

March 4, 2026

Honourable Lena Diab
Minister of Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
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Dear Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of AdvantAge Ontario regarding two urgent issues that are negatively impacting health care staffing and patient care that require immediate action. These challenges are directly affecting staffing levels, continuity of care, and the stability of seniors' care across Ontario. Without rapid federal action, long-term care homes will continue to lose trained staff, and residents will face increasing disruptions in care.

We are one of the nation's largest provincial seniors' care associations and the only one that exclusively represents the full spectrum of not-for-profit services and care for seniors. Our membership includes over 530 municipal, charitable, and not-for-profit long term care homes, seniors' housing, and seniors' community service providers.

Our goal is to be a constructive, solutions focused partner committed to improving care for older adults across the country and it is through that lens that we raise two interconnected issues that require focused attention, starting with the Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) Process. The requirement to complete an LMIA for each individual position, despite widespread and well documented staffing shortages in our healthcare sector in Ontario, has long burdened long-term care homes. This is especially challenging for not-for-profit homes which often have lean administrative teams, and staff time spent on repeated LMIA submissions diverts resources away from care delivery.

The federal government recently introduced the "preferred employer" program for agriculture. A similar approach for healthcare settings would allow providers to complete one LMIA per facility, applicable to all vacant roles.

Secondly, changes to immigration and the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program have caused significant recruitment and retention issues for our members across the province, in both urban and rural and remote areas. Recent federal changes to work permits, LMIA validity timelines, and residency pathways are creating instability for homes and workers and impacting resident care negatively.

On Sept 26, 2024, TFW work permits were reduced from 2 years to 1 year, and on May 1, 2024, the LMIA validity period shortened from 12 months to 6 months, requiring earlier reapplications. This has resulted in increased difficulty for health care professionals to secure permanent residency (PR) within shortened timelines. There is also uneven access to federal

rural immigration pathways, with some genuinely remote communities excluded from eligibility while larger urban centres qualify, creating additional barriers for homes already facing severe recruitment challenges.

The impact on our members of these recent changes has been significant. We understand some homes have already lost staff and others risk losing trained staff before PR applications can be completed. Shorter permits jeopardize large recruitment investments the homes have made. Rural and northern homes — who rely heavily on TFWs — face heightened risk of staffing instability. As an example, this is impacting 30 staff alone in one home in Kenora. Urban homes experience gaps when student workers complete training but cannot secure timely PR approvals.

We, therefore, respectfully urge you to restore longer permit durations, strengthen and simplify PR pathways for internationally trained health workers, and ensure equitable access to federal rural immigration programs. Last year when the former Immigration Minister was doing consultations in advance of changes to the immigration system, we warned his department not to treat the healthcare sector the same as others for these very reasons. Today we are asking for urgent action to resolve the ensuing problems created by a one size fits all suite of changes.

Addressing these two areas is essential to ensuring continuity of care and supporting the workforce older adults depend on for daily care. Just for the LTC sector alone, Ontario will need at least 59,000 more nurses and PSWs in the next five years to keep up. There will not be enough Canadian or Ontario graduates to fill this need, and therefore homes are increasingly hiring internationally. These changes are critical to ensuring homes will have the staff they need to provide residents with the high-quality care they deserve.

We appreciate your attention to these two important issues, and we would like to meet with you or your staff at your earliest convenience to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



Lisa Levin
Chief Executive Officer

CC

Peter Fragistakos, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship

Stephanie Mclean, Secretary of State (Seniors)

Leslie Church, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families