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## **An Open Discussion on Long Term Care Funding**

It is time for an open discussion on the role of the municipality in long term care (LTC) funding, a provincial jurisdiction. Right now, five percent of taxpayer's dollars go towards funding long term care in Timmins. Since this is a provincial responsibility, why are municipal tax dollars being used to support health care?

All LTC facilities in the province are subject to the same operational standards whether they are profit, not for profit or municipally operated. In 2014, taxpayers contributed \$3.365M towards the Golden Manor, as an operating subsidy. Other municipalities have found ways to reduce or completely eliminate operating subsidies and have maintained the mandated standards of care.

According to an AMO report "Coming of Age: The Municipal Role in Caring for Ontario's Seniors", municipalities can consider various options to help reduce the operating subsidies, including looking for efficiencies, outsourcing operations while keeping governance, selling the home and redirecting municipal contributions to other areas.

We can look to other communities to see how they have realized savings. For example in the 1990s, Muskoka realized they would no longer be able to sustain the municipal contributions to their LTC facility. They hired Extencicare as an advisor to see where they could realize savings and within four years, they eliminated their operating subsidy. As another example, the City of Sault Ste Marie made a one-time upfront contribution of \$9.8M towards the construction of a new home and released themselves from their financial obligations into the future. Thunder Bay walked away from its obligation, which in turn forced the province to fund two new not-for-profit homes.

We can all agree that our seniors deserve quality care and they are receiving that, at both the Golden Manor and Extencicare. The difference is that Extencicare is not a burden to the taxpayer. We would recommend that the City of Timmins review the options outlined in the AMO report, and contract an operational audit conducted by experts with a view to eliminating the current subsidy provided to the Golden Manor.