



THE **CHANGE**  
FOUNDATION  
ENGAGE, EXPLORE, EVOLVE

# ENHANCING CARE, ENHANCING LIFE

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**Administrator and Staff Assistant Views**  
of Residents' Councils and Family Councils  
in Ontario Long-Term Care Homes

October 2016



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# Project Overview

The Change Foundation has partnered with four organizations for a two-phase project—surveys and case studies—on Residents’ Councils and Family Councils in Ontario long-term care homes. The purpose of the project is to better understand the role, functioning, impact and leading practices of these councils, which are mandated for all homes in the province. This report presents detailed findings from our 2015 survey of staff assistants and administrators of long-term care homes, about the Residents’ Councils and the Family Councils. For an overview of the phase one findings and more information about the survey methods, please see our report, *Enhancing Care, Enhancing Life*.

In total, 353 staff assistants and administrators participated in the survey. This report is a summary of their responses.



# Participating Long-Term Care (LTC) Homes

**The homes that participated range in size: the smallest home has 12 beds and the largest home has 472, with the average size being 150 beds. Representation is achieved across all Local Health Integration Networks.**

## STATUS OF RESIDENTS' COUNCILS AND FAMILY COUNCILS

Eighty-three per cent (N= 293) of respondents said their home has a Residents' Council, while 1% (N= 4) said their home does not. Sixteen per cent (N= 56) of survey participants did not respond to this question. The newest council has been running for less than one year and the oldest for 54 years. The average length of time that Residents' Councils have been operational is 14 years.

Seventy-one per cent (N= 252) of homes have a Family Council, while 12% (N= 44) do not; 17% (N= 57) did not respond to this question. The newest council has been running for less than one year and the oldest for 54 years. The average length of time that Family Councils have been operational is 10 years.

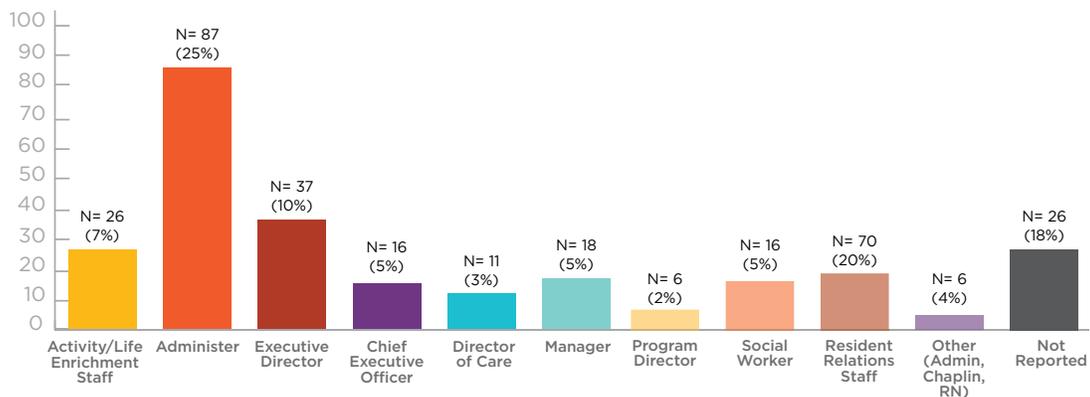
## ADMINISTRATOR/STAFF ASSISTANT ROLES

The administrators and staff assistants who participated in the study hold many different roles and titles. About one-half (51%, N= 177) of the respondents are the main assistants to the councils (Figure 1).

- 27% (N= 94) of respondents are the main assistants to the Residents' Council and hold various positions in the home.
  - 32% (N= 30) Manager
  - 22% (N= 21) Activity/Life Enrichment Staff
  - 15% (N= 14) Social Worker
  - 13% (N= 12) Program Director
  - 12% (N= 11) Administrator
  - 2% (N= 2) Director of Care
  - 2% (N= 2) Chaplain
  - 1% (N= 1) Executive Director

- 24% (N= 83) of respondents are the main assistants to the Family Council and hold various positions in the home.
  - 30% (N= 25) Administrator
  - 21% (N= 17) Program Director
  - 17% (N= 14) Social Worker
  - 13% (N= 11) Activity/Life Enrichment Staff
  - 7% (N= 6) Director of Care
  - 6% (N= 5) Manager
  - 5% (N= 4) Resident Relations Coordinator
  - 1% (N= 1) Executive Director

**Figure 1: Administrator/Staff Assistant Roles**

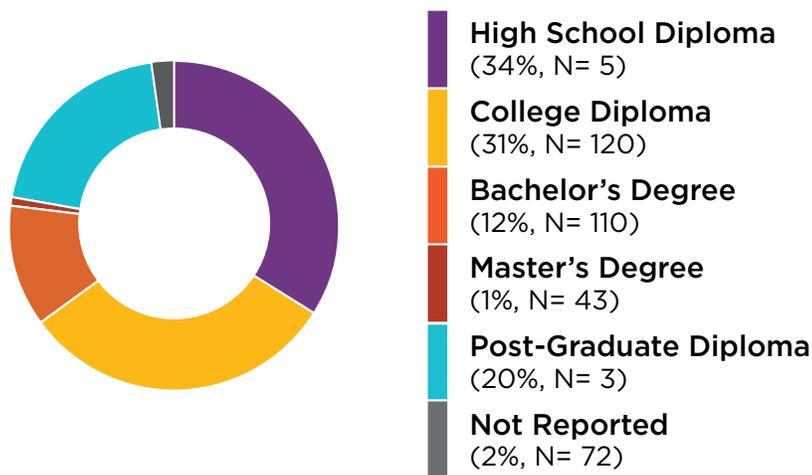


The staff assistants who said they are not the main staff person appointed to one of the councils hold other positions—administrative staff, advisors, back-up staff—or are one of several staff who help with the council.

