

Progress and Innovation in Home Care in Ontario

For over a decade, the government of Ontario and health care stakeholders have been engaged in a continuous process of improvement as the system transforms to respond to the needs of an aging population. Health system partners have been actively pursuing strategies to respond to the needs of Ontarians who want to receive care at home and for whom the home is the best venue for their care.

The Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA) is proud to have been part of the responsive and innovative strategies that have been tested and implemented in order to build on a history of service excellence. In Ontario, home care service providers are highly motivated to invest and to stimulate their organizations to achieve outstanding performance through the adoption of new and innovative technology applications. Initiatives include:

- Telephony systems that facilitate client responsiveness and staff safety
- GPS Systems that achieve travel efficiency
- Digital Wound Photography that improve access to specialists
- Electronic Point of Care documentation that increase accuracy and timeliness of information exchange
- Tele-monitoring to improve responsiveness to early symptoms.

Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skilful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.

Willa A. Foster

In partnership with the Ontario Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) measuring and reporting quality is now integrated to all aspects of care delivery. For example, CCAC and key home and community care providers including the OHCA have created:

- Board Quality Committees
- Annual quality improvement plans
- Formal client complaint and resolution processes
- A common client satisfaction survey
- Employee satisfaction surveys and strategies to maximize staff retention
- Relationships with Health Quality Ontario (HQO) to provide the public with information on a number of home care quality indicators that are reported annually; and to enable benchmarking of performance as essential to knowledge translation.

.....Always putting the patient first will drive the quality of our system, lead to better value for the money we spend, and ensure the excellent healthcare we enjoy today.

*Minister Matthews
April 2010*

All health system stakeholders have embraced the *Excellent Care for All* Act introduced by the government of Ontario and unanimously approved by all parties. The intent is to strengthen accountability for quality and reinforce principles of organizing care around the individual. All organizations are embracing this Act as a cohesive next step in building the best health care system and realizing Ontario's vision for "a health care system that helps keep people healthy, gets

them good care when they are sick, and will be there for our children and grandchildren.” The measures within the Act direct that best evidence and standards of care are better linked to ensure the efficient use of resources and achieve value for the individuals served.

Increasing numbers of Ontarians are benefiting from the province’s home and community care system which is so important to enabling early discharge from hospital and providing an alternative to long-term care homes. But everyone would agree that much more needs to be done. A number of government supported initiatives such as *Home First*, *Safe at Home*, *Integrated Client Care Project* and *Aging at Home* are showing promising results that will enable greater numbers of people with complex conditions to remain at home. The skills and commitment of frontline practitioners make a difference every day with every client.

Quality is everyone’s responsibility.
— W. Edwards Deming

For the overwhelming majority who prefer to remain in their community, home care service is more desirable, cost effective and health effective. The activities of the past ten years have been directed at providing more Ontarians with flexibility and independence to stay at home maintaining their valuable contributions to communities and families. The need and demands on the health system continue to challenge the pace of change in health care. However, by continuing the journey and ‘tipping the balance’ to the home and community sector and improving the integration with health and social system partners the sustainability of the whole health system will be more readily achieved. The OHCA, and all other health system partners, are working toward the shared vision of care ensuring that Ontarians confidently can receive “the right care at right time in the right place”.

About Ontario Home Care Association (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 members represent an estimated 25,000 staff collectively serving 300,000 Ontarians per year. OHCA works with families as integral partners in the delivery of home care services and as such estimates that 1.2 million Ontarians are impacted by members. 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, CARF, and/or registered with the International Standards Association (ISO).

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