Hawthorne Place on April 2nd, 2020, well before broad-based testing and effective Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) were advised by Public Health. Within weeks of these first cases, we had over 150 staff forced to isolate and unable to work. We immediately worked with our Health System Partners to find the necessary resources, and we were grateful for their additional support, and for the significant support from the CAF when we needed it the most.

We continue to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic. The advent of the vaccines, our mandatory vaccination policy, active screening, testing, masking, and PPE, have created a significant barrier to the virus entering our homes. We created a COVID-19 Pandemic Playbook based on our firsthand experience and our learnings from collaboration with health system partners and developed best practice informed tools and checklists for LTC managers and teams to use to prevent and manage the spread of the virus. We have entered into a new partnership with IPAC Consulting, developed positions focused on Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC), have new and ongoing staff training and development, interdisciplinary collaboration, and quality improvements which are all in place to keep our residents, their families, and our staff safe, healthy and engaged.

The ability to redevelop our older "C" class homes is critical as highlighted in the LTC Commission report. This will provide a new and modern environment for our residents and families to enjoy, and an increase in bed capacity will assist the many seniors who are currently waiting for long-term care. New investments from the Ontario government, including a significant boost to funding for additional staff and the refurbishment of Ontario's aging long-term care infrastructure will go along way to improving seniors care in Ontario.

We remain grateful for the dedication and tireless effort of our care teams through an incredibly challenging time.

Regards,

Nicola Major
Vice President, Culture and Communications
Responsive Group Inc.