On average, staff assistants have been working in the long-term care field for 16 years (with a range of one to 45 years) and have a range of educational backgrounds and professional designations.

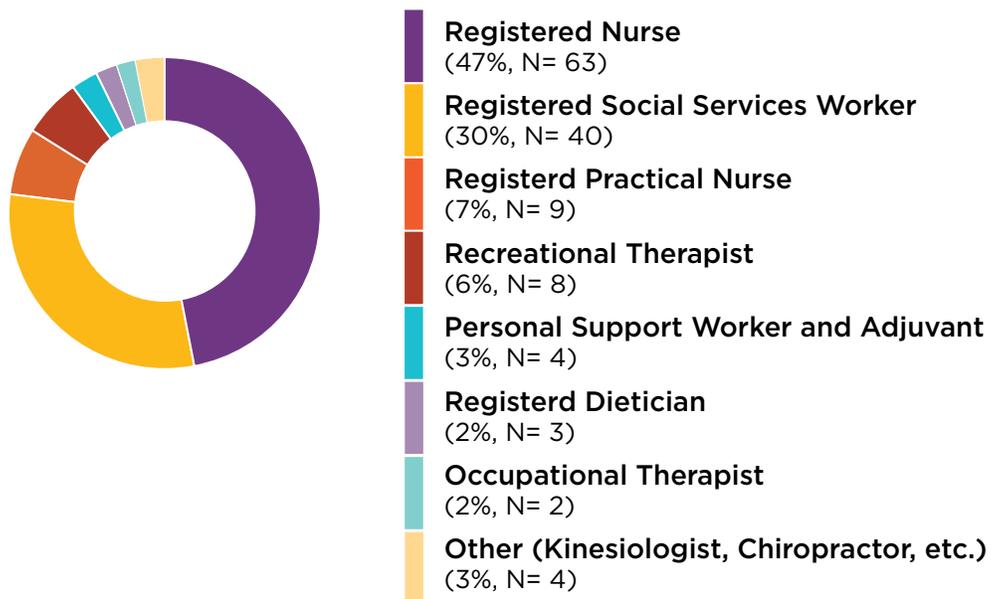
Most administrators/staff assistants (65%) have a college diploma or a bachelor's degree (Figure 2). More than twice the number of administrators have a master's degree (N= 31) compared to staff assistants (N= 12).

**Figure 2: Administrator/Staff Assistant Education**



Thirty per cent (N= 41) of staff assistants and 43% (N= 92) of administrators said they have a professional designation (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Administrator/Staff Assistant Professional Designation**



## ADMINISTRATOR/STAFF ASSISTANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Seventy-one per cent (N= 98) of staff assistants and 67% (N= 143) of administrators said they have access to continuous educational resources and opportunities.

Those who said they have access to continuous education are using various resources.

- 44% (N= 154) Websites
- 38% (N= 133) External educational sessions
- 37% (N= 132) Peer-to-peer support
- 31% (N= 110) Networks
- 28% (N= 99) In-service education
- 24% (N= 83) Pamphlets
- 21% (N= 73) Guidelines

Other resources mentioned include Ontario Association of Resident Councils (OARC) meetings and online tools, the Family Councils Ontario (FCO) website, various leadership courses, and Activity Professionals of Ontario and Therapeutic Recreation Ontario conferences. One respondent mentioned using an online course (dementia-specific) at the University of Tasmania, Australia, and several mentioned group facilitation sessions through the Alzheimer's Society of Ontario.

Staff assistants said that these resources help them organize and format meetings, understand what is expected of them by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), provide direction on proper protocols and expectations, brainstorm creative strategies to engage the councils, and keep up to date with the legislation.

“We have done some networking to better understand the role of Councils and what our obligations are to provide. It was helpful to speak to other homes and hear about their experiences.”

— STAFF ASSISTANT

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Administrators said that these resources help them understand what is expected of them by the MOHLTC, network with other administrators to share ideas and success stories, better understand the respective roles of the councils while fostering a collaborative environment, and understand what is needed for the councils to run smoothly and be effective in the home.

Staff assistants and administrators who do not have access to continuous education said that they would like to see more local networking and meetings that offer peer-to-peer opportunities, external educational sessions about supporting councils with increased rates of dementia, validation and communication from administration and leadership, as well as information on conflict resolution. Many of the respondents mentioned that they would like more financial aid to support their continuous educations.

Thirty-nine per cent (N= 138) of councils connect with other homes, while 37% (N= 132) do not; 24% (N= 83) of participants did not respond to this question.

