



May 29, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
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The Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
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The Honourable Merrilee Fullerton
Minister of Long-Term Care
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Dear Premier Ford, Minister Elliott and Minister Fullerton,

Wounds Canada is writing this open letter to you today in response to the Canadian Armed Forces' report on five long-term care homes in Ontario. We are deeply saddened by the content of the report and the lack of care for vulnerable Ontarians, but we are not shocked. Wound prevention and care for patients have been a problem across Ontario and Canada in all health-care settings for a long time – a point that Wounds Canada and other organizations have tried to raise in the past with the government, including your offices. It is time for the Government of Ontario to make wound care a priority across our health-care system, from long-term care to community care and acute care.

The military's report succinctly points out that long-term care staff have not been provided with the proper equipment, staffing and training to prevent and manage wounds, such as pressure injuries (bed sores). To make matters worse, they do not have access to appropriate skin and wound care supplies as basic as barrier creams and dressings or adequate access to wound care experts. Instructions on repositioning to prevent and manage pressure injuries are not being followed. To summarize, best practices in wound care, or anything remotely resembling them, were not implemented or followed in these care homes, and the Province of Ontario failed to inspect, monitor and rectify the situation.

Many of the observations in the military's report relate to horrific pressure injuries. For wounds to reach stage 4 or to be unstageable—to reach the bone—means that a basic, common-sense risk assessment and prevention measures were not carried out. The sight and smell of such a wound are horrifying, and the distress, pain and harm to the person are immeasurable. The fact that our long-term care homes had such severe wounds points to unconscionable gaps in a number of areas, including a lack of expertise on site, poor coordination between long-term care, acute care and wound care experts, and inadequate policies or implementation of policies designed to provide even baseline care. To clarify the severity of these wounds, we have attached an image of an unstageable pressure injury.

Wounds Canada recommends the following action to help Ontarians in long-term care homes. The Government of Ontario should immediately:

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- Provide wound care education and training to staff, for both regulated and unregulated health care professionals
- Increase staffing, equipment and supplies in long-term care homes, especially for wound prevention and care
- Restart regular and surprise inspections of long-term care homes
- Ensure best practices related to wound care are implemented in all long-term care homes
- Improve access to wound care experts, and ensure Ontario's interprofessional health-care teams include wound experts
- Ensure better coordination between long-term care, acute care and community care and implement wound care pathways from hospital to home and community care with set measurables, monitoring and evaluation
- Develop policies that prevent wounds such as pressure injuries and infected wounds in long-term, acute and community care

Wound prevention and care must be a priority for all governments across Canada. Not only does proper wound prevention and management improve the health and quality of life for patients, but it also reduces significant spending on wounds. Right now, Ontario spends \$1.9 billion on wound care. By investing in prevention and better management earlier on when a wound occurs, significant savings will be realized.

Most importantly, the Province of Ontario would be providing the care that our seniors and wound care patients deserve.

Premier Ford, Minister Elliot and Minister Fullerton, Wounds Canada would like to once again kindly request a meeting to discuss these recommendations, and we would like to be part of developing the solution to provide better care in our long-term care homes.

Thank you for your consideration. Wounds Canada looks forward to your response and to working with you.

Sincerely,



Mariam Botros, CDE, D.Ch, IIWCC
CEO, Wounds Canada
Director, Diabetic Foot Canada

Attachment (1)



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cc: The Honourable Robin Martin, the Parliamentary Assistant to the Ontario Minister of Health

France Gelinias, Ontario NDP Health Critic

John Fraser, Ontario Liberal Health and Long-Term Care and Seniors Affairs Critic

Mike Schreiner, Ontario Green Party Leader

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, Government of Canada

The Honourable Deb Schulte, Minister of Seniors, Government of Canada

Rana Shamoon, Director of Health Policy, Office of the Premier