

Dear [recipient name will go here],

I am writing to you today to express my concern about the issue of long-term residential care and to urge the government to take immediate action.

[submission:values:your\_comments]

For decades across Canada, long-term residential care has languished despite the calls for reform for help. The sector has been characterized by underfunding and lack not only the number of staff, but of appropriately skilled and compensated staff. Sadly, it is no surprise to anyone that around 50% of the deaths in Canada due to COVID-19 have occurred in long-term residential care facilities.

The rapidly evolving tragedy in long-term residential care across Canada requires immediate and long-term action.

Governments at all levels must work together to immediately apply all resources and efforts necessary to stop the spread of COVID-19 within our most vulnerable population.

Evidence-based actions that must be taken in the short-term include:

- Limiting staff to working in only one residential care home
- Increasing wages, job security and benefits for staff, especially sick leave
- Testing all those living in, working in or visiting residential care settings

Much information exists to guide governments and policy makers during this crisis, including the report Re-imagining Long-term Residential Care in the COVID-19 Crisis.

Once the pandemic is under better control and the immediate emergency is over, there is an urgent need for all levels of government to work together on comprehensive, research-based policy, legislative and regulatory changes to provide quality, publicly- resourced long-term residential care for the treasured elder members of Canada's society.

We cannot go back to “business as usual” when the current tragedy finally ends. Using the model of the Canada Health Act, governments must work together to develop a universal public long-term residential care plan that is adequately accessible and funded.

I know there are decades of provincial, national and international research into promising practices. This includes the groundbreaking research Re-Imaging Long-Term Residential Care: An International Study in Promising Practices and findings of the 2002 Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada related to long-term residential care. We urge you and your colleagues to work with your counterparts in other levels of government across Canada to transform nursing homes and long-term care.

I am a member of RTOERO, a bilingual trusted voice for healthy, active living in retirement with more than 81,000 members in districts across Canada. Our members regularly express their deep concern about care for seniors in our country. We are also connected with many other senior’s organizations which are eager to support this vital work.

I join my fellow RTOERO members in urging you to take action on identifying and implementing new strategies for long-term residential care throughout Canada.

Sincerely,

[your name will go here]

[your email address will go here]

[your location will go here]