Those councils that do network discuss strategies for running successful councils at inter-home meetings with “sister” homes or with homes in their area. These meetings allow them to troubleshoot difficult situations, share terms of reference, experiences, policies and procedures, build recruitment strategies and get referrals to additional educational sessions and resources.

“Stronger network with other homes’ RCs in the area. Funding to develop relationships in these ways. Funding directly to RCs to help them effectively meet their goals.” – STAFF ASSISTANT

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“We have a formal not-for-profit CEO group that discusses and supports on all issues, which can include the Councils.”

– ADMINISTRATOR

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# Staff Assistants, Administrators and the Residents' Council

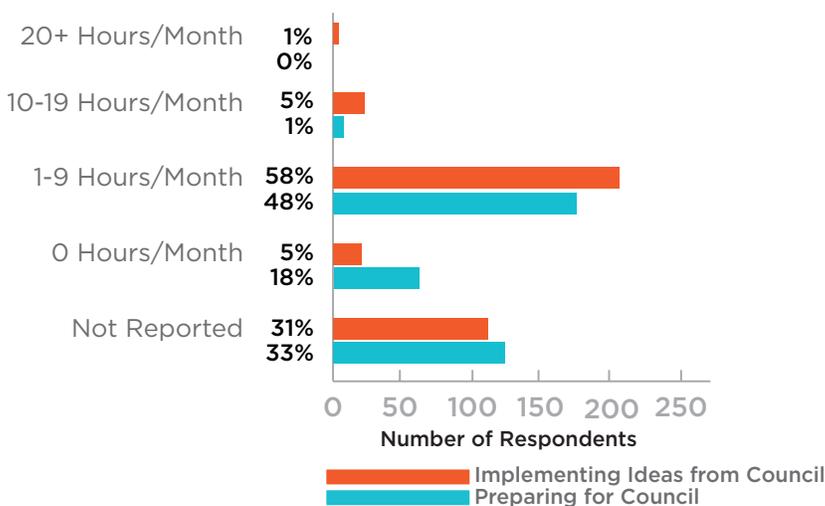
## INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Meetings of the Residents' Council generally happen on a monthly basis (65%), except in the summer months and December, which the council usually takes off. Six per cent of Residents' Councils meet bi-monthly and 2% meet quarterly. A high percentage (27%) of staff assistants and administrators did not report on the frequency of meetings.

Many of the smaller homes cited that instead of a regular monthly meeting, they hold informal get-togethers with the administrator. Because these homes are smaller in size with fewer beds, there is more familiarity with upper management.

Most of the staff assistants and administrators commit between one and nine hours of their time to council per month (Figure 4). They spend this time preparing for and implementing the ideas from the council meetings.

**Figure 4: Time Spent on Council Functions**



The relationship between administrators/staff assistants and Residents' Councils is mostly positive: 68% (N= 239) of respondents said that they have a positive relationship with the council. Four per cent (N= 15) stated that the relationship is neutral, while 28% (N= 99) did not report on the relationship. None of the administrators/staff assistants said that the relationship is negative. However, 6% of residents (N= 72) and 10% of family members (N= 30) who participated in the Residents' Council and Family Council surveys, respectively, said their relationship with the home is negative.

Staff assistants and administrators thought that a few resources could help to build the relationship between themselves and the Residents' Council. These resources include extra materials such as pamphlets for new residents on the importance of councils, education sessions to inform other staff about the councils, in-service education for residents during council meetings, and an online network hub for sharing the learnings of councils at other homes.

“I say a work in progress, as our resident mix changes all the time. When resident change happens it is like starting over again with creating culture and dynamics around the table. Currently we have a high percentage of complex residents which limits active involvement.”

— STAFF ASSISTANT

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## RESIDENTS' COUNCIL ROLE

Staff assistants and administrators stated the main role of the Residents' Council.

- 68% (N= 240) Enhancing quality of life for residents
- 66% (N= 232) Information sharing
- 59% (N= 209) Enhancing quality of care for residents
- 58% (N= 204) Advocacy
- 45% (N= 159) Peer support
- 45% (N= 158) Program planning
- 43% (N= 153) Education

Staff assistants said that the role of the Residents' Council is to provide a social activity for residents to get to know one another, to fundraise, to make decisions and to be heard by the home. One respondent noted that the role is the council's decision—the staff assistant's duty is to support the council and whatever role it chooses. Administrators added that the council's role is to make recommendations to management and to influence the residents' lives and circumstances at the home.

When it comes to educating the council on its legislated powers, Residents' Councils have multiple avenues of education.

- 66% (N= 232) Staff assistant
- 34% (N= 121) OARC
- 26% (N= 93) Participating Residents' Council members
- 22% (N= 76) Other home staff

Some administrators commented that they feel personally responsible to relay this information to participating residents.

“Council must decide what its main role is, this can change over the course of the year. I simply support the decision they choose.” – STAFF ASSISTANT

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“The role is to provide a voice, a safe place, a position of power to influence and control their lives.” – ADMINISTRATOR

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## COMMUNICATION PRACTICES AND ENGAGEMENT

Most staff assistants and administrators feel welcome at the Residents' Council; 67% (N= 235) said they always feel welcomed by the residents and at council, whereas 1% (N= 6) do not feel welcome at the meetings; 32% (N= 112) did not answer the question.

