

OHCA Position Statement

Rehabilitation Services in Home & Community Care

The Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA) advocates for the creation of a strong, reliable and accessible home care system that fully supports Ontarians who wish to remain independent and receive care at home. An effective health care system is only realized when all members of the team are appropriately integrated and utilized to deliver care.

OHCA recognizes and values the important contribution that rehabilitation services make to home and community care. Rehabilitation professionals collaborate with individuals of all ages to facilitate their independence and to achieve greater quality of life. Rehabilitation professionals working in the community (at home, in the workplace, at school or in residential care homes) help to promote better health and to support individuals living with life-long illnesses and health challenges, thereby reducing admission and readmission rates to acute care and helping to resolve pressure points in the system.¹

As members of the health care team, rehabilitation professionals collaborate with team members to provide client information, advice and direction, thus contributing to more effective use of system resources and to the achievement of greater system integration.

In home and community care, traditionally five professional groups comprise the rehabilitation therapies - *physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, speech language pathology and dietetics*. Within their regulated scope of practice, all rehabilitation professionals consult, assess, treat and provide teaching and support to individuals /caregivers in their homes. The goal of therapy intervention is to facilitate optimal function and independence thereby contributing to an enhanced quality of life for Ontarians.

OHCA believes that a well resourced home care system that includes rehabilitation services can make significant contributions to Ontario's health priorities. Some examples of the important role of the rehabilitation professional to the home health care team include:

Hip & Knee Replacements - Rehabilitation professionals help to improve a person's ability to function and mobilize independently pre- and post-operatively so that time in the acute care setting is kept to a minimum and recovery to self care is expedited.

Stroke Recovery - Rehabilitation therapists help individuals restore function and independence, mobilize, learn self-care and overcome dysphagia and communication barriers. Through the recommendation of proper equipment and the provision of

¹ OHA, Optimizing the role of CCC and Rehabilitation in the Transformation of the Health Care Delivery System, May 2006: 14

ongoing therapy programs to build muscle strength and exercise tolerance, conserve energy, simplify work and complete tasks, rehabilitation professionals play an important role in maximizing individual capacity and achieving community re-integration.

Palliative and End-of-Life Care – As advocates and resources to individuals at end-of-life and their families/caregivers, rehabilitation professionals provide support and guidance to help these individuals maintain their independence as long as possible and achieve an enhanced Quality of Life and a peaceful death at home.

Children’s Treatment – By providing early intervention, rehabilitation professionals help children to overcome speech, communication, cognitive, fine and gross motor and other physical challenges that, if left unattended, could prevent these children from maximizing their potential.

Chronic Disease Management – Coping with nutritional requirements, the physical and emotional challenges of chronic disease, and the loss of function and independence can be mitigated by the proactive intervention of rehabilitation professionals.

The OHCA believes that rehabilitation professionals are important members of the health care team. Successful teams will recognize the role and value of these professionals and work together to ensure their appropriate involvement in supporting people to live independently in their community with an improved quality of life. Ensuring the right care by the right provider in the right place and always as close to home as possible is essential to an effective health care system.

In the coming months please look for more in-depth discussion papers from OHCA on the rehabilitation professional’s role in the “Transformation Agenda”.

The OHCA, *the voice of home care in Ontario*, represents Canadian home care service organizations that deliver quality home care to Ontarians throughout the province. The OHCA advocates for a strong, dependable and accessible home care system for Ontarians. OHCA members are accredited through the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation (CCHSA) or the International Standards Association (ISO).

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