ONTARIO HOME CARE ASSOCIATION
BRINGING HEALTH CARE HOME

Ontario Home Care Association comments on Ontario Stroke Evaluation Report 2011

June 21, 2011 The Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA) commends the authors of the *Ontario Stroke Evaluation Report 2011: Improving System Efficiency by Implementing Stroke Best Practices,* released yesterday. The report is a comprehensive analysis of stroke care in Ontario describing the progress of stroke management since the inception of the stroke strategy in 2000.

While improvements within the system of care are noted, this report adds to the many that have identified the need for increased home care, particularly in rehabilitation services, and for consistency across Community Care Access Centres (CCACs). Others recently identifying the need include:

- The Auditor General of Ontario in the 2010 Report
- Analysis by the Ontario Home Care Research and Knowledge Exchange Chair and infoRehab
- OHCA's research showing a decline in therapy and nursing services

Research highlights the value of rehabilitation services to expedite discharge from acute care, and reduce readmission rates; the efficacy of nursing visits to keeping individuals at home; and the impact of a small amount of personal and community support to sustaining independence of the elderly. Effective stroke rehab requires a multidisciplinary team, typically with intensive therapy support. A recent study in Ontario by Markle-Reid et al showed greater improvements in quality of life for stroke survivors using a specialized inter-professional team approach to community-based rehabilitation compared to usual home care.

OHCA shares the concerns that rehabilitation support services provided to home care clients in Ontario are insufficient. Providing quality health care to Ontarians is a fundamental principle on which the government of Ontario bases health care policy development. The evidence for improved rehabilitation care at home post stroke is compelling. It is time for action. As the Report authors suggest, there should be provincial standards for community- based rehabilitation. OHCA commits to working with the system partners to move forward on this important priority.

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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 to individuals of all ages. OHCA members are contracted by all three levels of government, Community Care Access Centres, insurance companies, institutions, corporations and private individuals. OHCA members are accredited through the Accreditation Canada and/or the International Standards Association (ISO).

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