

Ontario Appoints New Patient Ombudsman

Province Continues to Strengthen the Voices of Patients, Long-Term Care Residents and Families

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TORONTO — The Ontario government has appointed Cathy Fooks as Ontario's new Patient Ombudsman to help improve the quality of care and supports people receive in hospitals, long-term care homes and in their own homes through home and community care.

"Cathy Fooks brings over thirty years of experience advocating for change to improve the care Ontarians receive," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Having served as Ontario's first Patient Ombudsman, I know how this role can directly help people by shining a spotlight on how we can improve the quality of care for all Ontarians. I am confident Ms. Fooks will be a great partner by making sure all voices are heard and concerns are brought to our attention."

The Patient Ombudsman provides support for Ontarians who have voiced concerns about their health care experience. The Ombudsman also investigates unresolved complaints about public hospitals, long-term care homes and home and community care, and makes recommendations to the government to prevent the recurrence of similar issues.

"I am thrilled to welcome Cathy Fooks as Ontario's new Patient Ombudsman during this extremely difficult time," said Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care. "Cathy will be working to ensure seniors and their families are heard as we work to improve Ontario's long-term care homes."

In this role, Ms. Fooks will also oversee an investigation into the care and health care experiences of long-term care home residents during COVID-19. This work will complement the government's independent commission into Ontario's long-term care system which will begin in July 2020.

"I am honoured to be appointed as Ontario's Patient Ombudsman," said Cathy Fooks. "Patient and caregiver voices matter now more than ever and need to continue to be heard. They will help us to make the right changes that need to be done. I am here to ensure that happens, so we can continue to ensure Ontarians receive the quality of care they need and deserve."

QUICK FACTS

- Cathy Fooks has served as President and CEO of The Change Foundation since 2007 and was previously the first Executive Director of the Health Council of Canada. Her appointment will come into effect on July 13, 2020.
- The term of the Patient Ombudsman's appointment will be for five years, with the possibility of reappointment for an additional five-year term.
- A rigorous process was followed, with the government procuring the services of an experienced executive recruitment firm, which reviewed all applications and presented candidates for consideration by an executive level selection committee. Following selection committee interviews with the short list of candidates, a final candidate was recommended to the Minister for her consideration.
- The Patient Ombudsman position was created in December 2014 through amendments to the *Excellent Care for All Act, 2010*.

LEARN MORE

- Visit patientombudsman.ca to learn more on Ontario's Patient Ombudsman's mission.
- Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19

David Jensen Communications Branch
media.moh@ontario.ca
416-314-6197

Hayley Chazan Minister Elliott's Office
hayley.chazan@ontario.ca

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