



AdvantAge  
Ontario

Advancing Senior Care

# AdvantAge Ontario in Action!

Without a doubt, my personal highlight in 2023 has been getting out to see so many members. It has truly been a year of planes, trains, and automobiles as I happily crisscrossed the province – Ottawa, North Bay, Thunder Bay, London, Brantford, Niagara, Barrie, and many, many places in between – to visit well over 50 members.

I have been greeted with such kindness and have loved meeting your residents and staff teams, being part of groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings, and seeing firsthand the tremendous work you are doing every day to provide the best care and quality of life for your residents. Your pride, passion and commitment are always so evident.

This year has certainly been one of action and achievement on multiple fronts, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to the betterment of seniors' care and advocacy for positive change.

One of our most notable successes was the realization of funding to compensate not-for-profit homes for their Bill 124 wage reopener costs. We were told by the Minister's Office that "this was not possible without AdvantAge Ontario." Member data was key – your survey responses gave us the evidence we needed to make our case. Funding to cover ongoing costs remains a big issue that we are

raising with the Ministry. We held our largest-ever public media campaign last spring, strategically designed to draw attention to the critical staffing agency crisis and the soaring cost of temporary workers. We know this issue is far from resolved for many members, and it remains a very high priority for us. This issue was featured in the recently released Auditor General's report on long-term care so we are hopeful action will be taken.

Another significant focus this year has centered on the very concerning erosion of cultural and religious placements stemming in large part from the pandemic and Bill 7. This trend threatens to compromise the well-being of residents and the



very essence of the homes that these communities have worked so hard to build. We are the lead advocates on this issue and, once again, data from members has armed us with powerful evidence. We are actively engaged with government officials and stakeholders to press for change to retain these unique environments.

These are just a few highlights from a very busy year. In the pages that follow, we have summarized our action and achievements. Don't hesitate to reach out with your thoughts. As always, we welcome your feedback!

# Members Visits



## Our Members Say:

When we joined AdvantAge Ontario, we heaved a sigh of relief. We had found our people. They get us.

# 2023 Highlights



Over **\$771M** in  
**increased funding**  
for the sector



Successfully influenced  
government to  
**compensate NFP  
homes for Bill 124**  
wage reopeners



**Led public  
calls for change**  
on temporary  
staffing agencies



**9.7% increase in  
nutrition funding,**  
bringing the two-year  
increase to 24.7%



AdvantAge Ontario  
certified as a  
**Great Place to Work**

# Queen's Park

Through hard work and deliberate relationship building, we have become a very trusted voice at Queen's Park. Our perspectives and insights are valued and respected across all political parties. Our motivation and what we stand for is always clear and consistent – supporting our not-for-profit and municipal members in delivering the best care for their residents.

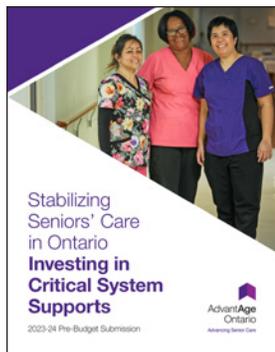


A major highlight was our Lobby Day last spring, the first to be held in-person in many years. Board members spent the full day meeting with key ministers, political staff, senior bureaucrats, and leaders of all three opposition parties. This visibility and concentrated time with politicians and others was a very impactful way to strengthen our relationships and raise awareness of critical issues facing our sector. Planning is already underway for our 2024 event.

We built an excellent relationship with Minister Calandra during his time as Minister of Long-Term Care and we continue to engage with him and his team in his new role as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.



Stan Cho is only a few months into his new portfolio as Minister of Long-Term Care, and we've already had numerous meetings and opportunities to connect at sector events. We have discussed our advocacy priorities, including funding, capital development, and critical HHR issues. Most recently, we brought together member cultural homes to meet with Minister Cho and his senior staff to advocate for the reinstatement of cultural admissions in the province. Our group greeted the Minister with flags from their home countries and passionately presented the case for cultural long-term care. Our Association is the lead advocate on this issue, and once again, data from our members is providing powerful evidence to support our calls for action.