Staff assistants said that to be welcomed by the council means that staff assistants have to earn the council's trust, ensure open communication, and prove to the council that they are working to implement their ideas and suggestions outside of the meetings.

Two staff assistants mentioned that on occasion the council looks to them for idea generation and decision making and that it is important to reiterate that this is an opportunity for the residents to lead and be in the driver's seat.

Administrators expressed mixed feelings about their own attendance at council meetings. A few noted that according to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care they should not be at the meetings, but that some of the residents prefer them to attend because they know that their concerns are being heard at the "very top".

Administrators in the smaller homes said that the residents make them feel very welcome to attend the meetings, but regardless they make a point of attending only if requested or invited to attend.

"I have built a caring working relationship with the council within the home and we all have mutual trust. Many times they won't start the meeting unless I am in attendance. We all work together as a team to benefit the Residents."

— STAFF ASSISTANT

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"I feel the Residents' Council looks to me as the leader at their meetings to make decisions and generate ideas. I reiterate that this is their forum. This may be due to cognition levels of this group of residents."

— STAFF ASSISTANT

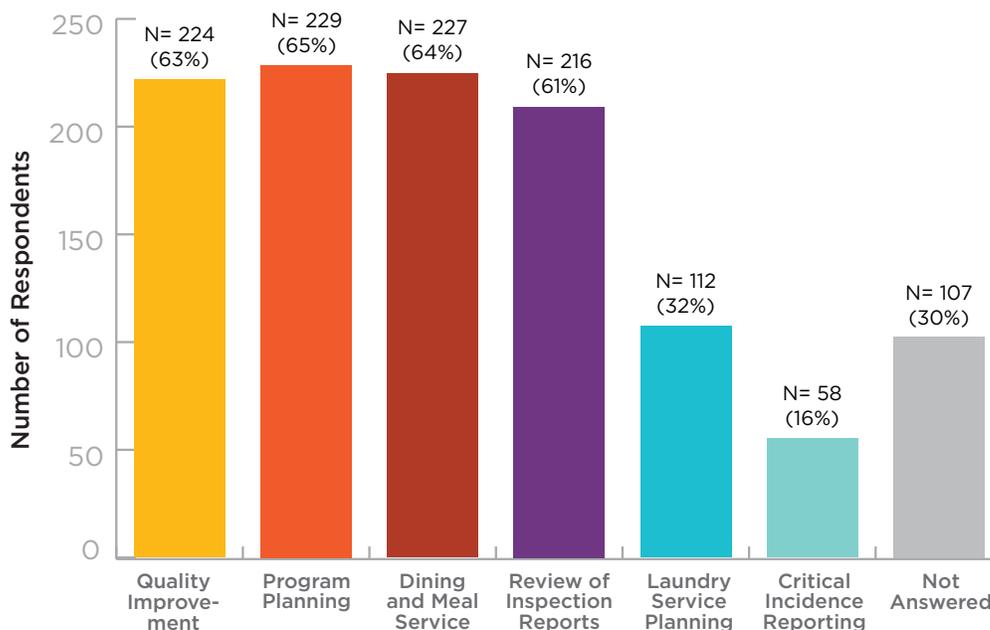
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Staff assistants, administrators and residents communicate with each other in multiple ways.

- 66% (N= 232) In person
- 30% (N= 107) Bulletin board/flyers
- 29% (N= 102) Written letter
- 21% (N= 73) Newsletter
- 8% (N= 29) Email
- 4% (N= 14) Telephone

The councils use these communication tools to help involve staff assistants, administrators and residents in various areas within the life at the home. More than two-thirds (69%, N= 246) of staff assistants and administrators identified the areas that they believed are most crucial to residents and which the Residents' Councils are most involved in. These areas include quality improvement, program planning, dining and meal services, and review of inspection reports (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Residents' Council Involvement in Life at the Home**



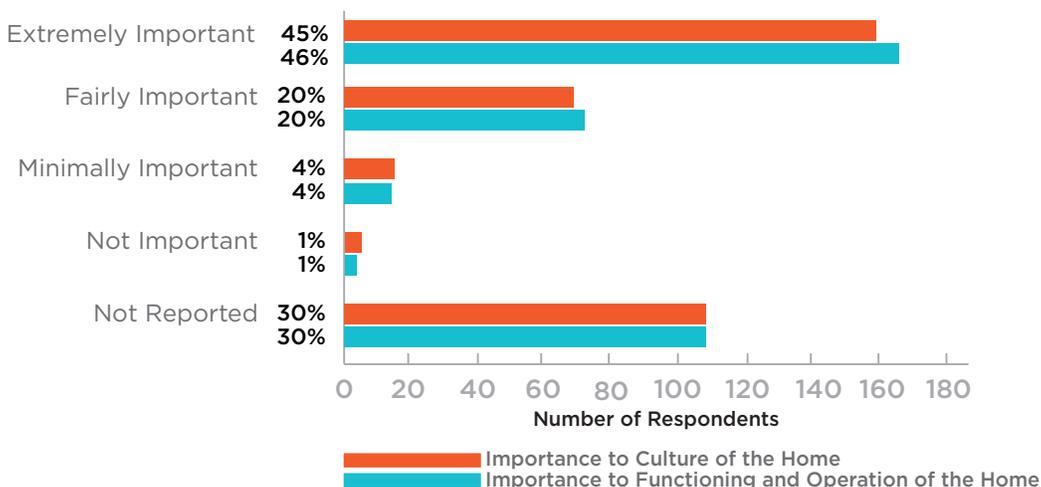
Access to resources—staff time, volunteer time, money/funding—varies among the Residents' Councils. More homes (38%, N= 135) do not have an operating budget for their council compared to those that do (30%, N= 105). Some homes have a foundation, which may explain why they have a Residents' Council budget, but other homes have stated that they are fundraising. About one-third (32%, N= 113) of respondents did not report on whether their Residents' Council has an operating budget.



