

*Aging Ontarians Deserve **the Best***

A new, public and non-profit home care and long-term care system



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Message from Andrea Horwath

Dear Friends,

Imagine home care and long-term care that gives our parents and grandparents a better quality of life as they age, rather than taking it away.

Think about a system that helps older adults stay in their own home longer with excellent home and community care to support them. And, when they're ready, small nursing home communities that feel just like home.

The Ontario NDP has a vision for a new system for home and community care and long-term care that delivers better living, better care, and more peace of mind for families.

We can ban greedy profit-driven corporations from the home care and long-term care sector, so every dollar goes into better care, and better living. We can make sure our parents get care that is responsive to their culture and language.

We can give our family members the help they need to stay in their own homes longer. And we can get to work building small nursing home communities that actually feel like home, with more staff who have more time to care. Imagine knowing there's enough well-trained staff to give every senior the time and attention they deserve, and knowing that family members are partners in care and decision-making, not just visitors.

To accomplish this, we need a system where every dollar goes directly to residents — not to corporate profits.

We are committed to making this a reality for every Ontarian, regardless of how much money is in their bank account.

Starting in 2022, an NDP government will deliver a new, public and non-profit home care and long-term care system.

We know our parents and grandparents should be better off than they are today, and our plan will make that happen.

Together, we can do this,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrea Horwath". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

A Broken System

Conservative and Liberal governments built a system where big, private corporations warehouse seniors in institution-like facilities. They cut corners when it comes to staffing and care, in order to pocket bigger profits.

And governments helped them do it. The Conservatives and the Liberals before them cut inspections. They cut funding. They froze budgets. And they blocked public inquiries.

Prior to the pandemic, we had all heard heartbreaking stories of seniors dehydrated, injured without explanation, left to develop bedsores, and not being given the time or the help to eat, dress themselves, bathe or even get to the bathroom. A revolving door of underpaid, part-time workers, like personal support workers (PSWs) were run off their feet, while one-size-fits-all care often erased people's culture, foods, and language.

When the COVID-19 pandemic got into these homes Doug Ford tried to save money by doing the bare minimum.

Tragically, more than 1,870 people lost their lives in the first wave of COVID-19. People's parents and grandparents have been left to get sick and die alone, in horrible conditions.

We must never go back to the way things were. We need a plan for better aging.

By 2046, people aged 65 and older will make up close to 25 per cent of Ontario's population.¹ As seniors get older, many will develop dementia or chronic conditions like diabetes and arthritis. And many will experience multiple health conditions at once.

¹ [Ontario Population Projections, 2018-2046](#)

Our Commitments

Starting in 2022, an NDP government will:

1. Overhaul home care to help people live at home longer

We will end the for-profit, understaffed patchwork of home care companies that make seniors wait and fail to address inequities

2. Make all long-term care public and not-for-profit

Let's stop greedy profit-making at the expense of quality of care

3. Build small, modern, family-like homes

The gloom of being warehoused in institution-like facilities is over

4. Staff up with full-time, well-paid, well-trained caregivers

Instead of the revolving door of staff run off their feet

5. Make family caregivers partners

We'll treat loved ones like more than just visitors

6. Create culturally responsive, inclusive and affirming care

We'll make sure seniors feel at home, surrounded by their language and culture, and make sure 2SLGBTQIA+ seniors can always live with Pride

7. Clear the wait list

Instead of 38,000 people waiting years for a bed, and even longer for a culturally appropriate home, we will end the waits completely

8. Guarantee new and stronger protections

Never again will we let care go downhill. We're committing to comprehensive inspections, a Seniors' Advocate, and more

How We'll Make it Happen

Overhaul home care so people can live at home longer

Most people prefer to live in the comfort of their own home for as long as they can.

Our current home care system is unreliable. Privatization and government underfunding have left Ontario with a patchwork system where home care services are delivered by chronically understaffed, for-profit companies.

Service delivery is unequally distributed across Ontario, with rural areas often receiving the least reliable care. In 2015, the Auditor General of Ontario pointed out this inconsistency in services across Ontario, and not much has changed since.²

Last year, almost 18,000 people living in long-term care homes could have continued to live at home and in their communities if the proper supports were available and appropriately funded.³

In addition to hurting seniors, this model comes with a hefty price tag for Ontarians.

Less-available home care means more seniors are staying in hospital beds unnecessarily, when hospital care is far costlier than care within the community.