## Our Members Say:

Very responsive to the needs of the sector and excellent advocacy for us.

# Amplifying Our Voice

We continue to be an active voice in radio, print and TV, with **close to 350 media mentions** to date. Our public campaign – one of the largest in the Association’s history – earlier this year calling for government action on exorbitant staffing agencies costs got massive media attention, and it is still having a ripple effect as this challenge continues to play out. We have been the loudest voice on this issue and, once again, tremendous credit goes to the many members who gave us the survey data we needed to make a compelling case.

Most recently, we took bold action to publicly tackle the narrative in the Ombudsman’s recent report on COVID-19 and long-term care. Paul Dubé said at the time that “The direct result of the lack of inspections, reports and enforcement was a lack of protection for residents and staff and a lack of accountability for the system.” Our op-ed in the Ottawa Citizen challenged that with the message that what homes desperately needed was more support, not more enforcement. We received many messages of appreciation from members for taking this stand on behalf of the sector. The op-ed is reprinted in full on the next page.



**Our Members Say:**  
Credible, absolutely!  
So grateful for all that you do!



# Amplifying Our Voice

## Levin: During COVID, long-term care facilities needed help, not inspectors



*At the height of the first wave of the pandemic, with staff sick or leaving, the government knew that what we desperately needed was more support, not more enforcement.*

**Lisa Levin**

Published Oct 27, 2023  
Ottawa Citizen

It's not hard, given the summer we've just had, to imagine a situation where a wildfire has consumed your community. In this sudden extreme emergency, cars have been abandoned on the streets. In some cases, they're in the way of firefighting crews.

Now imagine that instead of deploying tow trucks to clear the way for firefighters, government sends in a small army of enforcement officers to ticket abandoned vehicles.

Your town is literally burning. And government is prioritizing enforcement over assistance.

This is the narrative that has been playing out around Ontario long-term care homes.

There is a persistent myth that stricter enforcement at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic would have saved lives in those homes. That perspective was recently echoed in the Ontario Ombudsman's September report, which focused on the breakdown of the long-term care inspection system during the first wave of COVID-19.

"Ontario ombudsman urges stronger enforcement of LTC rules" read one ensuing headline. "The direct result

of the lack of inspections, reports and enforcement," Ombudsman Paul Dubé said at the time, "was a lack of protection for residents and staff and a lack of accountability for the system."

This simplistic equation — inspections equal safety — misses a large part of the story.

I know this because I run the association that represents 83 per cent of non-profit and 98 per cent of municipal homes in Ontario. We support inspections wholeheartedly. They are a critical foundation of our long-term care system. But they cannot replace assistance. And that is what we needed.

When the pandemic first hit, people who worked in our homes left in droves. Many were scared. Some were sick. Some left to protect their families. I don't blame any of them for one second.

Our staffing shortages were sudden and severe. Our world was on fire.

It was not uncommon for homes to lose 80 per cent of their staff in one night. Unlike restaurants and shopping malls, we could not close down long-term care homes. Some of the most vulnerable people in society live there.

Leaders of non-profit and municipal homes tried everything to desperately find staff to feed and care for residents.

They asked hospitals to backfill gaping holes.

They went to staffing agencies, begging, and spent three, four and five times the average wage to recruit a single staff member. Our member homes did much better during the pandemic than for-profit homes but, still, many were in crisis.

All the while, we were desperately asking government for help, speaking to officials daily reporting the situation.

When the calls for assistance didn't work, staff and management in our homes donned masks and gowns — and garbage bags if necessary — to provide front-line care.

Some heroic staff moved into homes and lived there full-time to care for residents.

At that point of the pandemic, enforcement officers wouldn't even enter long-term care homes. The ombudsman notes there was not one single in-person inspection for seven straight weeks in 2020, from mid-March to May.

Had they entered, the best we could have hoped for would have been an echo of our own desperate appeals for workers. It's likely, however, that inspectors would have drained already limited resources by requiring staff to spend time with them at a moment when residents needed basic care. At worst, they would have issued punitive orders for issues that our caring, dedicated staff simply could not fix.