## RESIDENTS' COUNCIL IMPACT

As shown in Figure 6, staff assistants and administrators thought that the Residents' Council has an important impact on the functioning and operation of the home (66%), and on its culture (65%).

**Figure 6: Importance of Residents' Council**



Staff assistants who thought that the Residents' Council is important stated why they felt that way: The residents are the voice of their home, they can veto ideas from head office, they engage and ask questions, they voice concerns, and they usually come up with useful comments and practical suggestions.

The few staff who thought that the council is minimally important said so because of the mix of residents on the current council, because they do not see much impact on the day-to-day operation of the home based on what the residents say they need, and because they see that some of the residents are uncomfortable or unable to speak up regardless of the venue.

Staff assistants and administrators reported they are seeing changes in programs, operations, home life and infrastructure as a result of having a Residents' Council.

- Programs
  - More music
  - Guest speakers
  - Volunteer Appreciation Day
  - Fundraising for outings
  - Welcome baskets for new residents
  
- Operations
  - Meal service improvement
  - Resident-friendly name tags for staff
  - Creating a council bank account
  - Becoming members of OARC
  - New mail delivery system for timely delivery
  - Creating a palliative-care room in the home
  - Education sessions for staff and residents by Alzheimer's Society of Ontario
  
- Home Life
  - Ensuring all residents who pass away have flowers at their funeral
  - Creating a bus stop in front of the building
  - Adding an aquarium/advocating to keep fish tanks
  
- Infrastructure/Renovations
  - Input on new furniture
  - Input on decorations
  - Adding more wheelchair-accessible doors (automatic doors)
  - Landscaping improvements
  - New sidewalk outside the home
  - Creating more indoor and outdoor seating areas

“Residents are the care and service recipients and they provide a lot of good comments and suggestions.”

— STAFF ASSISTANT

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“While I personally believe we need as many venues as possible to ensure our residents' needs are being heard, I currently see that those who are able to do so can do so directly to administration and that the majority do not speak up, regardless of venue. I also see an increase in complex care issues that leaves our residents, quite frankly, unable either physically or mentally to participate.”

— STAFF ASSISTANT

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Only 46% (N= 163) of staff assistants and administrators thought that having a Residents' Council in the home improves the relationship between residents and staff, whereas 3% (N= 12) thought it makes no difference, 20% (N= 70) felt neutral about it, and 31% (N= 108) did not respond.

Staff assistants and administrators thought that the council does help the relationship because it gives the staff assistants and residents a safe environment in which to speak about day-to-day concerns, encourages discussion and respect, and improves communication. Staff assistants reported that when there is a positive, open and structured outlet to voice concerns, management is better able to deal with issues before they become too large.

Administrators thought that the council helps staff to be more aware of residents' needs. The residents get to be part of the decision-making process and to build a unified residents' voice. As a result, staff have come to realize they are not hearing solely about individual issues, but issues from the group as a whole.

Some of the staff assistants and administrators said that the council does not improve the relationship, or said they felt neutral about the relationship, because regardless of the council's presence, the staff assistants and the residents work together to build positive relationships within the home.

“Council gives the residents an official capacity for sharing their thoughts and ideas and this helps staff know their expectations and wishes so we can all work together to meet them.”

— STAFF ASSISTANT

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“Allows everyone to be part of the issues/ challenges/celebrations. The more residents know of the team, the more they will respect them and vice versa.” — ADMINISTRATOR

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However, some staff assistants and administrators felt that residents do not use the council to their full advantage and that staff may not be aware of the ideas coming out of the Residents' Council because they are not in the meetings and do not always get updates.

Many administrators said that the residents' cognitive functions are weakening, which limits their ability to participate on the council.

In small- and medium-size homes, staff assistants thought that the council does not help the relationship because of the lack of residents who are willing to participate on the council.

Conversely, some administrators from small homes thought that the relationship between staff and the residents is positive to start with because of the intimacy of the home, and that having a council in place does not improve the relationship because there is no need for improvement.

“Residents don’t utilize the contacts of the Residents’ Council and deal directly with staff and management when they want or need things.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

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“Most staff are in the nursing department and do not have direct involvement; all staff are informed of changes happening but may not always know it is the result of Residents’ Council advocacy.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

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“I feel there is already a positive relationship between the residents and the home staff; the council just supplements those existing good relationships.”

