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Response to Financial Post

Re: [A looming housing affordability crisis is poised to hit seniors across Canada](#)

As CEO of the Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA) I read with keen interest Naomi Powell's article published May 13.

We are grateful to Powell for highlighting the housing crisis in our seniors' population.

The system we have today needs vast improvement. We need to **stop** pushing seniors into "beds." Instead, we need to think bigger and provide a solution that supports choice and empowers each senior to live the way they want, need and deserve.

Here's what we know – a 2018 poll conducted by DART Insight and Communications for ORCA clearly shows that 79 per cent of Canadians worry about having enough money to pay for their care when they need it; while 71 per cent worry about being a burden on their family if they can't look after themselves. Ninety-four per cent of Canadians agreed that social isolation is associated with higher health risks and 91 per cent of Canadians agreed that they do not want to be socially isolated in their later years.

That's why ORCA has been championing what we call a [Senior Services Benefit](#) – a monthly allowance – sent directly to the senior to help pay for housing and care needs as they choose. It's designed to alleviate financial pressures placed on seniors and would empower them to stay in the community – in a congregate setting where they can take advantage of clustered supportive services, in their own home, or wherever they choose to live and thrive.

It's an approach that – helps keep seniors out of hospital, out of long-term care – and in the place they choose to be. It ensures that the seniors continue to decide how and when they'll receive the supports they need to remain independent, longer.

It's so simple.

Other countries are already using this kind of self-directed care model – why aren't we?

Laurie Johnston, CEO, ORCA
seniorservicesbenefit.ca

