



Ontario must tackle hallway medicine with seniors' housing near hospitals: Report

VAUGHAN (Feb. 18, 2020) – The healthcare system is bracing for a grey tsunami as a wave of baby boomers are increasingly relying on Ontario's social and healthcare services. Unfortunately, Ontario is experiencing crowded conditions in many hospitals which means that the Province cannot properly accommodate all patients. Hallway medicine continues to strain hospitals more and more, says a report released today.

The solution is not necessarily to build more hospitals or increase the supply of hospital beds. If the Province shifts its focus to building seniors' housing and treating chronic disease in the home and the community as much as possible, Ontario can alleviate pressure on the hospital system, writes Michael Fenn, former deputy minister for Ontario and the founding CEO of the Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network. With funding being more restrictive than ever to meet this impending demand, Fenn recommends meeting the evidence-based test of the "right treatment, by the right provider, in the right place, at the right time, for the lowest cost to the taxpayer."

His independent report, called ["R to Cure Hallway Medicine: Building Targeted Housing for Ontario's Seniors,"](#) was commissioned by the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO).

"Technological, medical and social-support measures to maintain the elderly in their own homes, in retirement residences and in transitional accommodation – both to avoid hospital admissions and after hospital discharge – will need to expand dramatically," says Fenn, emphasizing that creating a more integrated system will also take pressure off hospitals. "... hospitals should not be the primary, front-line providers of healthcare services for those dealing with chronic disease, for patients recuperating from hospital-based medical or surgical procedures, or for those who have minor medical episodes."

Fenn has four recommendations:

1. Ontario's public investment focus should be on building seniors' accommodation to avoid hospital admissions and to reduce the length of hospital stays.
2. Wherever practical and medically sound, chronic disease should be treated in the home and in the community, rather than in hospitals.
3. Ontario must work with municipalities to free up suitable land assets for seniors' housing and adjust land-use planning objectives to produce a range of seniors' housing.
4. Use tax and pension policies to generate more seniors' housing.



Andy Manahan, executive director of RCCAO, adds: “Practical approaches to tackle hallway medicine will be necessary. We are encouraging the provincial government to implement a coordinated, multi-ministry approach to ensure that Ontario’s seniors receive the best treatment in the community and are provided with more housing options for medical services. The private sector should be part of the solution to ensure everyone can be accommodated appropriately at different stages of treatment.”

[Click here for the report.](#)

WHAT IS RCCAO?

This labour-management construction alliance has advocated for infrastructure investment for 15 years. This research marks RCCAO’s 53rd independent, solutions-based report to help inform decision-makers.

-30-

Contact:

Aonghus Kealy, Director of Communications, RCCAO

W: 905-760-7777, x. 111 / C: 647-530-4855

kealy@rccao.com