

Standards for Living. Quality of Life.

August 6, 2008

Helen Stevenson
Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Officer
Ontario Public Drug Program
Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
80 Grosvenor Street
Hepburn Block, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1R3

Dear Ms. Stevenson

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA) to request an exemption from the 'Conditions for Payment of Dispensing Fees' for residents of retirement homes in Ontario.

ORCA is a voluntary non-profit association that sets standards, inspects and accredits retirement homes in Ontario. Our membership represents 25,000 of Ontario's 42,000 retirement home spaces. The average age of seniors in retirement homes is over 83 and well over 90% of residents across Ontario take prescription medications daily.

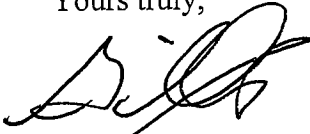
Retirement homes provide private pay care and accommodations for seniors. While retirement homes may be for-profit or not-for-profit, their residents all pay 100% of their costs with no government subsidy. It is the position of ORCA that retirement homes not only provide a necessary level of care and accommodations for seniors, they support the government subsidized system by providing an alternate choice for Ontarians. As such, we believe it is in the best interest of government to control costs in retirement homes to help seniors who wish to pay for their own care.

Seniors living on their own and having difficulty taking their medication correctly often move to retirement homes for this support. Like LTC, most seniors in retirement homes rely on assistance from pharmacies in the form of packaging and from trained staff in retirement homes in order to receive their medication correctly. Retirement homes in turn rely on strong support and partnerships with their pharmacies to properly administer medication to their residents. Instituting twice monthly dispensing will negatively impact patient care and safety through the safe storage of excess medication and the increased potential for medication administration errors. As such, seniors will have to pay for additional dispensing costs in order to have their safety margins back.

We urge the MOH<C to exempt retirement homes from this change in the same way and very much for the same reasons that LTC homes were exempted. Seniors paying for their own care and accommodations is positive and necessary for the care continuum in Ontario. These seniors should be encouraged by government for making their own choices, not penalized.

Please contact me at 905 403-0500 x222 or gord@orca-homes.com if you have questions.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gord White', written in a cursive style.

Gord White
CEO

cc. Dennis Darby, CEO OPA