



Home Care Staffing Plan Needed to Protect and Improve Care for All Seniors

December 21, 2020 - Home Care Ontario, the voice of home care in Ontario™, is calling on the government to launch a staffing strategy for the home care sector before April 2021, following the recent launch of its plan for Long-Term Care. This plan must include funding to provide home care workers with the same supports and hourly wages as those in the long-term care sector.

“This is a critical moment for the provincial health care sector. COVID-19 has created a near-universal desire from seniors and their families to live and receive care at home for as long as possible, and the surging case numbers have made this even more important,” said Sue VanderBent, CEO, Home Care Ontario. “While there is a clear need for a focus on the Long-Term Care sector, the government must recognize the deep interconnectedness between the long-term care and the home care systems. Government must immediately develop a staffing strategy that includes the same supports for home care staff to ensure our seniors can get the care they want, where they want it and where they are safest - in their own homes.”

Home Care Ontario members serve over 750,000 patients every year, delivering 39

million hours of care annually. Yet, publicly-funded home care workers are paid significantly less than those who do the same work in long-term care. These pay inequities are only going to get worse as a result of the recent announcement of the Long-Term Care staffing plan. It is even more critical now that government launch a similar plan to support home care workers before April 2021. Not doing so could result in a mass exodus of staff from one part of the health system to another, as we recently saw happen in Quebec. This decision would further reduce the amount of home care the system could provide and would mean dire consequences for all seniors.

"Home care workers should be paid at parity with those in long-term care, and care workers in both sectors deserve a raise for the amazing support they provide," concluded VanderBent. "COVID-19 has shown that it is truly a single health care system and that wage parity between home care and long-term care is long overdue. Ontario's seniors are counting on the government to protect them by enabling access to safe, reliable and compassionate care and launching a staffing plan to support Ontario's home care workers is the first step in making that a reality."

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Contact:

Ruta O'Grady

905-546-7899

ruta.ogrady@homecareontario.ca

About Home Care Ontario:

Home Care Ontario, the voice of home care in Ontario™, 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, Home Care Providers are responsible for delivering nursing care, home support services, personal care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social

work, dietetics, respiratory therapy, infusion therapy, speech language therapy and medical equipment and supplies to individuals of all ages. An estimated 59 million hours of publicly and family funded home care service is provided annually across the province.