Paying more for less care

Not having enough home care and long-term care beds costs Ontario billions of dollars, because the people who need those beds wait in expensive hospital beds instead.

Ontario has among the lowest number of acute care hospital beds per capita in the world,⁴ and the fewest registered nurses per capita in Canada.⁵ Years of deep health care cuts from previous Liberal and Conservative governments have led to rampant hallway medicine.

Over 5,000 people a day are stuck in a hospital bed despite not requiring hospital care. Known as Alternate Level of Care patients, these seniors remain in hospital because they are awaiting care in the community, like access to home care services or a bed in a long-term care home.

The Ontario Hospital Association reported at least 750,000 patient days in 2019 where an Alternate Level of Care patient occupied a hospital bed while waiting for access to home or long-term care.⁶ This cost Ontarians an **estimated \$375 million more** than what it would cost to provide care in the community.⁷ In 2018, Alternate Level of Care cost the province \$300 million more than the actual level of care needed. In 2017,

² "CCACs – Community Care Access Centres – Home Care Program" Ontario Auditor General, 2015.

³ OCSA, 2020 pre-budget submission, pg. 2

⁴ Ontario Hospitals – Leaders in Efficiency, pg. 13 Ontario Hospital Association, December 2019.

⁵ "Last again – Ontario has the most dismal RN-to-population ratio in the country" ONA, 2019.

⁶ Ontario Hospitals – Leaders in Efficiency, pg. 13 Ontario Hospital Association, December 2019.

⁷ The Ontario NDP estimates this figure by the number of hospital patient days cited in the OHA report and the amount that the Financial Accountability Office found that the Ontario government spends over for ALC patients in hospital versus what would be spent if the ALC patients would be in long-term care.

Ontario spent about \$170 million dollars on hospital care for Alternate Level of Care patients who were on the long-term care wait list.⁸

How we'll make it happen

We will end the wait for home care. In our first four years of government, Andrea Horwath and the NDP government will invest at least \$1 billion dollars in home care. We will match dollar-for-dollar home care funding from the federal government, and increase home care service volumes by five per cent each year.

We'll recognize Ontario's vast geographic and cultural diversity, and address the inequalities in home care service across the province, ensuring the same level of care whether you live in Brampton or Thunder Bay.

To achieve this, Andrea Horwath and the NDP will establish provincial standards for home care services by creating a basket of core services - a basic set of home care services, such as nursing care to help with medication management or meal preparation. We'll hold service providers accountable to ensure they meet the provincially-regulated criteria for basic services.

We'll also align home care services to communities' needs. Ontarians speak hundreds of different languages at home. But often, the health care providers who help our parents don't speak their language, and don't know about their culture.

To address this, Andrea Horwath and the NDP will create culturally appropriate resources and training for home and community care programs. We will develop a provincial jobs-matching program to attract and match personal support workers and other home care workers to jobs in communities where they have common cultural and linguistic knowledge.

We'll be upfront about where Ontarians' money is being spent when it comes to home care. Rather than continuing the previous Liberal and Conservative governments' approach of making decisions behind closed doors, the NDP government will work with local communities to provide home care that reflects local needs, and ensures access to services both at home and in the community.

We will bring in a community based not-for-profit home-care system and end for-profit home care in Ontario.

Make all long-term care public and not-for-profit

Year after year, we see media reports and investigations into long-term care, featuring harrowing stories of nursing homes so short-staffed that residents are neglected while a revolving door of underpaid, part-time workers are run off their feet. People are hospitalized for dehydration and malnourishment, and left in their beds for so long they develop painful bed sores. We hear about families left to worry, not being included in their loved ones' care decisions, or even informed.

⁸ ["Long-Term Care Homes Program: A Review of the Plan to Create 15,000 New Long-Term Care Beds in Ontario" Financial Accountability Office, October 2019.](#)

When the pandemic began, Doug Ford didn't change much. He tried to save money by doing the bare minimum to shore up protections and care in long-term care homes. So far, more than 1,870 seniors have died in long-term care during this pandemic.

Ontario has one of the highest percentages of for-profit ownership in Canada.⁹ Nearly 60 per cent of Ontario's long-term care homes are owned and operated by for-profit companies.¹⁰

Conservative and Liberal governments built a system where those big, for-profit corporations own most of the long-term care homes in Ontario. They cut corners when it comes to staffing and care, in order to pocket bigger profits. And the government lets their CEO and lobbyist friends do it.^{11 12}

Studies show that long-term care homes run by for-profit companies tend to have lower staffing levels and consequently provide less hands-on care than non-profit homes.

