Ontario Still Falling Short on Long-Term Care Bed Goals

Ontario remains far behind its goal to expand long-term care, according to new data released in the province's fall fiscal update. The province has built about 6,700 new long-term care beds and has another 18,000 in development, still well short of its plan to add 58,000 new or upgraded beds by 2028.

Despite the slow progress, Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy said the province is confident it will meet its target. He pointed to new funding programs that aim to make it easier for organizations to build nursing homes.

The government's push to modernize long-term care began in 2021, following the COVID-19 pandemic that devastated many homes and exposed deep systemic issues. Since then, 44 new homes have opened, and another 104 are under construction or approved.

AdvantAge Ontario, an association representing non-profit long-term care homes, described the province's new permanent capital funding program as a "game changer." The association says the program offers more financial support and flexibility, encouraging more organizations to start building.

However, independent reports suggest Ontario is still falling behind the needs of its aging population. The Financial Accountability Office found that while the total number of long-term care beds is projected to grow slightly by 2027-28, the population of Ontarians aged 75 and older is growing much faster. This means fewer beds available per person in the coming years.

Advocates, including the NDP's finance critic Jessica Bell, warn that some older long-term care homes are closing and being redeveloped into condos, especially in Toronto, further reducing access for those who need care.

To help ease the strain, the province has announced over $1 billion in new funding for home care, aiming to connect more people with nurses, physiotherapists, and social workers so they can stay at home longer and avoid hospital or institutional care.

Source:

1. https://www.ctvnews.ca/toronto/politics/queens-park/article/ontario-still-short-of-long-term-care-bed-goal-data-in-fiscal-update-show/

For more information on the topics discussed or questions, please contact us at info@nydp.ca

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