

OHCA Position Statement

The Role of Home Care in Chronic Disease Prevention & Management

An effective health care system for the 21st century focuses on health promotion and illness prevention as much as it does treatment. This outcome will be achieved when all members of the health care team are appropriately integrated and utilized to deliver care. The Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA) advocates for the creation of a strong, reliable and accessible home care system which fully supports Ontarians to remain independent at home for as long as possible. Home care must therefore become more actively engaged in activities that address the prevention and management of chronic disease.

The incidence of chronic disease is increasing dramatically (in Ontario almost two-thirds of Ontarians over the age of 45 have a chronic condition)¹ and forcing a shift in our approach to health care. Recognizing that chronic illness is experienced in the community, it makes sense that home care become more actively involved in health strategies that prevent or delay deterioration. As demonstrated in the Canadian Home Care Association's *National Partnership Project*², OHCA believes that home care's mandate and concomitant funding should be expanded to address the needs of those with chronic disease. In so doing, not only can home care better serve those traditionally referred, but it can help pre-empt those who would need services at a later time.³

OHCA believes that by drawing on the expert knowledge of home and community resources and applying strategies to support independence, individuals with chronic disease can be positioned to self-manage their condition effectively and responsibly.

By increasing consumer access to a 'virtual' team in the home - *physicians, nurses, therapists, personal support workers, case managers, community pharmacists and required medications, medical equipment*

¹ MOHLTC presentation 2006

² Canadian Home Care Association, 2006. [Partnership in Practice](http://cdnhomecare.ca/national_partner/final_report.php?npp=2)
http://cdnhomecare.ca/national_partner/final_report.php?npp=2

³ Ibid

and supplies - individuals can be supported to maintain their health despite the downward trajectory of their chronic illness. This virtual team must be aligned and committed to care pathways that draw on the expertise of the right health care professional at the right team across the health care continuum. Based on evidence informed clinical guidelines, the care pathway identifies multiple opportunities for health promotion and illness prevention and also promotes consistency amongst the team thereby instilling consumer confidence in the health system, and as importantly, improving clinical outcomes and quality of life for individuals.

Further, by strengthening the home and community team through enhanced communication systems and strategies to achieve productive collaboration, many of the inefficiencies and costly redundancies of the health care silos can be eliminated.

As Ontario's health care system evolves and shifts under the leadership of the LHINs, there is an opportunity to achieve improved health and enhanced client outcomes by acknowledging the valuable contribution of home care in chronic disease management.

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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