

Long Term Care- Valentines Day 2008 Action

One year ago, Health Minister George Smitherman promised to establish standards of care and staffing in Ontario's long-term care facilities. Given similar statements made in the 2003 and 2007 provincial elections by Premier McGuinty, this government has now promised three times to reinstate standards of care that were removed by the Conservatives.

Instead, the Health Minister is running yet another consultation led by Shirlee Sharkey. There is no indication that a minimum standard of care is being considered in this process.

Lobby your MPP on Valentines Day!

CUPE Ontario and its long-term care locals will be holding information pickets at constituency offices of MPPs across Ontario on February 14. Campaign flyers and stickers are being prepared with the message "3.5 hours- Time to care" and sent to every long-term care local. For more information, contact CUPE Ontario's Maureen Giuliani at mgiuliani@cupe.on.ca.

The Care Our Communities Need

Our loved ones, vulnerable and frail residents in nursing homes, require and deserve an average 3.5 hours of care each day. That's the standard of care that Manitoba, Alberta and New Brunswick are striving to achieve.

Not so in Ontario, where caregivers are run off their feet trying to provide quality care. There is simply not enough staffing, nor the legal requirement, to ensure a guaranteed 3.5 hours standard of care to meet today's demanding needs.

Shameful Conditions in Ontario Nursing Homes

- **Residents sit in deplorable conditions.** Incontinence products are often kept under lock-and-key, and many homes are directing staff to change residents only when the product is 75% soiled.
- **Residents wait for hours.** With so few staff, too many residents are awakened at 4:45 a.m. just to get ready for breakfast at 8:00 a.m. Some are put to bed at 7:00 p.m. so everyone can be ready for sleep by 11:00 p.m.
- **Some don't get fed.** In 10 per cent of cases, feeding is left undone due to staff shortages.
- **Many don't get exercise.** Walking and exercising is not done more than half the time needed.

Study after study has linked staffing and care standards to improved care and safety. It's time for the Ontario government to give seniors the dignity and respect they deserve.

**Send a message to Minister Smitherman:
It's time to care. Introduce 3.5 hours now!**