



News Release

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LONGER WAIT FOR A LONG-TERM CARE BED: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care needs to consider options for managing the increasing demand for long-term-care (LTC) homes, especially for people waiting in hospital for a bed and for the growing percentage of people over 75 years of age, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2012 Annual Report*.

“We found that almost 20% of those people waiting in hospital for a bed in a long-term-care home only applied to one home, even though that home might have a long waiting list,” McCarter said today after the release of the Report. “People who are waiting in hospital are at risk of contracting infections, they are occupying beds that are likely needed by others, and hospital care is more costly than community-based alternatives.”

Demand for LTC homes has been increasing as Ontario’s population ages. Since 2005, the number of Ontarians aged 75 and over has increased by more than 20%, and the median wait time for an LTC home bed has almost tripled, from 36 days to 98 days (wait times did decrease somewhat when tighter eligibility criteria took effect in July 2010). In 10 years, the number of Ontarians over 75 is expected to be almost 30% higher than today.

The Ministry has recognized that it must develop alternatives to LTC homes so more people can remain in their own homes longer. While the three regional Community Care Access Centres we visited managed some areas of the home-care placement program well, wait times varied considerably across Ontario.

Following are some of the Auditor General’s other significant findings:

- Wait-list data for LTC homes in March 2012 showed that crisis clients had been waiting a median of 94 days; moderate-needs clients could wait 10 to 14 months; and most other eligible clients could wait years. During the 2011/12 fiscal year, 15% of clients waiting for a bed died before getting into LTC homes.
- Clients able to pay for private or semi-private rooms are generally placed more quickly because homes can designate up to 60% of their beds for such rooms, but only 40% of people apply for them.

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