

The Time For Home Care Investment Is Now

Ontarians are committed to ensuring access to high-quality services across the health care continuum. Today, the demographic certainty of the aging population necessitates greater home-based care. The 2013 budget promise of additional home care investment is therefore very good news.

Over the past decade, there has been a growing recognition that a robust home care system is a fundamental pillar of the health care system. All three political parties and major stakeholders in the health care system have publicly supported the future growth of a system that provides more care for Ontarians in their homes.

The 2013 budget commitment will result in an additional one percent, \$700 million, for home and community care by 2015-16 (compared to 2012-13).^{1 2} This will control growing health system costs and better position the future health of Ontarians and their caregivers by avoiding unnecessary emergency and hospital visits and/or premature facility admissions.

The factors driving the need for strategic and sustained investment in home care are:

1. Demographics

By 2031, the number of seniors aged 65 and over is projected to more than double from 1.9 million, or 14.2 per cent of population in 2011, to 4.2 million, or 23.6 per cent, by 2036. This demographic shift is underway right now. As soon as 2017, seniors will account for a larger share of population than children aged 0–14.³

The health care needs of Ontario's population are therefore shifting away from an emphasis on critical life-saving surgeries and emergency medical treatments prevalent amongst a younger, episodically ill patient population. Seniors, as a group, are healthier and more active; and the seniors of the future are predicted to be among the healthiest in history. However, a natural consequence of longer life is that the likelihood of developing chronic conditions and long-term illness increases which can compromise the prospect of independence. It is this need that the health care system of the future must address.

2. Cost

Institutional care is expensive and should be reserved for those with the greatest need. The North East LHIN demonstrated that the average cost of care for seniors for one week in long-term care was three times as expensive as care at home and twenty times as expensive in acute care.⁴ Ontario's provincial home care program is vital to supporting the publicly insured system by enabling early discharge of patients from hospitals and providing an alternative to long-term care homes. Without adequate investment in home care, patients return to hospital for non-acute care that could be provided at home. Achieving cost savings necessitates investment.

¹ Ontario Ministry of Finance. (2013) Ontario Budget p.xx
http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2013/papers_all.html

² Total home care expenditures will then be an estimated \$2.8B of a \$49B health budget.

³ Ontario Ministry of Finance. Retrieved on May 9, 2013 from
<http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/projections/>

⁴ North East LHIN. (2011) HOME First Shifts care of Seniors to HOME. LHInfo Minute, Northeastern Ontario Health Care Update. <http://www.nelhin.on.ca/WorkArea/showcontent.aspx?id=11258>

3. Preference

Home is where Ontarians want to remain for as long as possible.⁵ One of the least desirable outcomes for patients is to be prematurely institutionalized because of the lack of options in home and community care. New health care strategies must be adopted to assist Ontarians to age, recuperate and end their lives at home.

The Board of the Ontario Home Care Association calls on all stakeholders, elected representatives and the people of Ontario to support this necessary funding shift.

The time for investment is now.

Support for Home Care Investment

“...OANHSS also commends the government's continued investment in the community sector. "The government has put a high priority on supporting people to stay in their own homes as long as possible. This funding will help ensure the community sector has the resources it needs to play a larger and more effective role in the continuum of care for seniors," said Rubin...”

Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors

“No Ontarian should have to go through the stress and difficulty of waiting indefinitely for home care.”

Andrea Horwath New Democratic Party

“...Ontario's doctors were pleased that the 2013 Ontario provincial budget reiterated its commitment to move ahead with the implementation of several key initiatives including..., shifting more routine procedures out of hospital and into clinics, and further investments in home care and long-term care...”

Ontario Medical Association

“...Hospitals welcome the government's additional investments in community and home care services. We believe that these investments are necessary to improve patient care and reduce the number of patients who are currently in hospitals who could be better served at home or in a different health care setting...”

Ontario Hospital Association

“Good home care... not only allows seniors to stay in their homes rather than having to move, but it can also keep them in significantly better health.”

Paths to Prosperity, A Healthier Tomorrow, Ontario PC Caucus White Paper

“...Many patients already receive care in less than 5 days. With this investment we will be able to achieve this target with even more people...”

Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres

⁵ Living Longer, Living Well, Report Submitted to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister Responsible for Seniors on recommendations to inform a Seniors Strategy for Ontario 2013 p.3
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/seniors_strategy/docs/seniors_strategy.pdf

About Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA)

The OHCA, *the voice of home care in Ontario*, is a membership association representing providers of quality home care services from across Ontario. OHCA members represent an estimated 25,000 staff collectively serving 300,000 Ontarians per year. OHCA works with families as integral partners in the delivery of home care services and as such estimates that members impact 1.2 million Ontarians. OHCA is dedicated to promoting the growth and development of the home and community health care sector by helping to shape health care policy, supporting members to excel, and being a leading source of information on home and community care. OHCA members are accredited through Accreditation Canada, CARF, and/or registered with the International Standards Association (ISO).

For more information, contact:

Susan D. VanderBent, Executive Director

Phone: 905-543-9474 Fax: 905-545

Email: suevan@homecareontario.ca

For the latest in news and information about the home care sector in Ontario, subscribe to the Ontario Home Care Association's "House Call" at www.homecareontario.ca or follow us on [Twitter](#).