Because the issue, at its core, was a shortage of staff.

No one should diminish the importance of oversight. It is critical that the ministry knows exactly what is happening in the long-term care homes they fund. Inspections are an essential part of that.

At the height of the first wave of the pandemic, however, the government knew about the desperate state of many homes. What we needed was assistance, not enforcement. That is the lesson we must learn from COVID.

*Lisa Levin is CEO of AdvantAge Ontario, the voice of not-for-profit seniors' care in the province, representing more than 480 providers of long-term care, seniors' housing, supportive housing and community service agencies.*

# Members in Action - Capital Development

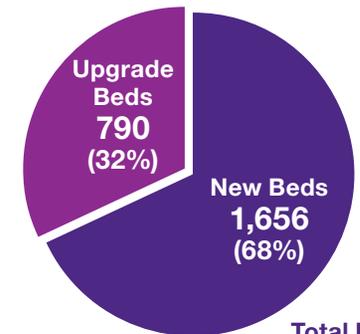
Capital expansion and redevelopment have been at an all-time high in our membership this year. A big congratulations to three members that opened their doors to new residents in 2023: Humber Meadows, North York; Wellbrook Place, Mississauga; and Terrace Bay, Aylmer. An additional 17 members have projects that are in various stages of construction.

The Construction Funding Subsidy (CFS) and increased upfront money that we secured last year was a huge win and benefitted many projects. But this time-limited top up expired at the end of August, and we heard from a number of members that they were unable to meet the deadline. We have been actively pressing the government for an extension, using updated data from members to put forward urgent recommendations, including a base CFS per diem increase of at least \$45.

Most recently, the government announced the creation of the Ontario Infrastructure Bank and plans to provide \$3B in initial funding for large-scale infrastructure projects, including seniors' housing and long-term care. We are very pleased to see this and believe it will provide much-needed financial support to the not-for-profit sector.

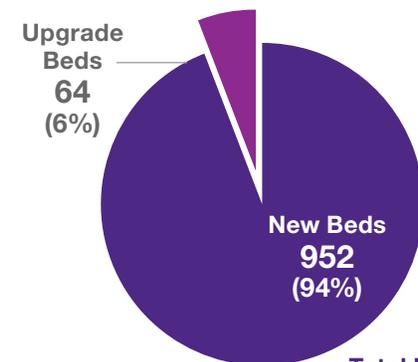


## 17 Member LTC Homes Under Construction in 2023



Total Beds  
2,446

## 3 Member LTC Homes Opened Doors to New Residents in 2023



Total Beds  
1,016

# Increased Funding: \$771M in 2023

We are taking action where you need it most – funding. Our pre-budget submission and campaign and other advocacy throughout the year helped secure over \$771 million in increased investments for long-term care, community services, home care and housing.

## Long-Term Care

**\$306,000,000**

PSW Recruitment and Retention

**\$138,452,800**

Level of Care

**\$50,220,000**

IPAC – Lead and Training

**\$15,000,000**

Local Priorities Fund

**\$10,000,000**

Equipment and Training Fund (Diagnostic Services)

**\$7,654,971**

LTC Minor Capital

**\$2,605,100**

Supporting Professional Growth Fund

**\$30,000**

Clinical Support Tools Program



## Home Care and Community Support Services Funding

3% increase in base funding for all community services, including assisted living, community support services (CSS), and services for people with acquired brain injury.

**\$196M**

New home care funding (2% for all staff and 4.7% for frontline program and support services and nursing). For home care, the 4.7% increase for PSWs and nurses is on top of the 2%, resulting in a total increase of 6.7%.

**\$45.1M**

New CSS funding (2% for all staff and remaining for program and support services).



# Your Issues, Our Priorities

We are a small but mighty team at the Association. We use member input, the Board's direction, and our own strategic insights to determine where to put our focus, energy and resources to best meet your needs. We were busy on many fronts this year. Following are a few key highlights.



