

To Region of Peel Councillors via email
January 31, 2022

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REGION OF PEEL
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

Dear Region of Peel Council members,

Rarely does CUPE 966 submit letters or make presentations to council. On this occasion, we think it imperative that we do just that. We are writing to highlight a good news story, one of cooperation between our union and regional council, which we believe will bring immeasurable benefits to care quality for residents living in our long-term care homes and the front-line staff who provide that care. That we've worked to achieve this jointly is a wonderful occurrence at a time marked by such suffering and pandemic related challenges in our Region of Peel long-term care homes.

We are very appreciative that following much dialogue with CUPE 966, Peel Region has made the right decision to create more full-time positions at regional long-term care homes. Allocating funding to create 20 additional full-time positions between Peel Manor, Tall Pines, Malton Village and Sheridan Villa, shows immense leadership on the part of Peel Regional council that may spur other municipalities to follow.

Are 20 new full-time positions spread over Peel's five long-term care homes adequate? More are needed. But we think they are a fine start. This is a much-needed investment in resident care and staffing that CUPE 966 has been advocating for some time. Peel has been funding 37 additional full-time positions as part of its COVID-response strategy, which we strongly encourage council to make permanent.

Additional new staff will help alleviate the exhaustion and burnout that many registered practical nurses, personal support workers, dietary, cleaning and other staff at Peel region homes are dealing with following nearly two years of pandemic work. Above all, these much-needed full-time positions will enable front-line staff to provide better care to residents, as we battle through yet another wave of this pandemic.

As Omicron sweeps through the province, we are witnessing a staffing crisis in long-term care and broadly in all of the health sector that many of us on the frontlines forewarned the provincial government. While that crisis is still a very real challenge for the Region of Peel – our homes continue to fare better than others due to historical and ongoing investment by council.

We would like to stress that even as Peel's long-term care homes have higher staffing levels than the provincial average, none of them meet the expert-recommended minimum staffing standard (four-hours of daily hands-on care per resident per day).

Meeting the minimum staffing standard would help front-line staff to spend more time with residents, developing better relationships and thereby becoming familiar with their

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needs. During the pandemic, studies have also shown that homes with higher staffing levels better manage COVID-19 outbreaks and prevent resident deaths.

CUPE 966 recognizes that Peel has in many aspects led the way in long-term care in Ontario, including by piloting innovative dementia projects and now investing in staffing. We urge you to work with CUPE 966 to do more.

Sincerely,

Salil Arya
President, CUPE 966