



Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010

**Re: "Home Sweet Home"**

For 36 years the sign outside St. Lawrence Lodge read 'Home for the Aged'. Have you noticed it now reads 'Long Term Care Home'? Do you know what that means today?

It means a home for anyone age 18 years and older requiring 'long term care'. What you say? That's right! Bill 140 has received Royal Assent and soon will come into affect.

Do you know what that means for the 'long term care homes' across Ontario but more particularly, the homes in our local communities, i.e. throughout the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville area?

Well, consider this. We've witnessed the closing of the Rideau Regional Hospital in Smiths Falls, the changing status of the Garden Street site of the BGH complex and the gradual closing of the ROHCG Brockville site, formerly known as the Brockville Psychiatric Hospital.

Those folks who are unable to live in 'supported' residential care in the community and require 'long term care' will now become residents in our 'long term care' homes.

Long term care homes are already operating with minimal staffing and funding. What is going to happen when the proposed changes come into affect? What about the safety of the elderly who are now going to share 'their' home with younger, stronger and perhaps mentally challenged adults; many of whom experience anxiety and agitation making them vulnerable to outbursts.

When this occurs, our elderly will become subjected to not only the noise factor but perhaps the physical factor as well. Is this conducive to providing a quiet, safe and relaxed home environment for our elderly loved ones? Where is the balance between the resident's needs and staff to provide the type of quality care which includes a safe and secure environment that is promised to those entering a long term care home?

Have you considered where your tax dollars are going? You pay municipal taxes part of which goes to support 'long term care' homes. You pay federal taxes, part of which is transferred to the Province for 'long term care' homes. You also pay provincial taxes, part of which is used to support 'long term care' homes. And now we learn that those specific tax dollars are being diminished for the purpose that they were intended. Now they are going to support 'mental health care' however the Province is not transferring additional dollars to 'long term care' homes to offset the additional staffing and training that will be required for this new environment.

If you are a baby boomer you should be very concerned for your parents and yourself. Many will require 'long term care' in the coming years. The number of beds we thought we had for long term care are being reduced to provide space for those who will be transferred from mental health facilities. Our long term care homes are full now with waiting lists and have been for years. We have elderly taking up hospital beds waiting for placement in long term care homes. How are we going to provide ongoing long term care for the aging population?

One last question to consider, why is the Province embarking on new programs when present programs such as 'long term care' are under funded?

Shirley Ellis, Co-Chair  
St. Lawrence Lodge Family Council