

From: AMO Communications <communicate@amo.on.ca>
Sent: Friday, September 23, 2016 2:33 PM
To: Lisa Slomke
Subject: AMO Policy Update - AMO Releases Seniors Policy Paper

September 23, 2016

AMO Releases Seniors Policy Paper

AMO is pleased to circulate to the membership, relevant provincial ministries, and the Premier's Office today a policy discussion paper on seniors' issues entitled, "Strengthening Age-Friendly Communities and Seniors' Services for 21st Century Ontario: A New Conversation about the Municipal Role".

The aim of the paper is to start a renewed policy dialogue between AMO, its members, and the Province on how to best serve seniors in Ontario's diverse communities. It was developed by AMO's Task Force on Age-Friendly Communities and Long-Term Care and approved by the AMO Board in August. The Task Force was chaired by AMO Board member Paul Grenier, Councillor, for Niagara Region.

The impetus for the paper is the recognition that the municipal sector in Ontario is at the forefront of developing age-friendly communities and providing vital services to seniors. This includes long-term care, affordable housing, public health services and community support services, as well as general planning for age-friendly communities. This vital work is supported by the partnership of the Ontario government through legislation, policies, and funding programs.

The successful delivery of seniors' services comes with both challenges and opportunities. Municipal governments are committed to providing high quality services to their residents while being mindful of safety and affordability. While some services are required through legislation, many municipal governments have filled gaps when provincial allocations are insufficient, introducing additional services, and developing innovative ways of working beyond what is required. However, providing the same quality of service on the same budget will not be possible given growing demand and service requirements. A broader conversation is needed about current capacity and level of demand.

The ability to fund and deliver the range of programs and services needed varies significantly across the province. Municipal governments are best positioned to provide services to residents, but they should have the flexibility to choose the services they offer to seniors, including whether to operate long-term care homes. Whichever services municipal governments choose; a conversation must be had about adequate resources to maintain a service standard.

Building on two previous AMO papers, this paper attempts to expand the discussion on the municipal role in facilitating age-friendly communities and providing services to seniors. It outlines

key issues for municipal governments, including developing plans, providing community services including transportation and housing, providing long-term care, and ensuring services are culturally-appropriate and relevant in northern and rural communities

Opportunities for improvement are highlighted, and recommendations are made, calling on the Province to:

- continue to play a supportive role to facilitate age-friendly community development under its Action Plan for Seniors;
- work with municipal governments to enhance community services and housing including transportation options, the Elderly Persons Centres program, and seniors' housing;
- amend the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*, to provide municipal governments the choice to operate a long-term care home which would allow them the flexibility to provide the most appropriate care to suit their local residents' needs;
- work with municipal governments to address issues in long-term care delivery including simplifying regulatory frameworks, reducing wait times, developing a human resources strategy, addressing challenging behaviours, undertaking systems capacity planning, supporting the redevelopment of long-term care homes, facilitating innovative models, developing community hubs, reviewing the funding model, and pursuing additional funding sources;
- address regionally-specific issues in rural and northern Ontario; and,
- support the municipal sector to deliver culturally-appropriate services to seniors.

AMO will use the paper as the basis for advocacy on seniors' issues and to advance the policy discussion with the Province on how best to support Ontario's seniors. The paper is found on the AMO website: [Strengthening Age-Friendly Communities and Seniors' Services for 21st Century Ontario](#).

AMO is holding a webinar on senior's issues on Tuesday, October 18th from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. If you are interested in joining this webinar, please e-mail Irene Ostrowski at IOstrowski@amo.on.ca.

AMO Contact: Michael Jacek, Senior Advisor, E-mail: mjacek@amo.on.ca, 416-971-9856 ext. 329.

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