AdvantAge Ontario

Advancing Senior Care

October 27, 2026

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1
premier@ontario.ca

Re: Cultural Homes Admissions Policy – Request for Policy Change and Meeting

Dear Premier Ford:

I'm writing with a solution to a very important problem facing our members and the communities they represent: Ontario's cultural long-term care homes are losing their identities.

For decades now, Ontario has a proud history of supporting the development of Italian, Chinese, Jewish, French, Ukrainian, Polish, Estonian, Indigenous and may other cultural homes. In total there are approximately 100 of them throughout the province.

However, the province's current admissions policy, which was updated in 2023 through Bill 7, prioritizes urgency over cultural placements. As a result, in some of Ontario's cultural homes today, fewer than half of residents belong to the designated community. This is a serious problem that requires urgent attention. There are three key reasons why.

First, culturally appropriate care is essential, particularly for residents living with dementia. Approximately 70% of residents living in long-term care have dementia. As dementia progresses, people revert to their early languages and seek comfort in traditions and memories of their youth. Familiar foods, customs and religious practices become vital sources of identity. In a province as diverse as Ontario, cultural homes are not simply a preference. They are essential to residents' dignity and quality of life.

Second, the current admissions system is undermining the purpose of cultural long-term care. Many residents are now being placed in homes where they do not share the language, traditions, religious practices or cultural background of those around them. These arrangements can be distressing for residents and challenging for homes to manage. Imagine having dementia and being placed in a home where the staff and other residents all speak a language you do not know and where the food, religion and customs are unfamiliar.

Third, we risk losing an important source of new long-term care beds. Cultural homes are typically built through extraordinary fundraising efforts by local communities. Families, donors and volunteers contribute millions of dollars because they want to ensure their families and future generations will have access to culturally appropriate care. When those communities see beds occupied by people from outside their community, the connection to the home disappears, along with their willingness to fundraise, volunteer and invest in future development. At a time when Ontario needs more LTC beds, we cannot afford to jeopardize this valuable pipeline.

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We appreciate the important steps your government has already taken, particularly the introduction of the cultural admissions pilot and the decision last December to make the placement model for crisis admissions permanent and expand it across the province. These were meaningful improvements that AdvantAge Ontario strongly advocated for. We are grateful your government listened. Unfortunately, the changes have not done enough. Many homes continue to experience a lack of culturally appropriate admissions. Their identity is under threat.

Furthermore, there are a number of new cultural homes currently being developed. For three years, we have been asking for a special process to be put in place to ensure initial admissions are culturally appropriate. This action has not been taken. As a result, we will soon see these homes which were developed, funded and created by cultural communities filled with residents who are not of that culture. We will see Portuguese homes where few residents are Portuguese. We will see Vietnamese homes where few residents are Vietnamese. And we may see francophone homes where no one speaks French.

We are respectfully asking your government to take the next step by giving designated cultural long-term care homes the ability to admit residents from the community admissions waitlist, as well as the crisis waitlist, which would increase the number of residents from that culture.

It is our belief that if done within the appropriate provincial eligibility and accountability requirements, the overall impact on the crisis placement list will be negligible as a result of this change.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further with you. Thank you for your consideration and for the progress your government has already made on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Lisa Levin
Chief Executive Officer
AdvantAge Ontario