

Ontario Should Follow Nova Scotia, Invest In Front-Line Home Care Workers

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Home Care Ontario →

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HAMILTON, ON, Feb. 10, 2022 /CNW/ - Health care workers in Ontario deserve the same treatment as their Nova Scotia colleagues, according to Home Care Ontario.

On Wednesday, Nova Scotia officials announced they would immediately raise wages by 23 per cent for all continuing care assistants in that province. Continuing care assistants are equivalent to personal support workers (PSWs) in Ontario.

"Nova Scotia decision-makers should be commended for their leadership in committing additional funding to the vital home care sector," said Sue VanderBent, CEO of Home Care Ontario, an association whose members represent 28,000 home care workers. "We need the Ontario government to do the same thing. Home care in Ontario has lost thousands of staff because the government has refused to fund competitive wages for the sector. We need urgent government investment so we can pay our workers more and deliver the care Ontarians need."

Similar to Nova Scotia's continuing care sector, Ontario's home care sector is facing serious recruitment and retention issues. The sector has lost an estimated 4,000 nurses and thousands more PSWs and therapy professionals since the beginning of the pandemic. This has resulted in the current crisis where thousands of seniors are not receiving the care they require.

These shortages continue to be reported on including in media stories today:



<https://www.collingwoodtoday.ca/local-news/personal-support-worker-shortage-hits-home-for-collingwood-family-5041511>

"Nearly 6,000 vulnerable Ontarians have seen their home care essentially stop because the system does not have the front-line workers to support them," said VanderBent. "This is completely unacceptable, and the government simply must address it."

Home care staff are paid far less than their colleagues in other parts of the health system. That includes personal support workers, who are paid at least \$5 per hour more to work in long-term care homes and hospitals.

Home Care Ontario has presented government with a three-point plan to help stabilize the sector, which plays a critical role in keeping people out of hospitals and LTC homes. The plan involves:

Step 1: Moving away from an institutional model of care by embracing a home-first system, with Ontarians receiving care in hospitals and long-term care homes only when absolutely necessary.

Step 2: Immediately investing \$460 million in the sector to support increased wages for front line and support staff, allowing providers to attract new workers and retain existing ones.

Step 3: Introducing a new tax credit worth up to \$1,500 per year for family-funded home care.

"Home care has been decimated in Ontario," said VanderBent. "The consequences are tragic and they're being felt by people across the province now. We need government action."

SOURCE Home Care Ontario

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