

Accelerated PSW program launches at Georgian College

Written By **Sam Odrowski**

Long term care homes across Ontario have seen shortages in Personal Support Workers (PSWs) and an accelerated program aimed at training thousands of new PSWs over the next year is launching at the Orangeville campus of Georgian College.

The locally offered accelerated program is part of a \$115 million investment to train up to 8,200 PSWs for high-demand jobs in Ontario health and long-term care sectors.

"PSWs are an integral part of the health-care team and the backbone of care in Ontario," said Dr. MaryLynn West-Moynes, President and CEO, Georgian College.

"The pandemic has proven there simply aren't enough of them. At Georgian, we're prepared to partner with the government and our local health providers to deliver quality training through an in-depth, hands-on accelerated format to get PSW professionals in our long-term care and acute care facilities at this crucial time."

The Accelerated PSW Training Program is a tuition-free opportunity for 6,000 new students and is expected to take only six months to complete, rather than the typical eight months.

After three months of coursework, and experiential learning in a clinical setting, students will complete the final three months in paid onsite training in a long-term care home or in a home and community care environment.

The province is also offering tuition assistance to in-process PSW students who started the program at one of Ontario's publicly-assisted colleges in January 2021. These students will be eligible to receive a \$2,000 tuition grant to help them complete their studies, as well as a stipend to complete the clinical placement part of their training.

Registration for the program is available through the Ontario College Application Service: <https://www.ontariocolleges.ca/en/>

Locally, staff at Avalon Care Centre are looking forward to an increase in the number of trained PSWs through the accelerated program.

"The recent announcement of the Accelerated PSW Program is a step in the right direction, as staffing shortages have been a systemic matter within the Long Term Care Sector at large," said Stephanie Barber, Avalon Care Centre community relations coordinator.

"This progressive strategy, coupled with the Provincial Government's commitment to an average of four hours of direct care per day for Long Term Care Residents demonstrates leadership that will support the long-term sustainability of the sector while ensuring Ontario's seniors receive the additional care they need and deserve, especially important as our Resident population grows and their needs continue to increase in complexity."

Barber added that Avalon looks forward to leveraging the accelerated PSW training program and working in collaboration with the provincial government to create a workforce where thousands more skilled healthcare workers can join long term care Homes, including Avalon Care Centre.

Dufferin/Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for more PSW and is pleased that the Orangeville campus of Georgian College will be part of the new training program.

"From needing assistance at home, to our residents in long-term care homes; PSWs are a critical part of the daily care that many

Ontarians rely on,? said MPP Sylvia Jones.