## Advocacy Issues

- > HHR, including temporary staffing agencies and wage harmonization
- > Bill 124
- > Cultural home admissions
- > Seniors' supportive housing
- > LTC pharmacy funding
- > Ward bed funding
- > Sprinklers in older LTC homes
- > Safe Long-Term Care Act
- > Bill C-295
- > IPAC/COVID-19
- > FLTCA Phase II regulations
- > Palliative care
- > Convenient Care at Home Act
- > Security issues
- > Ontario Health Teams
- > ELDCAP funding
- > Retirement homes



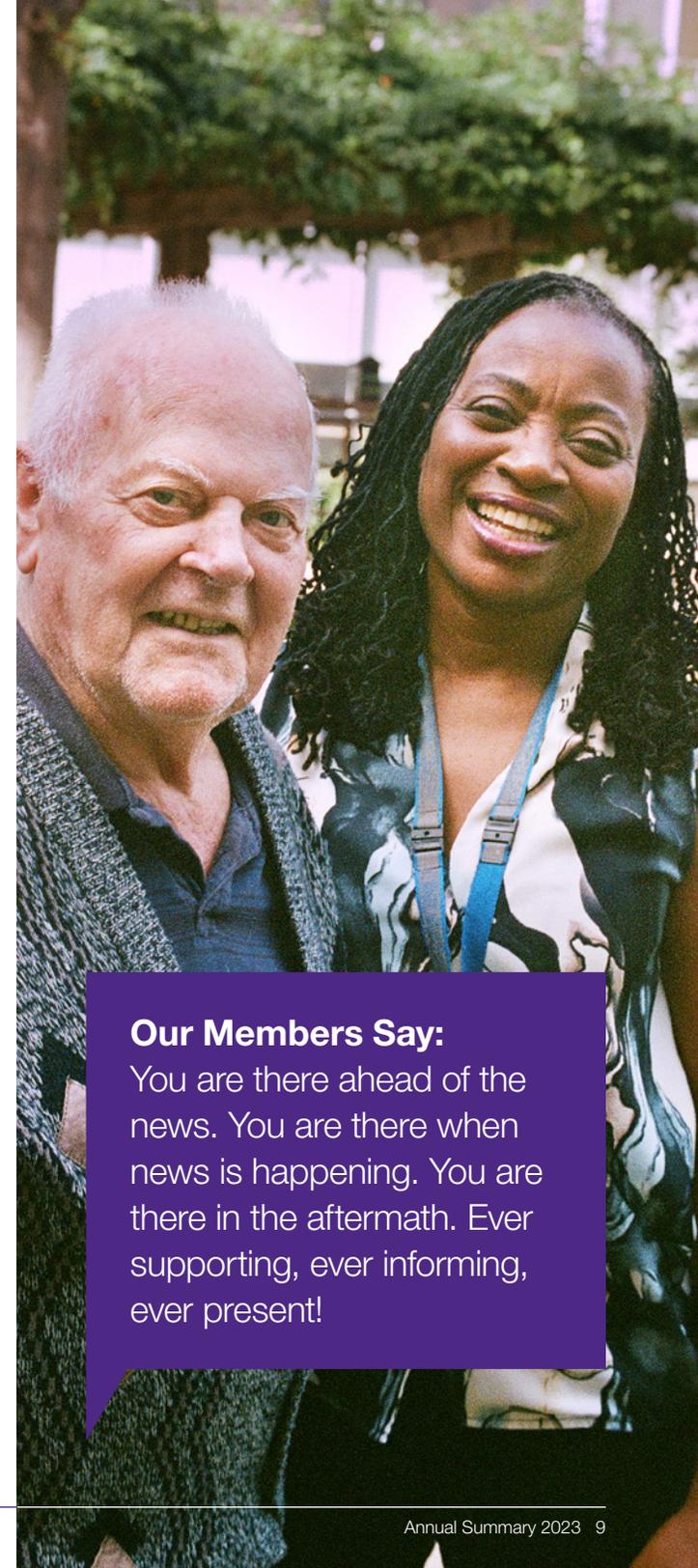
## Presentations

- > Association of Municipalities of Ontario
- > Rural Ontario Municipal Association
- > Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus
- > Region of Durham Townhall
- > Canadian Caregiving Summit
- > Urban Commissioners



