

# Change the Long-Term Care System: Better care, not more profits

## *OPEN LETTER TO ALL POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS*

With great concern, we, a coalition of trade unions representing the majority of long-term care (LTC) workers and community stakeholders, are asking your party to end to the tragic failures of the for-profit long-term care system. We are calling for the end of profits in LTC and for the establishment of national LTC standards.

The pandemic has exposed inequities in our health care system. Frontline health workers and care recipients, especially those from marginalized and racialized groups of people, must be included in efforts to eliminate systemic racism and other barriers to care.

Painfully, we are aware that Canada has had extremely high rates of Covid-19 deaths in long-term care when compared to other OECD countries. Canada's LTC infection totals have been more than ten times higher when compared to Australia, for example, or close to 4 times higher when compared to Ireland<sup>1</sup>.

Results from a study published in CMAJ found evidence that for-profit LTC homes in Canada had more significant COVID-19 outbreaks and a higher number of deaths<sup>2</sup>. The LTC system is under-resourced and unable to meet the growing demands of the Canadian people and continued expansion of LTC into the for-profit sector will surely decrease oversight and accountability while also driving working and care standards down.

Federal leaders must work with provincial ones to find ways to improve standards for long-term care. We are calling on the adoption of national standards which include:

- Increased federal funding that is conditional upon enforceable national long-term care standards
- Phasing out the for-profit long-term care system in Canada
- Improved working conditions, including requirements like staff training, better wages, and access to paid sick leave
- Improved living conditions for residents, such as ending the use of multi-bed rooms
- Adequate staffing to provide the necessary level of care within facilities, so that residents receive a minimum of 4.1 direct care hours per day
- Improved health and safety measures, including infectious disease protocols and training for all staff, volunteers and families
- Measures to address staffing shortages, retention and attracting new workers to the industry.

---

<sup>1</sup> When compared to Australia whose total cases in long-term care is 2060 ( as of 9 July 2021 - <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-outbreaks-in-australian-residential-aged-care-facilities>), Total number of LTC cases in Ireland 9113 (as of January 9, 2021) <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/all-topics-z/coronavirus/threats-and-outbreaks/covid-19/prevention-and-control/LTCF-data> and Canadian cases 31,998 as reported by the National Institute on Ageing (as of 13 July 2021 - <https://ltc-covid19-tracker.ca/>)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cmaj.ca/content/192/33/E946>

Creating sustainable change is an immense challenge, but we believe that there is no alternative but to act now. Maintaining the status quo would be negligent and harmful to Canadians.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts and working together as soon as possible towards an improved long-term care system.

Sincerely,

## Signatories:

**Adrian Durtschi, Head of UNI Care, UNI Global Union**



**Dave Baraniuk, President  
Misty Lafond, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President/Business Agent,  
USW Local 1-207**



**Jerry Dias, Unifor National President**



**Ken Neumann, National Director for Canada, United  
Steelworkers**



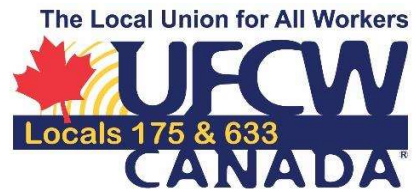
Paul Meinema, National President, UFCW Canada



Sharleen Stewart, President, SEIU Healthcare



Shawn Haggerty, President UFCW Locals 175 & 633



Chris Parsons, Provincial coordinator  
Nova Scotia Health Coalition



Christina Warner, Interim Co-Executive Director, The  
Council of Canadians



Edith MacHattie and Barb Nederpel,  
Steering Committee Co-chairs, BC Health Coalition



Fred Hahn, President CUPE Ontario



Linda Silas, President, Canadian Federation of Nurses



CANADIAN FEDERATION  
OF NURSES UNIONS  
LA FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE  
DES SYNDICATS D'INFIRMIÈRES  
ET INFIRMIERS

Mary Boyd, PEI Health Coalition

Paul Finch, Treasurer, B.C. General Employees' Union



Pauline Worsfold, RN, Chairperson,  
Canadian Health Coalition



**Sandra Azocar, Executive Director, Friends of Medicare**



**Vicki McKenna, President, Ontario Nurses' Association**



**Dr. Melanie Bechard, Chair, Canadian Doctors for Medicare**

