
Attention News/Health Editors:

Home and Community Care Under Severe Strain

TORONTO, July 31 /CNW/ - The Boards of the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) and the Ontario Home Health Care Providers' Association (OHHCPA) represent all direct service providers of CCAC-contracted home and community care services, both for-profit and not-for-profit, in the province of Ontario. Recent developments in the home and community care sector reinforce our on-going and joint concern about the long-term stability of the system and the impact on our ability to deliver high quality client care.

The home care system is a necessary and integral part of the larger health care system. Over 410,000 Ontarians depend on it to stay in their homes and maintain their independence for as long as possible. They depend on it to leave hospital or to receive rehabilitation following an acute care admission, however volumes and services are still being cut to meet funding constraints imposed on the sector. Virtually no organization has come close to getting the estimated number of visits. As a result, all home and community care organizations have had to make significant staffing cuts over the past months to address changes in service requirements by the CCACs. The situation for both clients and service providers grows more serious by the day.

OCSA and OHHCPA released a joint paper in 2001, "Building a High Performance Home and Community Care System in Ontario" calling on government to honour its commitment to strengthen the funding for this sector. Both OCSA and OHHCPA have also called for strong, consistent and province-wide standards regarding the process of contract management. Increased funding, consistent standards and a strong contract management process would improve the state of home and community care, stabilize the system and improve services for clients. It is imperative to restore the confidence of Ontario consumers and stakeholders in a functional home and community care system that will be there for people when it is needed.

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