— ADMINISTRATOR, SMALL LTC HOME

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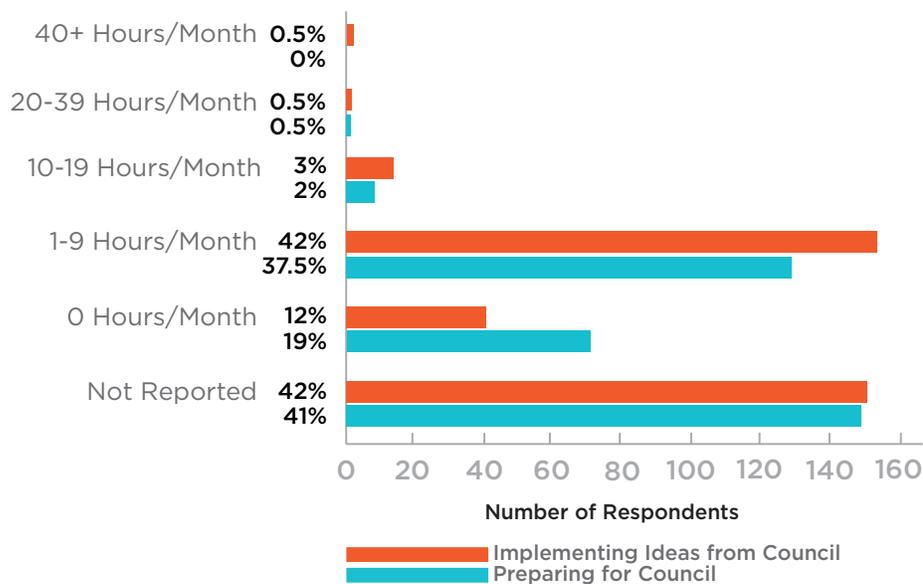
# Staff Assistants, Administrators and the Family Council

## INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Meetings of the Family Council generally happen on a monthly basis (32%), except in the summer months and December, which the council usually takes off. Sixteen per cent of respondents meet quarterly, 7% meet bi-monthly, 6% never meet as a council, 1% meet twice a year and 1% meet bi-weekly. There was a large non-response rate for this question (37%). Compared to the Residents' Councils, the Family Councils appear to meet less consistently and frequently.

The number of hours that staff assistants and administrators dedicate to preparing for council meetings and implementing council ideas ranges from zero to 40+ in a month (Figure 7). Most staff assistants and administrators (37.5%) reported spending one to nine hours a month preparing for the meetings.

**Figure 7: Time Spent on Council Functions**



The survey asked participants about their relationship with the Family Council. Half (50%, N= 179) of staff assistants and administrators felt they have a positive relationship with the council, 8% (N= 27) said the relationship is neutral, and 2% (N= 6) thought the relationship is negative. A large proportion (40%, N= 141) did not report on this issue.

The comments reveal that some tensions exist and that interest in forming a council is very limited in some homes, particularly the smaller homes, as they have difficulty finding interested people and recruiting them.

The survey asked about any resources that would help to improve the relationship between the Family Council, staff assistants and administrators. Respondents said that extra information materials and training guides could be useful in recruiting new members, educating families about the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, clarifying roles, identifying retention and recruitment strategies, networking with other homes on best practices, and getting funding in place for the Family Council.

Interestingly, 8% (N= 18) of home administrators said they have no need for additional resources to help with relationship building—their Family Councils are already running smoothly.

“We do not have a formal Family Council as the present families are not interested in forming one.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

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“Our Family Council struggles a lot with membership. Although family members will attend Wine and Cheese Get Together meetings, they will not volunteer for roles of Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, etc. Too many other competing priorities for families.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

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“The Family Council feels that their voice is the most important and some of the members have an arrogance and authoritative air and feel more important than the Residents’ Council. Too many members have been on the council for too long and don’t even have residents here.”

— STAFF ASSISTANT

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## FAMILY COUNCIL ROLE

Staff assistants and administrators stated the main the roles of the Family Council.

- 56% (N= 196) Enhancing quality of life for residents
- 55% (N= 193) Information sharing
- 52% (N= 182) Enhancing quality of care for residents
- 51% (N= 181) Advocacy
- 45% (N= 159) Peer support
- 43% (N= 151) Education
- 27% (N= 96) Program planning

When it comes to learning about their legislated powers, the Family Councils have access to multiple avenues of education.

- 44% (N= 154) Staff assistant
- 40% (N= 140) Participating Family Council members
- 24% (N= 85) Other home staff
- 13% (N= 45) Family Councils Ontario
- 6% (N= 13) Administrators



## COMMUNICATION PRACTICES AND ENGAGEMENT

Just over half (52%, N= 182) of staff assistants and administrators said they feel welcome at the Family Council meetings compared to the 6% (N= 22) who said they do not; 41% (N= 149) of participants did not respond to the question. The administrators stressed that only when invited do they attend the meetings, but that they do feel welcome. They said they are usually invited to give an update, to speak about the operation of the home, to meet with new members, and to answer questions or hear suggestions and ideas.

