

## **Home Care Ontario Applauds Government for Increasing Access to Service Dogs for Kids with Special Needs-New Bill will support kids with special needs, help keep them in the classroom**

October 31, 2018 (TORONTO): Home Care Ontario, *the voice of home care in Ontario*<sup>TM</sup>, is applauding the government's new bill that supports children with special needs, including those with autism, and makes it easier to have service dogs with them in school to aid in their therapy and help keep them in the classroom.

"This is great news and Home Care Ontario fully supports this bill as it means children with special needs have access to service dogs where and when they need them," said Sue VanderBent, CEO, Home Care Ontario. "Our members and their dedicated therapists see firsthand the difference having a service dog can make in terms of both a child's therapy, and being able to stay in the classroom and remain part of the school community."

Members of Home Care Ontario have provided supports to children with special needs, including those with autism, for over three decades through the School Health Support Program. A key pillar of this program is providing therapy to children directly in the classroom to minimize any disruptions to their education and school experience. The proposed bill will help further support that mandate by ensuring a consistent policy for service dogs in all school boards; easing stress on families and ultimately helping children with special needs succeed.

"A consistent policy across the province is the right thing to do," concluded VanderBent. "This bill will make the process simple for all families, and allow the parents, teachers and therapists of children with special needs to spend less time navigating individual school board policies and more time making sure these children succeed."

- 30 -

### **For additional information:**

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### **About Home Care Ontario**

Home Care Ontario, *the voice of home care in Ontario*<sup>TM</sup>, is a member-based organization with a mandate to promote growth and development of the home care sector through advocacy, knowledge transfer, and member service. Home Care Ontario members include those engaged in and/or supportive of home-based health care. In Ontario, service provider organizations are responsible for providing 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. An estimated 58 million hours of publicly and privately purchased home care service is provided annually across the province.