In Ontario, more than two-thirds of COVID-19-related deaths occurred in long-term care homes during the first wave of the pandemic.¹³ Of this figure, data revealed that COVID-19 deaths were much more likely to occur in for-profit long-term care homes than homes operated by municipalities or non-profit organizations.¹⁴

Andrea Horwath and the NDP believe it's time to take the profits out of long-term care, and to invest in seniors' care, not the stockholders' bottom line.

How we'll make it happen

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will ensure that every public dollar spent in long-term care and home care goes directly to care and not to corporate profits.

We will phase out existing for-profit operators within eight years.

We will immediately stop issuing new licenses to for-profit long-term care operators. Contracts with for-profit home-care providers will not be renewed. Delivery of these services will be transferred to public and community health organizations and not-for-profits.

Through the transition period we will significantly increase financial reporting, transparency and accountability measures governing for-profit long-term care homes.

We will immediately enter discussions with for-profit operators on the orderly transition to a not-for-profit system. We will systematically redirect public dollars towards public and non-profit homes, including funding for refurbishing and rebuilding.

⁹ ["Long-term care homes in Canada: How many and who owns them?" CIHI, September 24, 2020.](#)

¹⁰ [Ontario Long-Term Care Association, February 2019.](#)

¹¹ [CMAJ Commentary: COVID-19 and long-term care facilities: Does ownership matter? July 22, 2020](#)

¹² [Hospitalization and Mortality Rates in Long-Term Care Facilities: Does For-Profit Status Matter?" Tanuseputro, Peter et al, 2015.](#)

¹³ ["How Ontario is responding to COVID-19" August 17, 2020.](#)

¹⁴ ["For-profit nursing homes have four times as many COVID-19 deaths as city-run homes, Star analysis finds," Toronto Star, May 8, 2020.](#)

Legislation will prohibit the closing of any beds by for-profit operators during the period transitioning to a not-for-profit system. Homes will be required to meet all care standards and will be subject to regular, unannounced inspections throughout the transition period.

We will provide direct financial support to municipalities, not-for-profits and other public sector and community health care organizations to help them take over existing homes and construct new ones.

Build small, modern, family-like homes

No one should have to spend their final years living in an impersonal, institution-like facility.

Ontario is one of the few remaining places that continues to build big long-term care facilities, which can feel more like hospitals or institutions, and less like home.

And Ontario has some of the oldest long-term care homes in Canada. At least one-third of Ontario's long-term care beds have been designed according to outdated safety standards created in 1972.¹⁵

Liberal and Conservative governments have taken Ontario in the wrong direction. Instead of investing to make long-term care feel like home, they let big for-profit corporations focus on big, money-making facilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic confirmed what seniors, families, health care workers and experts¹⁶ have been saying for years: We need to stop building big long-term care facilities that essentially act as warehouse facilities for seniors.

Home-like settings reduce the risk of infection, and studies show that home-like settings help keep seniors safe and healthy, because smaller spaces are better for people living with dementia, who rely on familiar surroundings. Home-like settings also tend to have better working conditions for staff, which translates to better care for residents.¹⁷

The NDP will get to work right away, investing in building smaller long-term care homes all over the province – homes that actually feel like home.

How we'll make it happen

An NDP government will immediately start building small nursing homes that actually feel like home, and phase out older long-term care beds as we go. We'll develop new provincial standards to make sure that all new long-term care homes are based on home-like settings.

Based on best practices from around the world, we'll have smaller living spaces shared by groups of six to 10 people, with shared facilities including kitchen, dining, and living

¹⁵ Information based on the Ministry of Long-Term Care's Bed Classification report (provided July 2020, last updated by the Ministry in May 2019). The calculation is based on total of C and D beds divided by total bed supply.

¹⁶ ["This is the model for long-term care we need and deserve" Dr. Michael Rachlis, Toronto Star, May 8, 2020](#)

¹⁷ ["Physical Environments for Long-Term Care" Drs. Pat Armstrong and Susan Braedley, 2016.](#)

¹⁷ ["Building Better Nursing Homes" The Atlantic, April 21, 2015.](#)

["Time to re-think seniors' housing and long-term care in Canada" iPolitics, April 3, 2020.](#)

rooms. These homes tend to be embedded in the community, so that residents can continue to socialize with family and friends from their own neighbourhood.¹⁸

New Democrats will create design standards that allow communities to build new long-term care homes that make sense for their local needs. In a small town, it could look like a typical family home. In bigger cities, it could look more like a neighbourhood of villas.