## Submissions

- > Provincial Pre-Budget
- > Federal Pre-Budget
- > FLTCA Phase II Regulations
- > Temporary Help Agency Licensing Framework
- > RHRA Annual Information Return (AIR)
- > Bill C-295
- > Police Records Checks
- > LTC Capital Funding
- > Auditor General - Food and Nutrition in LTC Homes
- > Bill 135 Convenient Care at Home Act Legislation and Regulations
- > CSA Proposed Standard – Mental Health and Well-Being in LTC
- > FLTCA Phase III Regulations re: Resident Support Aides
- > Federal Safe LTC Act



### Our Members Say:

You are there ahead of the news. You are there when news is happening. You are there in the aftermath. Ever supporting, ever informing, ever present!

# Exclusively for Members

Membership definitely has its privileges! Our team works very hard to provide members with a range of exclusive resources and supports that you can't get anywhere else.

## Annual LTC Expenditures Report and Guide

Customized, comparative report of not-for-profit and municipal operating costs based on our unique database.

## Annual Human Resources Benchmarking Report

The only comprehensive independent report on HR costs for municipal, charitable and NFP LTC homes in Ontario.

## Member Survey - Ratings of Over 90% in all Three Areas:

- > Consistency of delivering on mission
- > Belief that the Association is achieving its mission
- > Value of advocacy, education and communications to members

## Monthly LTC Inspection Report

Comprehensive monthly report summarizing the latest data and trends on LTC home inspections.

## Member Advisory Groups

Municipal LTC Homes  
Charitable/NFP LTC Homes  
Hospital-Based LTC Homes  
Education  
Diversity and Inclusion  
Capital Development  
Nursing and Personal Care  
Management Support Services  
Seniors' Housing  
Cultural Homes

## IPAC Community of Practice

Monthly forum for IPAC leads in member LTC homes for sharing and learning about common barriers and best practices for implementing IPAC policies and actions.

## Capital Development Library

Extensive online repository of resources, tools and templates to support members through every stage of project development.

## Tools and Resources

FLTCA Regulations Support  
(webinars, education, legal advice)

## CEO Update Webinars

Interactive monthly forum hosted by CEO Lisa Levin on current sector issues and featuring Ministry speakers and guest experts along with a regular Q+A segment.

## Executive Report

Hugely valued weekly consolidation of all sector updates and developments with insights and guidance on implications for members.

Guide for Employers:  
New Licensing Regime for Temporary Agencies

IPAC Support for Homes in Outbreak

# Growing Stronger!

AdvantAge Ontario members provide care and services in communities all across the province. This year, our membership topped 700 for the first time ever and we continue to grow!

# Education – Developing and Inspiring Leaders

We continue to reach new heights as the leading organization for education in senior care! In 2023, we delivered close to **50 education sessions, attracting over 5,700 participants** with an overall satisfaction rating of 97%!

## Core Annual Programs

- > HR Year in Review
- > Convention
- > Administrator Leadership Program (Virtual and In-Person)
- > LTC Management Training Program (Fall and Winter Cohorts)
- > LTC Funding and Reporting
- > Member Housing Forum

## Learning Hub – On-Demand

Our unique Learning Hub offers on-demand education for senior care professionals.

It features over 25 timely, expert-led courses and webinars on a platform that allows users to learn at a time and pace that suits their schedule.

Learn about essential reporting, investigations under the FLTCA, enhancing your quality improvement program, legal and ethical decision making, long-term care funding and reporting, and more!

