

To: The Honourable Ben Lobb, MP

From: Canadian Federation of University Women-Kincardine (CFUW-Kincardine)

I am writing this letter on behalf of my club to ask that you consider placing long-term care under the Canada Health Act. The Canada Health Act (CHA) sets out the primary objective of Canadian health care policy, which is “to protect, promote and restore the physical and mental well-being of residents of Canada and to facilitate reasonable access to health services without financial or other barriers”. The CHA establishes criteria and conditions related to insured health services and extended health care services that the provinces and territories must fulfill to receive the full federal cash contribution under the Canada Health Transfer. The aim of the CHA is to ensure that all eligible residents of Canada have reasonable access to insured health services on a prepaid basis without direct charges at the point of service for such services.(Government of Canada. (2020) The Canada Health Act)

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how vulnerable residents and staff in long-term care are. Even before the pandemic these facilities already had serious problems. In many provinces, the lack of quality-controlled standards of care, the inadequacy of inspections, the profoundly disrespectful employment attitudes and practices regarding staff, especially Personal Service Workers, have caused tragic and preventable outcomes. These pre-existing problems combined with COVID-19 have been disastrous. Long-term care facilities in Canada are a “hot spot” in this pandemic with 79% of all deaths in the country now connected to long-term care and seniors’ homes.(Walsh, M. & Semeniuk, I. (April 28,29, 2020) Long-term care connected to 79% of COVID-19 deaths in Canada. The Globe and Mail) The majority of these seniors are women. With longer lives, higher rates of disability and chronic health problems, and lower incomes than men on average, many women need long-term care services without having the resources to pay for them.

Vulnerable senior citizens require the reasonable access to physical and mental well-being without the financial barriers. They need the protection of the Canada Health Act to establish standards for long-term care. In their study, Sizing up the Challenge: Meeting the Need for Long-Term Care in Canada, the Conference Board of Canada concludes that the investment and spending of long-term care beds will have a positive effect of the economy, contributing a total of \$235 billion to real GDP and supporting an average of 123,000 jobs per year. (Gibbard, R. (2017) Sizing up the challenge: meeting the need for long-term care in Canada. The Conference Board of Canada)

On behalf of CFUW-Kincardine, I thank you for your attention to our concerns that long-term care should be included in the Canada Health Act.

Sheila Gillson
Secretary, CFUW-Kincardine

