



Independent Commission Must Include Focus on How to Better Support Seniors During Pandemics Using Home Care

(TORONTO) July 29, 2020 – Home Care Ontario, the voice of home care in the province, applauds the Ontario government for today’s launch of the Independent Commission. Part of the Commission’s mandate is to consider further areas that should be the subject of future action by government to help prevent the future spread of COVID-19. Given this focus, the Association calls on the Commission to ensure its focus includes an examination of the role home care played in supporting seniors during the pandemic, as well as, what expanded role it could have played as part of the province’s response to COVID-19.

“It is more important than ever during the pandemic that seniors have the option to stay in their homes, where they are safe and where they want to be,” said Sue VanderBent, CEO, Home Care Ontario. “It is critical the Commission’s scope includes examining how home care services can be better utilized to support seniors at home during times of pandemics, and whether any reforms are needed ahead of a potential second wave of COVID-19 and the upcoming flu season.”

Ontario’s home care system already delivers more care to our seniors than any other part of the health care system, with over 35,000 professional home care workers, delivering care to approximately 440,000 seniors every year. With the right tools, Ontario’s home care system could do even more to support our seniors at home.

Better utilizing home care will also help Ontario’s health care system get back to normal by reducing the number of non-essential visits to hospitals, and giving seniors options to stay away from crowds and congregate settings. Increasing the focus on home care is also essential to keeping the pandemic from overwhelming our health system by providing care where people want to be and where they are safe.

“Ontario’s seniors are relying on the government to protect them and providing more safe, reliable, and compassionate home care is key to doing that,” concluded VanderBent. “Our province has a chance to get it right, and it is imperative that as part of the Commission’s important mandate, it reviews how the province can better utilize home care to support and protect our seniors. Our seniors deserve nothing less.”

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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. For over thirty years Home Care Ontario has promoted the growth and development of home care as a key pillar of Ontario's health care system through advocacy, knowledge transfer, thought leadership, and member service.

In Ontario, service provider organizations are responsible for providing nursing care, home support services, personal care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, infusion pharmacy, social work, dietetics, speech language therapy and medical equipment and supplies in the home to individuals of all ages. An estimated 50 million hours of publicly and privately purchased home care service is provided annually across the province.