## Issue-Specific Sessions

- > Palliative Care (4-part series)
- > LTC Staffing Challenges (3-part series)
- > Legal and Ethical Decision-Making (3-part series)
- > Capital Re/Development (3-part series)
- > LTC Funding and Reporting (3-part series)
- > Essential LTC Reporting Requirements (3-part series)
- > Legal Insights on Inspections
- > LTC Inspections: Board Responsibilities and Liabilities (2-part series)
- > LTC Inspections and Compliance
- > Quality Improvement in Seniors' Care
- > Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- > LTC in Ontario from Municipal Perspective
- > Transitioning to ONCA
- > Reducing Falls
- > Current Landscape of Bill 124

*...and many more!*



### Our Members Say:

The feeling of community where we are comfortable bringing forward difficult topics and knowing the Association hears us! Thank you Advantage Ontario!

# Best. Convention. Ever.

- > In person after three-year hiatus
- > Completely sold out – first time ever
- > Largest tradeshow – huge sponsorship program
- > All-time highest attendance
- > Over 40 education sessions
- > Rick Mercer, Minister Calandra, Minister Jones, Fireside Chat with system leaders

...and of course, a sold-out banquet and packed 80s retro dance floor!



**Our Members Say:**  
Continuously informing members of ongoing priorities and activities, and inviting feedback from members feels transparent and inclusive, valuing the sector's needs.

# Your Board of Directors



**Sue Graham-Nutter**  
The Reikai Centres



**Steven Harrison**  
Tri-County Mennonite Homes



**William Krever**  
Victoria Village Manor



**Jane Sinclair**  
The Corporation of the  
County of Simcoe



**Michele Harris**  
Elgin County



**Ada DiFlavio**  
Deer Park Villa



**Megan Garland**  
County of Bruce



**Dwayne Green**  
Malton Village Long Term  
Care Centre



**Carey Duncan**  
Lanark Lodge



**Linda Tracey**  
Marianhill Long Term  
Care Home



**Paul Chatelain**  
South Centennial Manor



**Tanya Baker**  
Pioneer Ridge Long Term  
Care Home



**Amy Porteous**  
Maxville Manor



**Julie Wheeler**  
Regional Municipality  
of Waterloo,  
Sunnyside Seniors' Services



**Abby Katz Starr**  
Unionville Home Society



**Jennifer Cornell**  
Corporation of the  
County of Grey



**Lisa Levin**  
AdvantAge Ontario

## Our Members Say:

AdvantAge Ontario is a trusted and respected voice for the long-term care community, and I am proud to be part of it.

## 2024-2028 Strategic Plan

A major initiative for the Board this year has been the development of our 2024-2028 strategic plan that will be launched to members and the sector early next year. Through this work we were very pleased to hear that:

- > We have earned high recognition from stakeholders internally and externally.
- > We do high quality, important work in a complex and challenging sector.
- > Our work matters and makes a difference to members, and through them, the lives of seniors and their families.

With our new five-year plan, we will be well positioned and energized to meet new challenges, navigate the political landscape, and lead the change that the sector needs.

# Wonderful Feedback from Members – Thank you!

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Fabulous lobby and advocacy work this year - you pushed, people heard and acted! Well done.

Direct and simplified information that AdvantAge Ontario sends to us after vetting the MLTC's memorandums, funding notices, new incentives, etc.

The alliance. It is where we keep in touch with the sector.

You have a pulse on the sector and are almost one step ahead of the needs.

It is very clear that they are the champion of NFP LTC and seniors community services and housing as evidenced by requests for input from government.

Policy and political action. AdvantAge Ontario rocks!

Always timely and good quality. Always look forward to Lisa's CEO calls.

**Our Members Say:**

The Association is approachable and willing to continue to dialogue and listen.



**AdvantAge  
Ontario**

Advancing Senior Care

For more than 100 years, AdvantAge Ontario has been the voice of not-for-profit seniors' care in Ontario. We represent 500 providers of long-term care, seniors' housing, supportive housing and community service agencies, including 98 per cent of all municipal long-term care homes and 83 per cent of all not-for-profit long-term care homes.

**AdvantAge Ontario**

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[advantageontario.ca](http://advantageontario.ca)

Photo credits: Holland Christian Homes, Shepherd Village, and Tall Pines Long Term Care Centre.