New Democrats will ensure that shovel-ready projects receive funding supports to meet new design standards.

It is impossible to calculate the financial drain that has occurred in the sector since Conservative and Liberal governments embarked on the massive privatization of long-term care in Ontario. We have no way of knowing the total amount of public dollars earmarked for seniors' supports that have actually gone into profits and, in many cases, left the province.

We know that many for-profit homes no longer meet current standing for health and safety and will need major renovations in order to meet current standards. Others face license renewal.

As part of our capital investment of \$750 million a year over eight years to eliminate the wait list for long-term care, we will provide direct financial support to municipalities, not for profits and other public sector and community health care organizations to help them take over the operation and ownership of existing for-profit homes.

While this may prove to be a significant one-time investment, it is an investment that must be made. It is an investment that we believe will have long-term benefits to Ontario financially and to the quality of life for aging Ontarians for generations to come.

Today, there are 38,000 Ontarians waiting for long-term care.

It is estimated that Ontario will need 50,000 new long-term-care beds by 2030. We will build them.

Staffing up with full-time, well-paid, well-trained health care workers

Everyone deserves meals that aren't rushed. Caregivers with time to listen. And comfort in the basics, like warm baths and clean clothes.

Decades of underfunding by successive Liberal and Conservative governments have led to a staffing crisis in long-term care and home care. For-profit corporations keep staffing levels dangerously low, and use part-time and temp workers instead of full-time staff. That means staff are often run off their feet, unable to give residents the time and care they want. They have to rush the basics, like help with eating or bathing. And, tragically, they have to choose which call bells they can get to, while others ring and ring, unanswered.

Personal support workers are badly overworked and underpaid.

¹⁸ ["The case for moving long-term care into small households" June 30, 2020.](#)

In the absence of decent working conditions like a fair wage, job security and benefits, personal support workers continue to leave the sector. For those that stay, they are often forced to work multiple jobs to make ends meet.

During COVID-19, temporary and part-time staff have been forced to move from one long-term care home to another, which contributed to the rapid spread of the virus, putting residents and staff at elevated risk.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP are committed to creating full-time and well-paid jobs for personal support workers, to ensure staff are retained in the sector, and that more people consider it as a career.

How we'll make it happen

New Democrats will make more personal support worker jobs permanent and full-time.

We will give personal support workers a permanent wage boost of \$5 an hour over their pre-pandemic wages.

We'll also mandate that employers pay personal support workers for travel time and expenses to get to their home visits.

We will promote and protect increased universal wages, benefits, and pensions for all personal support workers.¹⁹

PSWs are not the only workers underpaid and overworked in the long-term care and home care systems. In the first year of an NDP government, we will review and adjust all wages and benefits in the sector, and ensure all workers are fairly compensated for the work they do. This includes, but is not limited to, workers like Registered Practical Nurses, and dietary staff.²⁰

An NDP government will legislate minimum standards of care to increase staffing levels and lower the staff-to-resident ratio. In 2016, the Ontario NDP introduced the *Time to Care Act*, legislation that would provide a minimum of 4.1 hours of hands on care per resident per day. The NDP has introduced this bill four times in the legislature, but previous Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to give it the support needed to pass into law.

An NDP government will enshrine in legislation the level of staffing our loved ones need. We will immediately pass the *Time to Care Act*²¹ into law, ensuring every resident is offered a minimum of four hours of hands-on care and attention every day.

An NDP government will eliminate the use of temporary agencies, many of which take a significant portion of a worker's pay.

¹⁹ ["Ford pledges help for 'overworked' 'underpaid' personal support workers' CityNews, August 6, 2020.](#)

²⁰ *Time to Care Act* bill, introduced by:

- 1) MPP France Gélinas, April 2016
- 2) MPP France Gélinas, October 2016
- 3) NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, April 2018
- 4) MPP Teresa Armstrong, July 2018

²¹ <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-1/bill-13>

We'll restrict the use of part-time hiring instead of full-time jobs, then we'll mandate that personal support workers must only work at a single long-term care home or health care setting.

