



Video Transcript

Value-for-Money Audit: Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (2020)

As part of our work on the 2020 Annual Report, we performed a value-for-money audit of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority.

Seniors are a fast-growing population in Ontario. By 2046, the number of seniors, people aged 65 and over, is expected to grow from 2.4 million in 2018 to 4.6 million. Of those 4.6 million people, 2.8 million will be at least 75 years of age. The level of care required by an aging population is also increasing. Between 2016 and 2020, the number of people waiting for long-term care increased by 43%, from almost 27,000 people to more than 38,000 people. Seniors have a range of housing and care service needs depending on the level of care they require.

The Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority was established in 2011 to promote and enforce consumer protection and safety, to protect retirement home residents from harm. *The Retirement Homes Act, 2010* defines retirement homes as a residential complex where at least six people primarily aged 65 or older live and the home operator makes at least two care services available to the residents. The Authority is responsible for licensing and inspecting retirement homes, as well as enforcement. This includes responding to complaints, and public education, as well as supporting public health authorities on infection prevention and control.

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, which oversees the Authority, is responsible for developing and maintaining policy, legislation and regulations.

Our audit assessed how the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority and the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility are performing in their areas of responsibility.

We found the both Authority and Ministry need to do more in this important sector.

The Authority does not collect health information of retirement home residents, such as the number of residents with more significant needs for care waiting to be placed in long-term-care homes.

In 2019/20, 4,201 hospital patients were discharged to retirement homes, some to beds subsidized by the Ministry of Health. Neither the Authority, nor the Local Health Integration Networks nor the Ministry of Long-term Care were inspecting these beds to ensure safety and security of these residents.

As of August 31, 2020, 185 COVID-19 outbreaks were detected at 171 licensed retirement homes.



During our audit, we also noted that the Authority took an average of about 4.5 months to respond to complaints. It does not have a target time to address complaints, and does not publish complaint trends unless an investigation is launched and results in a significant finding.

And though it has been in existence for almost a decade, the Authority has not developed performance benchmarks in areas like public awareness of its mandate to protect retirement home residents.

We also found that many ministries are responsible for delivering services to seniors in a variety of settings, including long-term-care homes, retirement homes, and in the community. The Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility had not completed its work to develop a coordinating strategy to address this at the completion of our audit.

Our report contains **26** recommendations, consisting of **63** actions, including that:

- The Authority collect data on residents and retirement homes from other organizations.
- Both the Authority and the Ministry clarify inspection and complaint responsibilities for subsidized beds in retirement homes with the Ministry of Health, the Local Health Integration Networks and the Ministry of Long-term Care.
- That the Ministry establish targets for the Authority's performance and publish results annually, and
- Seek the responsibility to lead the development of a coordinated seniors' care and housing approach to prepare for the significant increase in the seniors population expected in the future.