Some administrators and staff assistants, generally from the medium and larger homes, sounded guarded when they spoke about their relationship with the Family Council and about invitations to attend its meetings. Some staff assistants made it clear that there is tension between the home staff and the Family Council.

Staff assistants and administrators identified the most common way(s) they communicate with the Family Council.

- 53% (N= 187) In person
- 42% (N= 147) Email
- 27% (N= 96) Bulletin board/flyers
- 25% (N= 90) Telephone
- 24% (N= 86) Newsletter
- 24% (N= 85) Written letter

“I only go when invited as per the Act and give a 30-minute update on activities within the home.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

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“I was told clearly that I will be invited when the council feels they want me to explain [something] or when they have an issue I will need to deal with. They do not see their role as a partnership but instead as a governance board.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

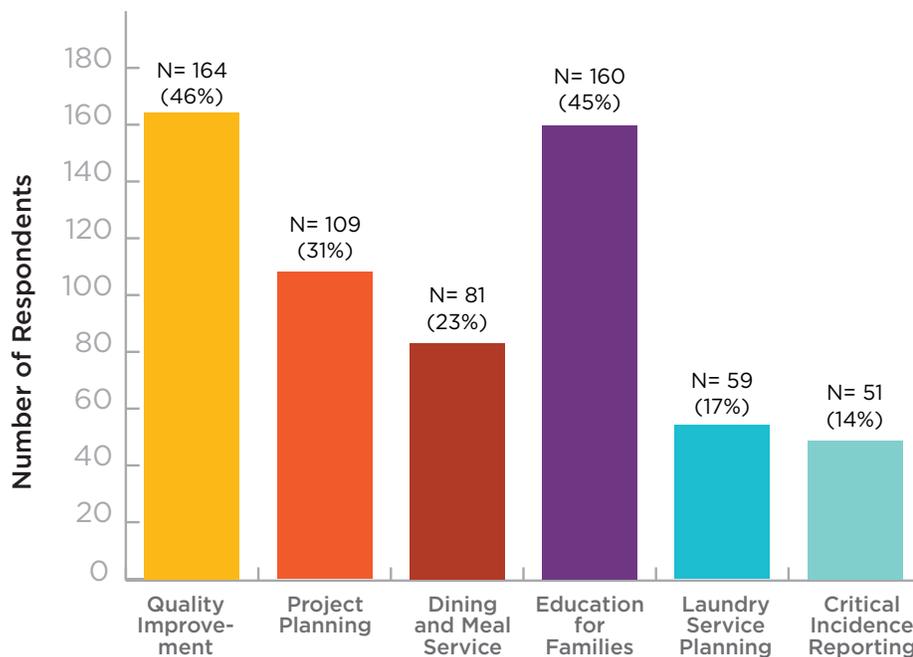
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“Negative environment at meetings towards the home and some family members within the home.” — STAFF ASSISTANT

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Councils use these methods of communication to promote involvement in the life at the home. As shown in Figure 8, staff assistants and administrators thought that the Family Council is most involved in quality improvement (46%, N= 164) and in education for families (45%, N= 160). Participants in the family survey identified these same two areas.

**Figure 8: Family Council Involvement in Life at the Home**



Staff assistants and administrators stated the various resources that are available to the Family Council.

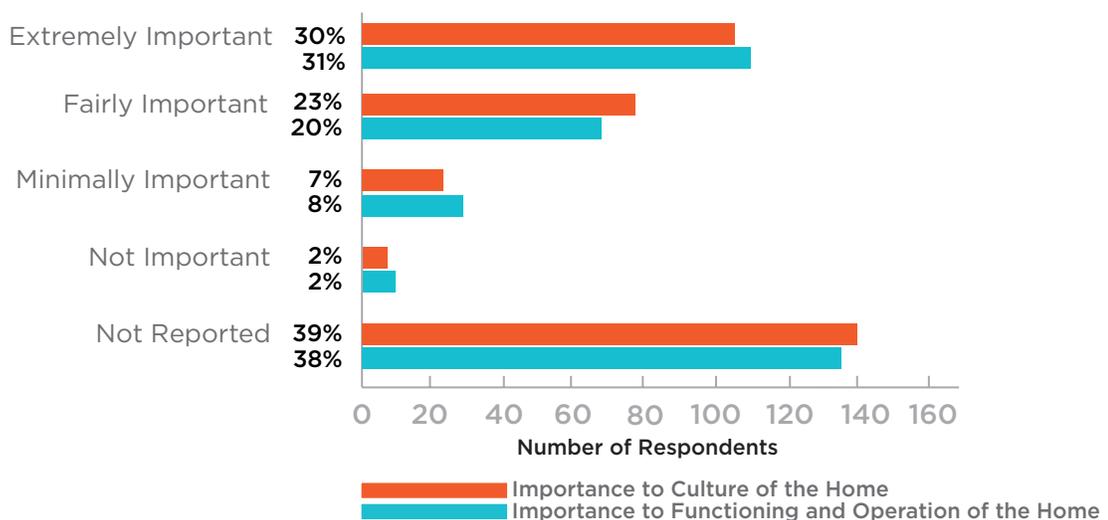
- 54% (N= 192) Staff time
- 26% (N= 93) Volunteer time
- 15% (N= 54) Money

Only 15% (N= 53) of staff assistants and administrators said that the Family Council has an operating budget; 43% (N= 152) said they do not have one and 42% (N= 148) did not respond to the question.

