



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Administration, Finance and Human Resources Committee
From: Susan Farrelly – Director of Human Resources
Date: April 20, 2021
Subject: OMHRA Advocacy on the 2021 Ontario Budget

Background

The Ontario Municipal Human Resources Association (OMHRA) is a not-for-profit association representing professionals engaged in human resources management within municipalities and local public sector agencies, boards and commissions. OMHRA's membership represents more than 200 municipalities with an employee base of over 85,000. The Board of Directors currently consists of 10 Human Resources Professionals from across Ontario, including OMHRA Board member Susan Farrelly, Director of Human Resources at the County of Wellington.

2021 Ontario Budget and the Long-term Care Sector

On March 24, 2021, the Ontario government tabled its 2021 Budget, *Ontario's Action Plan: Protecting People's Health and Our Economy* (Budget). In this budget, a broad set of initiatives was announced that is aimed specifically at improving the quality of life of residents in Long-Term Care Homes, as well as stabilizing staffing levels and supporting current and future frontline workers in the Long-term Care sector. Provincial investments will support the ongoing hiring of additional staff, including Registered Nurses (RNs), Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) and Personal Support Workers (PSWs).

Highlights of the 2021 Ontario Budget relating to Long-term Care staffing include:

- Extending the wage enhancement of eligible Personal Support Workers until June 30, 2021 and it will continue to be reviewed. This enhancement of \$3 per hour was originally effective on October 1, 2020 until March 31, 2021, in connection with regulations made under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*. At the County of Wellington, this temporary enhancement of \$3 per hour is applicable to 129 of the PSWs employed by Wellington Terrace, representing 39% of Terrace employees.
- Investing over \$121 million to support the accelerated training of almost 9,000 PSWs, which is the largest recruitment of PSWs in Ontario's history. The accelerated PSW training program is a publicly funded, tuition-free opportunity for 6,000 new students and is expected to take six months to complete, rather than the typical eight months. Additionally, nearly 2,200 existing students will be eligible to receive a \$2,000 tuition grant to help them complete their studies.
- Starting in 2021-2022, Ontario is investing \$2 million over two years to attract new PSWs and nurses to work in retirement homes. Through this initiative, PSWs will receive a financial grant of \$5,000 for a six-month commitment to work in a retirement home. Nurses will receive \$10,000 for a one-year commitment to work in a retirement home.

OMHRA Advocacy

In response to this Budget, OMHRA has sent an advocacy letter directly to The Honourable Doug Ford to commend the Premier on the commitment to improve the infrastructure and the level of care provided to residents of long-term care homes, as well as the commitment to training and attracting health care professionals to this sector. It is OMHRA's hope that the Association will be engaged in providing valuable insight

and feedback into the development of implementation provisions of these new programmes, with specific interest in the applicability and parameters around the financial grants provided to nurses who commit to work in retirement homes, and the potential unintended impact this may have for staffing at Long-term Care Homes.

Recommendation:

THAT the report titled 'OMHRA Advocacy on the 2021 Ontario Budget' and the attached letter be received for information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Farrelly', with a stylized, flowing script.

Susan Farrelly
Director of Human Resources

Attached: OMHRA Advocacy letter dated April 13, 2021