This is one of the most important ways to reduce the spread of infectious diseases among vulnerable seniors. Consistency in staffing also improves quality of care, as staff become familiar with people's needs and preferences. This is especially helpful for managing memory loss and other symptoms for residents suffering from dementia.

We will establish a dedicated fund for training personal support workers.

As seniors live longer, their needs become increasingly complex. Two-thirds of long-term care residents have dementia.²² Long-term care staff often have not received specialized training. Staffing shortages, increased resident needs, and inadequate training have created a perfect storm that results in violence and burnout.

An Ontario NDP government will implement a key recommendation from the Gillese Inquiry to create new, permanent funding to provide training, education, and professional development for all long-term care staff providing care.^{23,24} We will ensure that health care staff also receive training in palliative and geriatric care.

We will also create a provincial program dedicated to recruit and retain personal support workers, and develop an apprenticeship program so that personal support workers are paid while learning on the job.

Make family-caregivers partners

Support from family can be critical to residents' mental, physical and emotional well-being. But they're more than just visitors.

Approximately 3.3 million Ontarians provide informal care to our loved ones.²⁵ Informal family care ranges widely, from helping a spouse with eating and bathing to acting as a parent's unofficial translator.

As Ontarians age, family members take on additional caregiving duties, often while juggling demands from child care and busy careers. For many, this is a financial and emotional strain — women often bear the brunt.

Existing supports typically give too few rights and too little financial support to family caregivers, and eligibility criteria can be highly restrictive.

The Ontario NDP recognizes the invaluable role that family caregivers play, and we're committed to incorporating them as partners within our long-term care system.

²² ["This is long-term care 2019" Ontario Long Term Care Association.](#)

²³ [RNAO](#) and [Alzheimer Society Ontario](#) have called on the Ontario government to implement Recommendation #21 in the Wettlaufer Inquiry

²⁴ ["Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System" Recommendation 21.](#)

²⁵ ["Expanding Caregiver Support in Ontario" June 2017, pg. 9.](#)

How we'll make it happen

An NDP government will create a provincial Caregiver Benefit Program that provides direct support to family caregivers who do not qualify for the existing federal tax credit programs or respite care.²⁶

We will collaborate with Family Councils Ontario and the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils to create standard toolkits and training materials that ensure that every long-term care home has active and strong family and resident councils.

Culturally responsive, inclusive and affirming care

Every long-term care resident should feel included and seen and respected, whatever their mother tongue or cultural background. Conditions like dementia create an added need for language and rituals that are comforting and familiar.

That is why many communities have been working for years to establish non-profit long-term care homes run by their community for their community.

In our current system, it's up to individual long-term care homes to establish culturally appropriate programming.

Non-profit organizations like the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care and the Mon Sheong Foundation are leading the way in delivery of culturally responsive long-term care. Organizations like Indus Community Services, Momiji Health Care Society, and the Jamaican Canadian Association provide their own programming to support seniors in the communities they serve.

They do an incredible job – and more families should have access to culturally responsive homes and programming like this.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP understand the need for a provincial plan for culturally responsive long-term care.

The reality for too many 2SLGBTQIA+ folks entering long-term care is that they're forced back into the closet because the culture in their new home isn't affirming [or accepting, and staff aren't trained with 2SLGBTQIA+ lived experiences in mind.

It's time for care homes that ensure people can always live with Pride.

How we'll make it happen

We will partner with community organizations and experts already doing this work to develop a comprehensive provincial plan for culturally appropriate care across Ontario.

²⁶ Nova Scotia is the only province to set up a Caregiver Benefit program that provides \$400 per month based on specific criteria.

We'll partner with communities to deliver long-term care homes that reflect communities' distinct needs regarding everything from food services to activities to religious accommodations, in addition to developing appropriate training programs for staff.

We will provide funding to help homes deliver culturally appropriate programming, food, and training for their staff.

We will partner with Indigenous Nations to support the construction of homes that meet the culturally-specific needs of Indigenous people. To fulfill the desperate need for access, we will build more, smaller nursing homes with strong connections to the communities. We'll hire and train First Nations, Métis and Inuit staff. And we'll ensure that seniors whose primary language is a First language can continue to speak that language in their new home.

An NDP government will implement 2SLGBTQIA+ training for staff so seniors can always live with Pride. We will invest in 2SLGBTQIA+ friendly homes and home care services.