## FAMILY COUNCIL IMPACT

The Family Council's impact on the culture, functioning and operation of the home is mostly cited as important (Figure 9). However, a large proportion of respondents chose not to answer this question.

**Figure 9: Perceived Importance of Family Council**



Staff assistants and administrators who stated that the Family Council is important to the home's functioning and operation said that they felt that way because the council provides valuable input, is accountable, and has a follow-up mechanism that allows for positive change in how residents are cared for.

Those who reported that the council is important to the culture within the home said that the council provides an opportunity for family members to share their thoughts and concerns; most importantly, it supports the betterment and quality of life of all residents, not just a selected few. The council promotes "customer satisfaction," shapes the culture and values within the home and in other homes, and provides strategic direction that helps to set annual goals.

Administrators mentioned that the council fosters a culture of transparency, which is crucial to building and keeping family members' trust.

The few staff assistants who thought that the council is minimally important to the functioning, operation and culture of the home said so because of continually changing membership, and because of conflict that can arise amongst participating residents.

Some administrators said that most families prefer to deal directly with staff and management concerning their loved one, rather than through a council.

Administrators felt that sometimes it is difficult to meaningfully engage with the Family Council because the members are not very involved.

In particular, administrators from small and medium homes made it clear that regardless of whether or not there is a Family Council venue, the families will find a way to have a voice and be involved.

As a result of having a Family Council, staff assistants and administrators have seen changes to programs, operations and infrastructure.

“Provides a venue for family and friends to offer suggestions and improvements for home-wide care issues with a clear follow-up mechanism.”

– STAFF ASSISTANT

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“A Family Council can send a positive message out about the home and culturally, this can have a fairly important impact on other family members.”

– ADMINISTRATOR

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“Our transparency with family allows us to have open communication that keeps us moving in the same direction for resident care improvements.”

– ADMINISTRATOR

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- Programs
  - Funding for new activities
  - Sunday afternoon entertainment
  - Christmas party for families and grandchildren
  - Started Family Council Day
  - Family expo (brought in vendors for education)
  - Staff recognition program
  - Fundraising (writing and selling cookbooks)
  
- Operations
  - Changes to the food and nutritional menu
  - Inclusion of Family Council in bi-monthly newsletter
  - Emailed program information to families to keep them informed
  - Brochures for new members
  - Name tags for staff
  - Changes to visiting hours and policies
  - Engagement in Residents' Council activities
  - Fundraised for iPad technology
  - Created a family satisfaction survey
  - Family Council representation on board of directors
  - Introduced Wi-Fi
  - More family involvement in planning resident care

“The current Family Council is not particularly independent or active in programming. However I think the existence of a Family Council is important to many families in providing a venue for peer support and education. The fluid nature of the membership makes this difficult.”

— STAFF ASSISTANT

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“Most residents and family members would rather deal directly with staff and management.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

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“Would be more important if only current family members were involved. Current Chair has no direct link to home and is more involved in bringing forward his concerns as a member of the Ontario Coalition.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

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- Infrastructure /Renovations
  - Parking lot expansion
  - Bus shelter in front of the home (Family Council advocated with the City)
  - New walkway
  - Improved landscaping
  - Installing more automatic doors on residents' private balconies

Five per cent (N= 11) of administrators said that nothing has changed because of the council. Only 30% (N= 105) of staff assistants and administrators thought that having the Family Council in the home improved the relationship between residents and staff; 8% (N= 27) did not think it helped, 22% (N= 79) were neutral and 40% (N= 142) did not respond to the question.

The reason why many staff assistants and administrators said that the council improves the relationship between staff and residents is that they felt that families play an active role in the life of the home: they advocate on behalf of the residents, they try to explain things to staff—forming relationships on behalf of their resident(s)—and they keep the home accountable.

They also said that some type of formal mechanism of communication between staff and residents is appreciated—the council helps the staff to be professional, to maintain appropriate boundaries with residents.

“Whether the venue is there or not, the same families would find a way to be involved.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

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“Family Council presence in the Home keeps us performing well in our work; it offers a need to be professional and maintain our boundaries.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

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“We have had major challenges finding family members willing to sit on the Family Council. It hasn't met for a long time because nobody is interested in joining it. The current Chair and most of the members are loved ones of former residents rather than current residents. Despite our best efforts to promote the Family Council we just can't get people to join it.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

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Staff assistants and administrators who said that the council does not improve the relationship, or who felt neutral about the relationship, said the Family Council either does not have enough members to have an impact, or has too much turnover, or has an adversarial relationship with the home. Some staff assistants and administrators described the Family Councils as being overly critical, of not having a clear role and function, or being stuck on individual concerns.

“Our current Family Council is adversarial, often causing conflict with staff when unnecessary or overstepping their roles and responsibilities. The council needs stronger leaders to define their roles or FC has been known to skip proper communication pathways and go directly to the CEO.” — Staff assistant

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