

OHCA Response to the 2010 Auditor General Report

December 6, 2010:- The Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA) advocates for a strong, reliable and accessible home care system which fully supports Ontarians to remain independent at home for as long as possible. The Government of Ontario recognizes the importance of the home care sector to supporting individual health needs, managing chronic illness and to assuring broad sustainability of the health care system. This year, the Auditor General of Ontario devoted a chapter of the '2010 Annual Report' to home care services. The Auditor General examined the extent to which the Community Care Access Centres (CCACs), Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), and Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) have mechanisms to:

- meet the needs of people requiring home care services;
- fund services based on client needs and monitor compliance with service requirements to ensure that services are provided equitably and consistently across the province; and
- measure and report on the quality and effectiveness of the services provided in the home.

The OHCA welcomes the Report and agrees that many long standing issues identified in previous audits (2004, 1998) still remain. These include:

- historically based funding methodologies as opposed to needs based funding;
- service level inequities in home care across the province;
- long wait-lists for home care assessments and/or various home care services.

Additionally, notwithstanding increased investments to expedite discharge from hospital and the \$1.1B 'Aging at Home' strategy, the Auditor General found that province-wide, 50% of patients who could have been discharged if home-care services were available, had to wait in hospital for an average of six days for service and only \$45M of Aging at Home Strategy funding flowed to home care through the CCACs.

Recommendations

As the 'voice of home care in Ontario', the OHCA believes that the government of Ontario has the opportunity to make care at home a priority, not only by tipping the balance of care provision to the community, but by establishing the right to receive care at home as a fundamental right of all Ontarians.

The OHCA recommends that the Ontario government:

1. **Institute multi- year funding for CCACs** in order to establish consistent and continuous support for home care services vital to health system transformation (e.g. acute care relief and chronic disease management for people of all ages, aging at home and palliative care). The current 12 month budget cycle during which the CCACs respond to unexpected demand surges (e.g. H1N1) often leads to withdrawal of care for people during the last quarter of the fiscal year and upsets the equilibrium of the health care sector.
2. **Implement health allocation based funding model (HBAM)** where funding follows the individual across the continuum of care and pilot financial analysis of the continuum of health care in order to establish guidelines for the appropriate balance of public funds to enable Ontarians of all ages to live and age successfully in their own homes and communities.



3. **Establish a Centre For Quality and Research in Home Care** in order to understand the best mix of services, programs and settings to achieve the greatest health outcomes for Ontarians.
4. **Resume the fair, transparent procurement process** that ensures due diligence with tax-payer funds selecting service providers offering highest quality home care for best cost. The OHCA believes that the interests of home care clients are best served through such an objective process conducted by the CCACs— a process that is driven by evidence and demonstrates “value for health care dollars”.
5. **Support the family caregiver’s ability to privately purchase** additional home care services by exempting them from additional taxes related to those services.

Home care is vital to supporting Ontarians as they age to remain independent at home maintaining their valuable contribution to communities and families. For the overwhelming majority who prefer to remain in their community, home care service is more desirable, cost effective and health effective. By entitling Ontarians to home care, the government will be signaling to all stakeholders the importance of ‘tipping the balance’ to the home and community sector.

About the 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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