

## Inside Toronto

# Mon Sheong starts \$150 million drive to build three nursing homes

**New facilities would add 600 long-term care beds**

COMMUNITY 05:00 AM by [Mike Adler](#) Scarborough Mirror



Mon Sheong Foundation CEO Stephanie Wong and Chairperson Tim Kwan, seen at a Jan. 30 press conference in Scarborough, say the organization hopes to build 600 more long-term-care beds in Greater Toronto in the next 10 years. - Mike Adler/Metroland

Imagine 17 persons waiting for the same nursing home bed, and you'll understand the challenge for the Mon Sheong Foundation.

The charity housing Chinese seniors announced Jan. 30 it plans to build three new long-term care facilities with a total of 600 beds in the GTA over the next 10 years.

That will cost \$150 million, but the number of Chinese seniors in the GTA is rising fast, and by Mon Sheong's count there's only 3,500 nursing home beds offering culturally appropriate care.

"We are facing a critical shortage of beds," Frank Chau, a special adviser to the charity's board, said at a news conference at Mon Sheong's Scarborough nursing home.

Founded in 1964, the charity saw this surge in potential clients coming. It built 1,200 assisted living apartments for seniors in Scarborough, Markham and Richmond Hill, and opened adult day programs and private care centres to serve seniors before they need nursing homes.

But an estimated 20,000 Chinese seniors in the GTA aren't mobile and need round-the-clock care.

Mon Sheong is proud of its high standards, but better care means longer waiting lists because nursing home residents live longer, said Chau.

In the last decade, the charity's nursing home waiting list jumped from 1,500 to 4,500 last November. That's like 10 persons waiting for each bed Mon Sheong has, and average waits are five to eight years.

In a crisis, people might jump the queue, but as always the province's local health integration networks decide who's eligible.

"In some cases we have people waiting for 12 years," said Mon Sheong CEO Stephanie Wong.

Separately, the Scarborough location, with 160 beds, has the longest list — 17.5 people for each.

That's why Mon Sheong is making a huge commitment to build three new nursing homes with 200 beds each, Wong said.

"The government is not giving any money to help build. And to borrow money is not easy."

The charity won't announce potential locations for nursing homes until they're approved by the province, which promised to create 5,000 new nursing home beds by 2022.

Scarborough-Agincourt MPP Soo Wong said she wants more details. "We want to find ways to keep seniors at home as long as possible," she added.