LEGISLATING HOME: THE IMPACT OF THE REGULATION OF SMALL HOUSE SETTINGS FOR LONG TERM CARE RESIDENTS IN NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

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ABSTRACT

In May 2006, the Province of Nova Scotia, Canada announced a Continuing Care Strategy (CCS) in which issues of home care and long term care were addressed. As a result of the CCS, the Provincial government has built 11 new LTC facilities to support the vision of “living well in a place you can call home” (CCS, 2006). A key feature within the guidelines is that all of the new LTC facilities be built in the model of the small house (SH) community, with multiple households (cottages) of 12-15 residents each. In order to gain a better understanding of the implications of a LTC system where resident choice and empowerment are provided for and regulated by legislated policy, a qualitative case study was conducted in early 2012 in two LTC facilities in Nova Scotia. Through place theory and an ecological theoretical framework, the key themes which emerged included the need for shared goals, expectations and consistency in leadership; frontline staff empowerment through the strength of teamwork; and the balance of choice, risk and autonomy for residents in the setting. The physical environment had a direct impact on the social environment in the communities and the while the actuality of ‘home’ was a very personal distinction based on the history and past preferences of each resident, the shared themes between the two study communities related to the core elements of LTC: the need for and the provision of care.