

Established in 1889, the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) is the self-regulating body for the province's architecture profession. It governs the practice of architecture and administers the Architects Act in order to serve and protect the public interest.

Brian Pollard, Assistant Deputy Minister
Long-Term Care Capital Development
Ministry of Long-Term Care
8th Floor, 438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON
M5G 2K8

[Sent by email to: brian.pollard@ontario.ca]

February 15, 2024

Re: Standardized Design in the Long-term Care Home Sector

Mr. Pollard,

In March 2020, we collectively began to witness the unimaginable: a hundred-year pandemic sweeping across the globe, infecting thousands across Canada, particularly vulnerable residents and loved ones in long-term care homes. Ontario architects, many of whom were directly affected by this unfolding tragedy, began to explore what they could do to help mitigate the effects of the crisis.

As the regulator of the profession responsible for the design of the province's built environment, and entrusted to serve and protect the public interest, the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) is keen to join its members in playing an important role in assisting government as it moves forward with the critical task of ensuring the health, safety, and happiness of those who live in long-term care homes.

In response to your December 6, 2023 memorandum, the OAA and its members stand ready to provide input on using standardized designs and design elements in long-term care to help ensure that the architecture industry's expertise and feedback is captured and reflected in the final processes and products that government creates.

OAA members have expressed concerns about the risks and challenges of standardizing long-term care home designs across Ontario given the range of climate, geologic, and socio-economic conditions that prevail. They caution that standardizing design may compromise the ability to provide appropriate, affordable, and safe care to residents in our aging population.

Replicating a design developed for one specific set of parameters may be most expeditious in the short term. However, in the medium to long term, it is not likely to be as effective as developing a series of designs with repeatability and modularity in mind from the outset.

In 2022, the OAA and Jacobs Canada co-sponsored a study, "[Reimagining Long-Term Care Architecture in Post-Pandemic Ontario—and Beyond](#)", authored by Dr. Stephen Verderber, director of the Centre for Design + Health Innovation at the Daniels School of Architecture at the University of Toronto.

The aforementioned report explores evidence-based design recommendations to improve long-term care in Ontario. It also considers best practices from around the world, and makes suggestions about possible interventions that will have profound positive impacts if implemented in Ontario.

It is imperative that Ontario architects are consulted in the development of design standardization guidelines for new long-term care homes to ensure that the criteria outlined by the Ministry are met and all due consideration is given to the needs of the residents, staff, and operators. Focusing on evidence-based designs of long-term care homes may reduce health-related challenges to the Ontario population and the pressure on the public healthcare sector.

The OAA enjoys a longstanding, collaborative relationship with government, and it looks forward to working with you and your Ministry to protect and promote the public interest.

Sincerely,



Settimo Vilardi, Architect
M.Arch., OAA, FRAIC
President