



January 24, 2020

The Honourable Rod Phillips  
Minister of Finance  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Frost Building South  
7 Queen's Park Crescent  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Y7

Thank you for the opportunity to submit CARP's priorities for the 2020 Ontario Budget.

CARP is Canada's largest advocacy association for older Canadians. Formerly the Canadian Association for Retired Persons, CARP has more than 320,000 members aged 50+. Headquartered in Toronto, CARP has 26 member chapters across the country, including 180,000 members in Ontario. CARP is committed to working with all levels of government to advocate for older Canadians. We advocate for better health care, enhanced financial security, and freedom from ageism and abuse for older adults.

This submission calls on the Ontario government to:

1. Improve safety and quality of long-term care
2. Deliver on the commitment to end hallway medicine
3. Fully fund and improve access to best-in-class and evidence-based adult vaccines for shingles, flu and pneumococcal
4. Increase protection for defined benefit pensioners

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MLennox".

Marissa Lennox  
Chief Policy Officer



## Summary

This submission calls on the Ontario government to:

1. Improve safety and quality of long-term care
2. Deliver on the commitment to end hallway medicine
3. Fully fund and improve access to best-in-class and evidence-based adult vaccines for shingles, flu and pneumococcal
4. Increase protection for defined benefit pensioners

### **1. Improve safety and quality of long-term care**

Recent CARP surveys indicate that:

- 92% of CARP's 320,000 members agree that long-term care homes are not adequately staffed.
- More than half of respondents (55%) believe the measure that would most improve care and safety is a higher staff to resident ratio.
- 80% of CARP members know someone who is living or has lived in long-term care

CARP requests the government:

#### **(a) Implement the recommendations of the Wettlaufer Inquiry**

CARP renews its call on the Ontario government to implement the recommendations of the Long-Term Care Homes Public Inquiry Report (Wettlaufer Inquiry).

CARP urges the government to:

- CARP fully expects the Ontario government will make a formal commitment in step with these recommendations so that seniors can trust in the systems that house and care for us as we age
- Require all LTC homes to install cameras in medication rooms
- Develop a standardized protocol for autopsies performed on the elderly
- Require LTC homes to provide ongoing training to staff about their obligations to report instances of abuse and neglect, and enforce policy creation and adherence standards within care settings
- Regulate and limit the supply of insulin in long-term care homes



## **(b) Mandate better training, supports and safe working conditions for Ontario' PSWs**

CARP is calling for the province to mandate better training, better pay and safer, healthier work environments for Personal Support Workers who provide critical homecare and long-term care work.

CARP renews our call for:

- Implementation of mandatory staffing levels in long-term care facilities to reflect the changing composition of residents and better protect the frailest of the frail population
- Funding and requirement of dementia care training and sensitivity training for staff who care for residents with dementia
- Investment in technology and innovative approaches to provide better and more effective care

## **2. End Hallway Medicine for Ontario's Older Adults**

CARP is calling on the Ontario government to fulfill its commitment to ending hallway medicine. Specifically, the government must:

- Move on the commitment to fund 15,000 new long term care beds
- Improve the transition from hospital to home care / retirement homes / long-term care homes that incorporates the patient experience (i.e. healthcare navigation options through community supports to reduce cyclical hospitalizations)
- Implement a patient-centric model of care across the care continuum
- Make electronic medical records (EMR) mandatory for all care providers, and ensure proper integration of EMR systems and data
- Mandate patient access to personal primary care medical records through patient portals so that a patient can access their health information at the point when they need it the most

## **3. Fully fund the most effective vaccines for older adults, including shingles, high dose flu and pneumococcal**

CARP is calling on the Ontario government to invest in the three leading vaccines for all adults over age 65: high-dose flu, shingles and pneumococcal vaccine. These vaccines incorporate the best scientific evidence and are recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization.

**High-Dose Flu:** Seniors account for almost 65% of influenza-related hospitalizations and 87% of influenza-related deaths. The high-dose influenza vaccine should be made available to all Ontarians age 65 and older across the



province through pharmacies and other accessible points of distribution. While the Ontario government is funding the high-dose influenza vaccine for those 65 years of age or older, distribution has been limited and access remains a concern for older Ontarians.

**Shingles:** One in three Canadians will get shingles in their lifetime. Shingles can lead to loss of vision or debilitating nerve pain. Two-thirds of all shingles cases occur in adults over age 50. There are two vaccines available in Canada to prevent Shingles, however research shows that efficacy rates vary greatly with age between the two. The Ontario government should provide the most effective shingles vaccines to all Ontarians over 65 free of charge.

**Pneumococcal Vaccine:** The pneumococcal vaccine helps to fight off multiple strains of bacteria. Pneumonia attacks weakened immune systems and contributes to 3000 pneumococcal related deaths in Canada each year. There are two pneumococcal vaccines available in Canada. Vaccination is the best tool for reducing the incidence of hospitalization due to pneumonia. Both options should be fully funded and made available for all adults over 65.

Lastly, CARP also urges the government to fund an awareness campaign around routine adult immunization. This would include establishing clear messaging around which vaccinations should be given, and when.

#### **4. Protect Defined Benefit Pensioners**

CARP supports FSRA and the government of Ontario for taking proactive steps to support innovation and reduction of red tape in the pension sector. Enhancing regulatory tools available to FSRA, and strengthening legislative and regulatory protections for pensions, will enhance retirement security for Ontarians and save the Ontario government money.

CARP supports the reduction of regulatory burden only if the remaining regulations are enhanced to protect pensions. CARP is asking the Ontario Government to:

1. Make pension protection a high-impact priority for FSRA and the Ontario Government.
2. Recognize a key factor in the long-term financial stability of the PBGF will be reducing the risk of pensions failing, critical to this is maintaining healthy pension solvency levels.
3. Identify specific legislative and regulatory changes that could enhance its ability to prevent pension defaults, such as:
  - a. abolishing pension funding relief except in true hardship cases
  - b. preventing the sale of a company until the pension is fully funded
  - c. blocking executive bonuses or issuance of dividends when a pension falls below established solvency funding requirements

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- [i] Violence and abuse in long term care homes. CBC, 2018.  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/thenational/violence-and-abuse-in-long-term-care-homes-1.4504831>
- [ii] Mancini, Melissa; Pedersen, Katie. 'It's a horror movie': Nursing home security footage provides raw picture of resident violence problem. CBC, 2018.  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/long-term-care-marketplace-1.4501795>
- [iii] This is Long-Term Care 2016. Toronto: Ontario Long-Term Care Association, 2016. <https://www.oltca.com/OLTCA/Documents/Reports/TILTC2016.pdf>
- [iv] Long-Term Care Needs to Change with the Times. Toronto: CARP, 2018.  
<http://www.carp.ca/2018/01/26/long-term-care-needs-change-times/>
- [v] Public Health Agency of Canada. "Influenza Vaccine Uptake: Results from the 2015/16 National Influenza Immunization Coverage Survey in Canada." Canada.ca, 6 Apr. 2017.