

Home Care is the Solution

Hamilton, November 23, 2009 - Ontario's health care transformation is intended to ensure that people receive the right service at the right time in the right location by the right provider. In other words, the health system must work together to avoid premature admission to acute or long-term care facilities. It must work collaboratively to treat and discharge patients who require the expertise of the acute care facility.

Keeping Ontarians independent at home for as long as possible is what home care is meant to do. Health system partners agree that home care is vital to sustaining the broader health care system. In Champlain, the system pressures have caused geriatricians and nurses to speak out publicly about the need for home care services. They know that people do well and families are able to cope when they are provided the necessary personal support, nursing, and therapy services in their own homes.

Ontario's "aging at home" strategy suggests an awareness of the need for investment in the home and community sector. There have been a number of great programs launched within the community, however, the funding appears to be too little too late. The Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA) believes that there needs to be a better understanding of the mix of resources and care required to sustain healthy, safe aging at home – at a system and at an individual level. Concurrently, there needs to be system wide reallocation of resources; examination of operating processes; and the elimination of duplication at the clinical and administrative levels.

In order to keep seniors, particularly those "at the margins" of facility placement, at home, the health system must demonstrate that community is the priority. Integration must be achieved and technology in home care expedited.

Avoiding premature institutionalization of the elderly ensures that the institutional bed is reserved for those with the greatest need and saves precious health system resources. Home and community care is cost-effective both in the short and long term particularly when it is focused locally on specific populations at risk, such as our frail and vulnerable seniors with loving families who want to care for them at home. Research supports that even small amounts of home care will make a difference in people's lives. Home care is part of the solution. To achieve the goals of the health system, transformative changes must be made to realize the role that a strong and robust home care service plays in maintaining balance in our fragile system of health care.

It is time to stop and course correct to enable the right care not only in Champlain but across the province.

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About the OHCA

The Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA), *the voice of home care in Ontario*, is an organization of home health and social care service providers. Association members deliver nursing care, home support services, personal care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, dietetics, speech language therapy and medical equipment and supplies in the home. Ontario Home Care Association members are contracted by all three levels of government, Community Care Access Centres, insurance companies, institutions, corporations and private individuals. OHCA members are accredited by 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.