

Waterloo Wellington LHIN Services for Seniors

Key Findings

- The WWLHIN has 35 long-term care (LTC) homes providing 3,666 beds, including all long-stay, short-stay and convalescent care beds.
- As of February 2008, the Long-Term Care Home System Report indicated that the utilization of all long-term care homes was extremely high (99%)ⁱ. Table 2, below, shows the trends in placement to long-term care beds in WWLHIN and Ontario.
- Since June 2007, both in the WWLHIN and the province, the waitlist has increased and more clients are waiting for transfer to a LTC bed.
- Between June 2007 and February 2008, the median number of days to placement has increased both within the WWLHIN (14.0%) and in Ontario (50%).
- The median number of days to placement of client's first choice has doubled in the time period from June 2007 to February 2008 in the WWLHIN, and increased by almost 40% for Ontario.
- The median number of days to placement for the highest priority clients increased in the WWLHIN by 75.5% between June and November 2007. However, this number has decreased since November 2007 by 58.6%.
- Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) case managers have identified that a third of those on LTC wait lists do not require this level of care, but do need augmented home support. Many high-functioning patients are admitted to LTC homes if they cannot manage with 10 hours per week of home support. Additional options for long-term care, such as assisted and supported living accommodations and arrangements, have the potential to serve the needs of such individuals. Recent studies show that 85% of people over the age of 65 years want to continue being at home as they ageⁱⁱ.
- The Waterloo Wellington CCAC is providing more services to those waiting to be placed in LTC to alleviate pressure on acute care beds.
- Between 2002/03 and 2005/06, there was a 12% increase in the number of clients served by community support services; wait lists were noted as much more common than in the past. Most of the clients served or on waitlists were elderly.
- In terms of psycho-geriatric services, there are 23 beds for older adults with dementia and behavioural difficulties in Wellington.
- In Waterloo Region, there are no psycho-geriatric hospital beds. Clients requiring this care access St. Joseph's Health Centre in London or Grand River Hospital's psychiatric unit at the Kitchener site. Care is also available in the community, however such services are operating at capacity.
- Unmet need for psycho-geriatric services contributes to Alternative Levels of Care (ALC) days. For example, of the 26,363 ALC days (9.5% of the total days from WWLHIN hospitals) in 2006/07, 2,591 days (9.8%) were for psychiatric services.

Current @ August 21, 2008

Table 1: Placement in Long-Term Care Beds, WWLHIN and Ontario (June 2007-February 2008)

	WWLHIN						Ontario					
	June 2007	Nov. 2007	Feb. 2008	% Change June to Nov.	% Change Nov. to Feb.	% Change June to Feb.	June 2007	Nov. 2007	Feb. 2008	% Change June to Nov	% Change Nov to Feb	% Change June to Feb
Clients waitlisted	1201	1320	1365	9.9	3.4	13.7	19,432	21,564	22,151	11.0	2.7	14.0
Clients waiting for transfer	487	535	577	9.9	7.9	18.5	9,619	10,040	10,118	4.4	0.8	5.2
Overall median # of days to placement	86	109	98	26.7	-10.1	14.0	62	87	93	40	6.9	50.0
Median # of days to placement to 1 st choice	102	161	203	57.8	32.1	99.0	88	117	123	33.0	5.1	39.8
Median # of days to placement to 2 nd choice	119	83	93	-30.3	12.0	-21.8	64	83	89	29.7	7.2	39.1
Median # of days to placement to 3 rd choice	52	101	70	94.2	-30.7	34.6	45	62	69	37.8	11.3	53.3
Median # of days to placement for highest priority clients	106	186	77	75.5	-58.6	-27.4	51	69	61	35.3	-11.6	19.6
Median # of days to placement for 2 nd highest priority clients	157	168	113	7.0	-32.7	-28.0	75	96	112	28	16.7	49.3

Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Information Services Group, Health Data Branch, Long-Term Care Home System Report as of February 29, 2008.

Risks and Opportunities

- The trends shown in Table 2 are consistent with the past, and suggest that the current number of LTC beds in the WWLHIN is insufficient to meet demand. High utilization rates also increase wait lists and may negatively impact the health of those waiting.
- The combination of high utilization rates and lengthening waiting lists also has an adverse impact on hospitals, which are challenged to transition ALC patients into more appropriate care settings. Given these difficult circumstances, the 288 long-term beds, scheduled to open in the Guelph area by early 2010, are anticipated to provide relief.
- The MOHLTC has allocated multi-year funding to the LHINs for Aging at Home (AAH) initiatives over the next 3 years. The implementation of these initiatives are designed to help decrease the pressure on LTC homes, thus improving the ALC situation as well.
- The rapidly growing aging population is creating increased need for specialized geriatric services. Psycho-geriatric and specialized geriatric programs in both Wellington and Waterloo are currently stretched to capacity, and are not sufficient to meet anticipated demand due to an aging population.

ⁱ Government of Ontario, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Information Services Group, Health Data Branch, *Long-Term Care Home System Report as of February 29, 2008* (Toronto: April 2, 2008).

ⁱⁱ Government of Ontario, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, *Aging at Home: Enabling Seniors to Live Safely at Home with Dignity and Independence* (Toronto: July 2007).