

July 2, 2009

Dear Editor:

RE: Crisis on the doorstep, Pauline Tam, June 28, 2009

Ontario's growing, active senior population is a testament to a progressive health care system and to our success as a society. One of the greatest health care priorities facing our province is the need for enough health care workers to respond to the increasing numbers of seniors wishing to live and age independently in their own homes.

Given the serious human resource challenges occurring across the entire health care system, it is simplistic to suggest that the process for procuring home care services in Ontario is the direct cause of the human resource issues in home care. Shortages of health and social care professionals have been identified in the Canadian Home Care Association's 2008 "Portraits of Home Care in Canada" as a major concern in every jurisdiction across the country, regardless of home care delivery model.

A 2008 Ontario Home Care Association Survey conducted in collaboration with McDowall Associates, a firm specializing in compensation issues, refutes Tam's anecdotal evidence on wages. Additionally, data in the same year showed 48-58% of home care staff with a tenure of up to three years and another 18% -24% of up to five years with their employer.

Across Canada, we are all challenged by current demographics to attract our youth to careers in health where the needs are 24 x 7 and the skills, knowledge and abilities are unique. It takes a special kind of person to work in health care. The OHCA is currently working with other home care associations to address broader HR issues and celebrates the fine men and women throughout the system who work to deliver innovative solutions to meet the growing demand.

Susan D. VanderBent, MHSc, CHE
Executive Director
Ontario Home Care Association
P.O. Box 68018, Blakely RPO
Hamilton, Ontario L8M 3M7
Phone: (905) 543-9474
Email: suevan@homecareontario.ca