

Home Care Ontario Advocacy: *Preventing the Underground Economy in Home Care*

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Kijiji Ad
*copied directly from
the web*

Caregiver Wanted/Needed
Ottawa, Ontario

PSW Overnights
Some Times During The Day
Seeking Elder Care Provider

■ Similar Ads are on Craigslist

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Most Ontarians do not know that there is a thriving underground economy (or black market): home care.

Looking for Care

Hi there my name is Diane . I'm seeking an elder care provider working in Ottawa, Ontario. I'm planning to find a passionate person with availability.

Services And Training:

Our family is in need of physical therapy, and support. Ideally, you have a drivers license. Our best-possible service provider would be a licensed practical nurse although it is not necessary to work with us.

Notes On Availability:

We can likely accommodate other availability.

Please Reach Out:

Shoot me a message and expect a response within 1 day.

Canadian or Philippines worker.

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Individuals (like Diane in this ad) are seeking 'a licensed practical nurse' and hopes to seek a 'passionate person' with availability.

Ad like this one appear everyday on Kijiji and Craigslist. In fact, some of our members will say that their biggest competitor is the underground market.

Book Jane:
Uber-type
technology company

Home Care Organization Conversation with a Sales Rep:

- Online staffing company
- 8000 caregivers at 500 locations
- Self-schedule from a web-view app
- Looking to partner with agencies



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This is scary.

Book Jane wants access to staff of legitimate organizations.

No quality checks are done, no credentials are checked, no previous records of work are requested, no insurance is offered

No face-to-face interviews with care providers are undertaken – care providers simply sign up on line through an app and start receiving bookings.

Why do we have this problem?

The publicly-funded system is stretched

- Ontarians are looking for additional care by:
 - retaining home care services privately for themselves or their loved ones - paying cash for these services
 - turning to online marketplaces such as Kijiji or Craigslist
- In this underground economy/black market, patients and families are extremely vulnerable



<https://toronto.craigslist.org/personal-support-worker>

What is Home Care Ontario doing?

- **Advocating to government to create a *Consumer Protection Campaign*** that will:
 - **inform Ontarians** about the very real dangers (risks and responsibilities) of hiring unqualified and poorly trained caregivers to look after their loved ones.
 - encourage and **support Ontarians** to seek private care from **reputable organizations** which follow proper HHR protocols and practices
- **Working with:**
 - Minister of Seniors and Accessibility
 - Ministry of Health
 - Ministry of Labour
 - Political and senior government staff

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Several years ago the Ministry of Labour undertook a “Roofing/Roofer Campaign”

The goal was to increase the homeowner’s awareness of the risks of hiring unlicensed roofers (without proper training, equipment & insurance) and educate them about the underground economy.

When a person searched google/Kijiji, various ad messages would pop up to direct homeowners to MOL webpage filled with useful tips and tools.

This campaign was extremely successful.

What is our message?

- Serious risks are associated with hiring non-qualified caregivers.
- The growing need to ensure Ontarians understand the importance of hiring qualified and well-trained caregivers
- Need to ensure that:
 - Fair labour practices are followed
 - Quality health care services are delivered
 - Provincial tax revenue base protected

How are we doing this?

Objectives

- **Raise awareness** about the importance of hiring qualified and properly trained caregivers
- Help Ontarians understand **how to choose** trained, qualified and accredited caregivers
- Explain the role care providers have in **ensuring accreditation and training**
- Ensure **tax-fairness and an even playing field** for workers that are following labour guidelines
- **Outline the rights and responsibilities** Ontarians have when purchasing home care privately to make a well-informed decision



Elements of the Proposed Campaign

- **Facilitate focus groups** to understand what drives individuals to hire caregivers that do not have proper training
- **Develop campaign strategy**, key messages, advertising based on focus group findings
- **Design website** that provides accurate and timely information to Ontarians seeking to privately retain home care
- **Create online ads** appearing in targeted marketplaces such as Kijiji, Craigslist and Google when the relevant search words are typed – i.e. looking for someone to take of my father/mother

Elements of the Proposed Digital Media Campaign

- **Audio** news releases 
- **Facebook posts**, tweets promoting the campaign 
- Presence at **health care and caregiver events** to share information and answer questions 
- Enhanced campaign could include a **multi-lingual webpage** as well as translated advertising. 

When will this happen?

Soon!

- Government is very receptive and understands the concerns of consumers and patients
- Association is advocating with Ministries of Seniors & Accessibility, Health and Labour
- Meetings continue with all Ministries – Ministers and senior staff

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The Association is also in conversations with government Ministries to ask for a tax credit on privately purchased care.

This will:

- Encourage Ontarians to purchase care from reputable, legitimate providers that adhere to safe & responsible health human resource, occupational safety and accreditation standards
- Deter the growing and dangerous grey market/underground economy

All Home Care Ontario members and Ontarians will benefit from this Campaign.