

May 28, 2020

Dear Gerontological Nurses and Associate Members:

On May 26 the Canadian Armed Forces released a report identifying issues related to the care of older people living in long-term care homes. GNAO and CGNA board members, like all of you, experienced a wide gamut of emotions as we read the report and heard subsequent media broadcasts. We are sending this message to acknowledge that over the last few days there is a growing public awareness about the need for long-term care home re-design. Many of you have held this view for some time and are already influencing for change. Now is an opportunity for us to leverage our collective expertise for advocacy that will shape the future of long-term care reform. This letter is intended to be a reminder of our organizations' ongoing commitment to older people and our membership to collaborate with you to take action toward a solution-driven approach.

All older people, particularly residents in long-term care homes and their families are deserving of competent nursing care that is compassionate and respectful. We know that across the province and the country, there are homes striving to provide the person-centred care that we expect our loved ones to receive. Across many care sectors, including long-term care, nurses are embracing best practices, are achieving certification in gerontological nursing and practicing to the standards and competencies established by their regulatory body and CGNA. In these settings, dignity, respect and innovation are flourishing for not only the residents and their families, but also for their healthcare providers (HCP). Long-term care homes are a demanding health care environment. The sector itself has changed dramatically over the last decade and care expectations of the public have risen as well. Long-term care home residents of today have increasingly complex care needs. You are working diligently to address these needs and with your help we can offer solutions to this crisis.

We recognize that the longstanding challenges faced by the long-term care sector have been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These include, under funding, disparity in HCP wages, inconsistency in standards application and limited personnel, naming but a few. Sadly, these variables are not limited to those 5 homes identified in the Canadian Armed Forces report. We acknowledge that many of these variables are difficult to control. Any actions taken should reflect the need for healthcare reform of older people across all healthcare sectors. **We pledge to take the following actions:**

- 1) collaborate with decision-makers to build carefully crafted solutions that balance tension between regulations and quality of life needs expressed by older people and their families;**
- 2) lobby to participate in review panels that will be established across the country;**
- 3) survey our members to document leading practices to support quality of life of older people in congregate living settings during the pandemic;**
- 4) contribute to the development of practices that will better prepare leaders to respond to future waves of COVID-19 or future pandemics;**
- 5) ignite conversation of ways to improve care for older people across all healthcare sectors.**



Stay tuned for updates on our developing action plan. In the meantime, please read:

[Canadian Armed Forces report released May 26, 2020](#)

[Canadian Nurses Association 2020 Vision: report released May 27, 2020](#)

[Registered Nurses Association of Ontario ECCO 3.0 report released May 12, 2020](#)

Together, we will make a difference.

Melanie Kelly, President, GNAO

Therese Lim, Past-President, GNAO

Lori Schindel Martin, President, CGNA

Mollie Cole, Past-President, CGNA

Julie Rubel, Director of Communication, CGNA