

Today's Home Care – Contributing to the Health of Ontarians

Under the leadership of the Ontario government, the province's health system has been transformed to address the needs of the population and ensure that a good system of care is in place for generations to come. Home care has emerged as an increasingly vital part of the broader health care system in Ontario, and accordingly the government has introduced a number of reforms¹ which have contributed to the stabilization of the present home care system in Ontario.

Ontarians expect the government to be diligent and accountable in the allocation of their tax dollars and build a system that achieves best value for the healthcare dollar. Today, as the province spends \$1.6B in home care service, Ontarians can be assured that there is a fair and publicly accountable process for the selection of home care providers. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are in place and designed to ensure that performance is fundamental to maintaining the right to deliver home care services.

Home care providers must be able to meet the rising demand for increasingly complex care within constrained resources. Today, there are a number of measures designed to provide stability to the system, ensure that home care staff is valued for the work that they do, and most importantly, enable excellence in client care.

The following measures to support home care in Ontario have created a strong foundation for quality care:

- Home care contracts can be as long as 9 years based on quality performance.
- Wage increases have been achieved, with a legislated minimum wage of \$12.50 per hour for Personal Support Workers (PSW)².
- Staff is compensated for travel between clients.
- Payment for statutory holidays is provided to all home care workers even if they choose to work on a casual basis.
- Home care PSWs have access to guaranteed hours of work and it is required that by 2011, 30% of the PSW workforce will do so.

¹ Outlined in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care report, *Choosing Quality, Rewarding Excellence*, May 2006, http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/ministry_reports/caplanresp06/caplanresp06.html

² Personal Support Workers are those who have completed a standardized training program. PSWs provide a broad range of services and includes personal care – assistance with activities of daily living which may include help with dressing, bathing, grooming, feeding, toileting, mobilization and transferring; and homemaking – essential housekeeping tasks necessary to enable the individual to remain at home in a safe and acceptable environment, including cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, shopping, banking and transportation. For more information, see OHCA's paper - The Personal Support Worker in Home & Community Care, March 2007, <http://www.homecareontario.ca/public/about/publications-position-papers.cfm>

- Performance standards for continuity of care for clients have been enhanced and limits established on the number of staff that can be assigned to a client.
- Clients have greater authority to direct their care and can make changes if they are dissatisfied in any way.
- The Ontario Health Quality Council has been tasked with measuring and reporting to the public on the quality of home care and client satisfaction with these services. Public Reporting about home care service can now be found at [www. http://www.ohqc.ca/en/hc_landing.php](http://www.ohqc.ca/en/hc_landing.php)

Today, the home care system is achieving excellence and contributing to the health and independence of the population through continuous improvement, innovation and best practice. It is the best thing to do for the people of Ontario.

About the OHCA

The Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA), *the voice of home care in Ontario™*, is an organization of home health and social care service providers. Association members deliver 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. OHCA members are contracted by all three levels of government, Community Care Access Centres, insurance companies, institutions, corporations and private individuals. OHCA members are accredited through the Accreditation Canada and/or the International Standards Association (ISO).

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