Clear the wait list

Too many Ontarians are stuck waiting months or even years for a place in long-term care.²⁷ For families waiting for culturally relevant care in an ethno-specific home, the wait is especially long.²⁸ Often, seniors languish in hospital beds, waiting, despite no longer needing hospital care.

And often, tragically, seniors who have spent decades devoted to each other, are separated by care needs as well as by wait lists.

Right now, more than 38,000 people in Ontario are on the wait list for a long-term care bed.²⁹

The previous Liberal government let the wait list grow by 78 per cent in under 10 years.

The province's Financial Accountability Office has warned that the Doug Ford Conservatives have not kept pace with our province's needs when it comes to long-term care.³⁰

So far, the Doug Ford government has built just 34 long-term care beds.³¹

The Ontario NDP recognizes that with the right level of investment in home care, we can keep seniors healthier and in their homes longer, and reduce the wait list for long-term care.

How we'll make it happen

An NDP government led by Andrea Horwath will create up to 50,000 spaces to eliminate the wait list within eight years after forming government. We will fast-track projects and move planned capital spending forward. We will invest the additional

²⁷ ["Waiting for long-term care in the GTA: Trends and persistent disparities" Wellesley Institute, September 29, 2020.](#)

²⁸ <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/The-Cost-of-Waiting-For-Care.pdf>

²⁹ [Ontario Newsroom, August 11, 2020.](#)

³⁰ [Long-Term Care Homes Program, Financial Accountability Office, October 30, 2019.](#)

³¹ <https://www.ontariondp.ca/news/doug-ford-has-only-built-34-new-long-term-care-beds>

one-time capital costs needed to ensure that by 2030, every person who needs long-term care support will get timely access to it.³²

We'll also ensure couples can stay together, regardless of their care needs. The NDP has been fighting for our *Till Death Do Us Part Act*, and an NDP government will make sure that everyone has the right to live with their spouse or partner when they enter long-term care.

New and stronger protections: a seniors' advocate and regular inspections

Never will we let care go downhill again.

Long before the pandemic, Ontarians heard horror stories of neglect and abuse in chronically understaffed long-term care homes. But increasingly, there's been nowhere for people in care, or their spouse or children, to turn.

For years, Ontario's long-term care inspection process has been shrouded in secrecy. The previous Liberal government refused to name long-term care homes classified as high-risk. They broke campaign commitments by scaling back annual comprehensive inspections for more than 500 long-term care homes.³³

Doug Ford and the Conservatives made things worse by cutting unannounced comprehensive annual inspections. Only nine homes had comprehensive inspections in the year before COVID-19 started.³⁴

Most of the long-term care homes with the highest number of COVID-19 deaths had received dozens of complaints in previous months and years, yet didn't receive comprehensive, annual inspections.

By the end of Sept. 2019, more than 1,870 seniors in long-term care had lost their lives to COVID-19.³⁵ Thousands of families are grieving.

Doug Ford removed the Bill of Rights for home care services during the height of the first wave of COVID-19. And he blocked a public judicial inquiry into how and why seniors in long-term care were left so vulnerable.

Successive Conservative and Liberal governments have failed to hold accountable long-term care operators that have failed to keep their residents safe. And they've certainly failed to give residents and their families someone to turn to for help, to prevent problems from turning into tragedies.

Accountability for problematic homes

Since 2000, the province has revoked licenses from just two of its 626 long-term care homes.³⁶

³² Current wait list is over 38,000. The FAO says province needs 55,000 more spaces by 2033-34 to maintain the 38,000-person wait list. The report does not state how many spaces needed by 2030.

³³ ["Ontario Liberals switching to 'lite' inspections at over 500 long-term care homes across the province" National Post, July 2016.](#)

³⁴ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/seniors-homes-inspections-1.5532585>

³⁵ [Bill 175](#) removed the Bill of Rights

³⁶ [Picton Manor Nursing Home, 2012](#); [Lady Isabelle Nursing Home, 2017.](#)

Many of the homes hit hardest by COVID-19 racked up years of complaints and critical incident reports, yet they continue to keep their licenses.

At Orchard Villa in Pickering, one of Ontario's worst-impacted homes, nearly 80 long-term care residents died during the first wave of the pandemic, yet the Ford government refused to revoke its license.

We know seniors and staff are safest when inspections happen regularly, and operators are held accountable for the quality of care they provide.

