

DISTRICT OF KENORA UNINCORPORATED AREAS RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

A NON-PROFIT ONTARIO CORPORATION
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February 26, 2020

To: Merrilee Fullerton
Ontario Minister of Long-Term Care

Dear Minister

We wish to add our voice to those endorsing a proposal by the Kenora Chiefs Advisory to purchase, upgrade and expand the existing Birchwood Terrace long-term care facility in Kenora.

Our organization — (DoKURA) District of Kenora Unincorporated Areas Ratepayers Association — represents the needs and concerns of some 25,000 people throughout the Kenora District who live year-round or seasonally in non-municipal, non-First Nations communities.

The shortage of long-term care beds in the Kenora area is well known by area residents and is reflected in the continuous use of critical care beds in area hospitals for those awaiting placement in appropriate long-term care, and in the number of people forced to leave the area to access long-term care when health issues prevent them from remaining in their own homes.

The proposal by the Kenora Chiefs Advisory addresses several key concerns about the current long-term care situation in the Kenora area.

It will provide a culturally suitable setting for those with a First Nations background, whether currently living in First Nation communities, municipalities or non-municipal areas. It includes significant improvements to the current 96-bed Birchwood Terrace facility which is long overdue for upgrades as it was built some 50 years ago and has undergone no significant changes since its construction, and the eventual construction of a completely new facility to meet current and future standards and provide critically needed specialized care.

The proposal also includes the addition of 64 long-term care beds to the current number of beds in the district, an increase that is long overdue.

Finally, the proposal for the Wiigwas Elder and Senior Care facility is to operate it as a not-for-profit facility. While Ontario has a mix of public, private and not-for-profit operators of long-term care facilities, in this area community owned and operated facilities are the preference for residents whose family members require long-term care. Operational decisions are made by a local board selected by local residents and reflecting local needs. Current long-term facilities in the district owned and operated by local organizations whether they be municipalities or health care organizations are supported by strong local community volunteer organizations as we are sure this one will be.

Our organization has been working with the Kenora Chiefs Advisory as a community representative on the All Nations Health Partners which is working towards improving overall health care in the Kenora area and believe the Kenora Chiefs Advisory are an ideal group to operate this facility.

Thank you

Bob Stewart
Secretary, DoKURA

On behalf of Jack McKenzie
President, DoKURA