

# City of Toronto

## Long-Term Care Homes & Services

### Accountability Framework and Measures

When it comes to building an accountability framework, as leaders we often encounter conflicting expectations ...

We are told to...

Think strategically and invest in the future,  
but keep the numbers up today.

Know every detail of our organization,  
but delegate more responsibility.

Become passionately dedicated to 'visions' and 'goals',  
but be flexible, responsive and able to change directions quickly.

Encourage creativity and innovate in new directions,  
but be sure you 'stick to the tried and true'.

Communicate urgency and push for results,  
but take time to deliberately plan for the future.

Get 'lean and mean',  
but be a great organization to work for.

When it comes to accountability in long-term care this dichotomy is normal.

To give context to my experience with accountability let me tell you a little about my organization. Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of about 2.7 million people. Toronto's government is dedicated to delivering customer service excellence and creating a transparent and accountable

government, reducing the size and cost of government and building a transportation city.

Like most organizations, we have multiple stakeholders. Toronto Long-Term Care Homes & Services is only one part of a very large City organization. We are comprised of ten (10) long-term care homes with over 2600 residents receiving 365/24/7 care and services. Our average resident is 87 years old, with multiple diagnoses and varying cognitive abilities. An exception to the average age is our young adults resident home areas.

We provide three primary community service programs ...

- Homemakers and Nurses Services with 2300 clients;
- Supportive Housing Services with 450 clients; and
- Adult Day Programs delivering 12,500 client days of service each year.
  
- We also support Meals on Wheels agencies by preparing over 2400 meals each week.
  
- We have about 3400 full and part-time staff and 2400 volunteers.

Our key stakeholders include:

- Residents and clients and their families
- Volunteers and staff
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC)
- Five (5) Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) which we have signed separate Service Accountability Agreements (SAAs) for each individual home, and we have several community program (Multi-Sector SAAs) in place.
- Toronto City Council - comprised of 44 councillors and the Mayor
- General public

Regulatory, Inspection and oversight/monitoring bodies include Toronto City Council; four (4) accountability officers (Auditor General, Ombudsman, Integrity Commissioner, and Lobbyist Registrar); the MOHLTC compliance inspection program; five (5) LHINs; as well as the Ministry of Labour; Public Health; Health Quality Ontario; Accreditation Canada; Family and Resident councils, Advisory Committees; plus others.

The media also functions in many ways as an accountability body as they routinely report on what is happening at the City of Toronto and more so in recent years they have increased their focus on the long-term care homes system.

One of our greatest challenges in long-term care has been a loss of public confidence, partially due to negative media coverage. Good and positive stories are not covered with the same enthusiasm that negative stories are reported, which is most unfortunate. Long-term care homes are characterized as places to fear because abuse, neglect and incompetence is seen as rampant. This does nothing to build public trust and confidence when serving some of the most vulnerable people in our society who may be suffering from dementia and are naturally afraid and vulnerable. Nor does it provide peace to families who are already suffering guilt when they need to place a family member into a long-term care home. Rebuilding trust and changing the public's impression of long-term care is not easy.

Accountability at the City of Toronto began to change focus in early 2011 when City Council directed the City Manager to initiate a comprehensive Service Review Program.

Two of the components of this program were:

1. a Core Service Review process – for all program areas – which asked the question what services the City should be delivering.
2. Service Efficiency Studies – for selected program areas – which asked how best to deliver City services.

During the time of these studies routine reporting to each accountability body or group continued based on their own unique and specific accountability focus or requirements.

As you know – accountability means being answerable to another person or organization for a “specified” outcome. But what if your accountability is measured by multiple bodies, individuals and organizations and not all outcomes are specified, measurable or even clearly known or understood.

By having multiple accountability bodies with differing and sometimes conflicting expectations and with the myriad of questions being asked it was becoming clear that what we were being held accountable for was in fact unclear. In the end, the approach we took was simple and straight-forward. We did our job ... we re-dedicated ourselves to the task at hand ... we remained inalterable in our principles, inviolable in our commitment to a client-focused approach to caring for residents, inclusive in our continuing long-term objectives, and innovative in our search for economies of operation.

➤ We encouraged our staff and volunteers to serve our residents and clients well

- We refreshed our Mission, Vision and Values
- We re-focused our strategic plan and moved forward
- We communicated with transparency to our stakeholders – cautious to not create fear but straight-forward and factual
- We fully cooperated with the City's service review process and all Council directives
- We set high standards and expectations and told our stakeholders so they could hold us accountable
- We met all of our ongoing stakeholder accountability requirements
- We are currently establishing a culture of being "leaders in excellence", so we are holding ourselves accountable to achieve our vision

During the time of these various studies we received national recognition by undergoing a division-wide accreditation process for which we received Accreditation with Exemplary Standing; we received two provincial awards for innovation and excellence in long-term care in the categories of supporting seniors and workplace quality – and we received the City Manager's award (Human Rights, Equity and Diversity category), which is the highest possible municipal recognition within the City of Toronto.

But as an organization our greatest satisfaction comes from serving well those entrusted to our care. Appreciation letters and the feedback we receive through resident, client and family satisfaction surveys provide an excellent accountability measure.

In the end, the consultants' service study concluded that our services were not only important but essential to both those we directly serve and indirectly to the long-term care system as a whole. These conclusions were arrived at to a large extent because our stakeholders overwhelmingly supported us throughout the review process.

We embraced accountability to our stakeholders and our stakeholders embraced us.

Reg Paul  
General Manager  
Long-Term Care Homes & Services  
City of Toronto