How we'll make it happen

Andrea Horwath and the Ontario NDP will immediately bring back annual comprehensive resident quality inspections for every home. We will make sure that all inspections are unannounced, unlike the former Liberal and current Conservative governments, which have been tipping off long-term care homes that inspectors were coming.³⁷

We will create a new accountability system that ensures there are consequences for homes that fail the inspections process. We will increase penalties and revise the criteria for revoking licenses.

An NDP government will create a new independent officer of the Ontario Legislature called the Seniors' Advocate, responsible for safeguarding the interests of seniors, their caregivers, and their families. The NDP already has the *Seniors Advocate Act* tabled in the legislature, and we'll make it a reality in 2022.³⁸

The Seniors' Advocate will identify and analyze systemic challenges that seniors face and make recommendations to government to ensure their best interests are looked after.³⁹ And they'll make sure that families have someone to turn to when they see problems that need to be addressed.

An Ontario NDP government will also mandate the collection of health data including:

- Race-based and socio-economic data to identify and address systemic inequities
- Long-term care and home care staffing data to identify such issues like how many staff work part-time versus full-time
- Standardized provincial home care data to address existing service gaps in the province and anticipate growing population needs⁴⁰

³⁷ <https://ipolitics.ca/2020/09/28/long-term-care-homes-have-been-tipped-off-about-inspections-for-10-years-transcript/>
³⁸ <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-1/bill-196>

³⁹ Ontario NDP, July 8, 2020.

⁴⁰ The 2015 Ontario Auditor General report on home care indicated number of instances of missing data, and lack of standardized data, which has not been fixed to date.

Funding and investing in support for older Ontarians

Ontario's long-term care and home care systems have been chronically underfunded and neglected by governments for decades. The pandemic has exposed the consequences of that neglect in an unimaginable way. It has to end. Now is the time.

Currently the Ontario government directly budgets \$4.6 billion for long-term care and another \$3.2 billion for home care. An estimated \$645 million is spent in community supports and it is estimated another \$375 million is spent caring for seniors in hospital beds while they wait for home care or long-term care. That is a total of \$9 billion dollars.

Much of that \$9 billion dollars can be better spent. The system is fragmented and expensive to administer with untold millions being syphoned off into corporate profits, stock dividends and private sector executive salaries.

It is impossible to estimate the staggering costs of a broken system on other government services, the economy and especially on families. There are more than 38,000 people on the wait-list for long-term care.

There has never been a more important or better time to invest in new safer, friendlier and more home-like facilities. The population is aging rapidly. With low interest rates, an economy in recession and new-found federal government attention, now is the time to make those one-time capital investments and get to work building the facilities Ontario needs.

By committing an additional \$750 million annually in one-time capital over the next eight years we can get this done.

By removing profit, with better administration of a coordinated system, and finally investing what's necessary, we can begin to provide the system aging Ontarians and their families deserve.

We estimate that the much-needed new investments will be up to 30 per cent over and above the \$9 billion now being spent. New investments will be transparent and responsible, phased in at approximately five per cent per year over six years, reaching \$3 billion by 2028.

Conclusion

Everyone deserves to age with dignity.

Our current system is failing Ontarians as they age, often reducing seniors' quality of life, safety and happiness.

Andrea Horwath and the Ontario NDP have a bold vision to transform home care and long-term care so that better aging is guaranteed for all Ontarians, no matter where you live, what language you speak or how much money you have.

We are committed to taking the profits out of seniors' care, and to building a new public, not-for-profit system that puts every dollar invested directly into the care seniors receive.

We are committed to keeping Ontarians in their homes longer and creating better, safer conditions for staff to ensure better care for residents. We will build smaller, more intimate long-term care homes that feel like home, and are better integrated into their local community. We will make sure homes have responsive, culturally appropriate programming, and staff that are trained to carry this out.

We commit to regular, unannounced inspections of homes, and stronger penalties to keep homes that fail to protect their residents and staff accountable.

We will continue to listen to seniors, their families and advocates, and to health experts, and to include their critical input in the solutions we apply to fixing the challenges Ontarians face as they age.

Better aging for seniors — and greater peace of mind for their children and loved ones — is a major priority for the NDP, and a plan we're deeply committed to realizing.

Because we know our parents and grandparents should be better off than they are today. And they will be, with Andrea Horwath and an NDP government.