

OHCA welcomes Health Council of Canada Report

June 9, 2008:- The Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA) welcomes the Health Council's report "*Rekindling Reform, Health Care Renewal in Canada, 2003-2008*" released last week. The light that this report shines on the importance of home and community care across the country serves to remind all Canadians about this vital sector of our health care system.

From the Ontario perspective, the OHCA is pleased to note the expansion of home and community care as integral to Ontario's health care transformation agenda. Structural and funding initiatives have been undertaken to respond to the needs of our aging population. Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) have been aligned to Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) in order to enable improved care for Ontarians. Recent funding announcements, such as the Aging at Home Strategy announced in the fall of 2007, and strategies to address Emergency Department congestion, have included multi-faceted solutions that include home and community care. Most recently, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) has increased its commitment to the growing need for short-term flexible home care by making changes to the home care service guidelines so that more Ontarians 'on the fringe', who need a little extra support to be at home, can be accommodated.

Through a number of inter-professional collaboration incentives, Ontario has undertaken to build a well resourced proactive primary care system that optimizes the contribution of the entire home and community health care team (family physicians, community pharmacists, nurses, therapists, personal, home and mental health support, and palliative expertise).

Attention has been paid to home care improvements in Ontario. However, as in other jurisdictions,, there is much more work to do. Continued investments need to be made so that Ontarians of all ages, can remain independent at home for as long as possible. Expanded home and community care programs need to be based on evidence and supported by research. Technology investments that enable improved interprofessional collaboration and more efficient use of health care personnel is a pressing need. Policies and resources must be directed toward ensuring that the members of the home care team are truly integrated within the broader health and social system and are fully resourced, so they can mitigate the risk factors for loss of independence in order to make the dream of living at home, even with significant challenges, a true reality for all Ontarians.

OHCA will continue to work with all the health system partners to enable the realization of the commitments envisioned in the health accord which ultimately are about ensuring "the right care at the right place by the right person" and increasing confidence in one of our most precious assets - our health care system.

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About OHCA

The OHCA, *the voice of home care in Ontario*, is a membership association representing providers of quality home care services from across Ontario. OHCA is dedicated to promoting the growth and development of the home and community health care sector by helping to shape health care policy, supporting members to excel, and being a leading source of information on home and community care. OHCA members are accredited through Accreditation Canada and/or the International Standards Association (ISO).



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For the latest in news and information about the home care sector in Ontario, subscribe to the Ontario Home Care Association's 'House Call' at www.homecareontario.ca.