



April 18, 2016

The Hon. Dr. Eric Hoskins  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
80 Grosvenor St., 10th Floor,  
Hepburn Block  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Hoskins:

On behalf of the Board of Home Care Ontario, I am writing to share advice on behalf of Home Care Ontario members regarding the promised federal funding for home care. Our members are proud of the work that has been undertaken by the Ontario government to transform the health care system to one that is home-based, patient-centred and provides value.

Home Care Ontario expects that the promised \$3B from the federal government will be prorated to population and anticipate that Ontario, with approximately 33% of the country's populace, would receive at least \$990M. This investment provides the opportunity for the provincial government to dramatically change the trajectory of health care delivery in the province and get ahead of the perpetual shortfall in meeting the demands generated by present demographics. The government should maintain the current home care funding course and invest the new federal money to shift the ratio of home care as a percentage of the total health care budget. The investment could increase the share of home care by as much as 1.5% creating a health care legacy that will benefit Ontarians for generations to come.

The funds need to be directed to the frontline in order to increase **the amount** and **quality** of care in the home. Specifically funding needs to be directed as follows:

**Patient Care**

1. For first dollar coverage for end-of-life care needs so that families truly have the option to keep a loved one at home without having to compromise of services and supplies.
2. For seniors who are "on the fringe" of crisis and/or admission to facility based care and for whom funding has not been available because of the increasing acuity and complexity of patients receiving publicly funded home care services (OACCAC). Research has demonstrated the positive impact on cost and quality of life when that is achieved through investment in home care for the frail elderly with longer term, lower acuity needs (Valuing Home and Community Care, Boston Consulting Group).
3. For family caregivers who are vital to the success and sustainability of Ontario's home care program. Given the reliance on families, it is vital that Ontarians understand what

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they can expect. Providers need information to adequately prepare their patients for transitions in care. Families are entitled to understand the full range of services that are available prior to making life-altering decisions such as initiating admission to a long-term care facility. They need to be prepared and provided with respite relief for the emotional, physical, mental and financial toll that prolonged caregiving may have.

### ***Caregivers – Paid and Unpaid***

Investment in home care is not only required to keep pace with demand as the system increasingly shifts to the community, but also to compensate and support the clinicians who make it possible for Ontarians to remain at home. Home Care Providers have been harshly impacted by cost containment strategies over the past decade. Ontario must invest in competitive compensation packages, continuing education, quality improvement and research for the home care system.

Families, the unpaid partners in care, are entitled to an honest conversation with the health care team in order to understand a loved one's care needs, what the system can afford and alternative options. All health care providers in the system (family and specialist physicians, hospital staff, long term care, retirement homes, CHCs and public health) should be able to provide information about services that support government funded delivery, including the provision of private home care service.

The promised funds by the federal government will serve as a catalyst to a new health care funding structure that has never before been seen in the province. It is a significant moment in and has the potential to achieve a monumental and historic shift for the sector and the Ontarians relying on the system.

Home Care Ontario commits to working with the government to leverage this opportunity to its fullest potential.

Sincerely,



Sue VanderBent  
CEO