



Urgent \$600 Million Investment Needed to Fix Crisis in Home Care: Association
New campaign highlights patient needs, staff shortages, loss of 3,000 nurses

(HAMILTON, ON) – September 29, 2021 – Ontario’s home care system is in crisis and needs an urgent \$600M investment in order to give patients the care they need, according to Home Care Ontario which launched a new campaign today to highlight the growing problems in the sector.

The campaign, *Home Care is Health Care*, is designed to raise awareness about the often overlooked, but critically important role the sector plays in delivering care to Ontarians at home and, at the same time, preventing hospital and long-term care admissions.

“Home care is invisible to most of us because it is received in the comfort and privacy of Ontarians’ personal dwellings,” said Sue VanderBent, CEO of Home Care Ontario. “That boundary of personal privacy makes it easy for policy makers to ignore the desperate needs of Ontarians. As a result, home care has been underfunded for decades. We are launching this campaign to send a clear message to government: we need an immediate investment to ensure we can continue to deliver the quality home care to Ontarians that they deserve.”

Home care, which treats more than one million Ontarians every year, is desirable, effective, and much more affordable than institutionally-based care.

However, financial incentives to shore up long term care and acute care introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, while understandable, have greatly accelerated pre-existing human resource issues in home care. As a result, home care has lost 3,000 nurses and countless more personal support workers (PSWs) since the pandemic began.

These staffing shortages have caused the availability of home care to plummet. Provincial Nursing Visit acceptance rates, which measure whether home care service providers are able to fulfill an urgent request for care have dropped from 95% pre-pandemic to 60% in August 2021. This means home care providers are not able to effectively fulfill 4 out of every 10 requests for Ontarians needing nursing visits, resulting in wait lists and patients seeking care in the ED.

“Ontarians are just not getting the level of care they need to stay safe and stable at home,” said VanderBent. “It’s a very real problem for hundreds of thousands of people and their families.”

In its most recent Ontario budget, government gave no new funding to patients receiving home care while adding billions into institutional care.

“The province can’t continue to overlook home care,” said VanderBent. “Ontarians deserve better. It is time government urgently invested health care dollars closer to home.”

The \$600M requested in urgent government funding will help attract and retain 3,810 nurses, PSWs and other staff needed to treat existing patients and address increased post-pandemic surgical volumes. In addition, Home Care Ontario is calling for a new credit that would apply up to a maximum of \$10,000 to support annual family-funded home care services.



The new campaign is anchored by an informative website, www.choosehomecare.ca, that invites Ontarians to nominate 'Home Care Heroes' who provided exceptional care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It is time we brought the vital services performed by dedicated home care staff in neighbourhoods all across Ontario into the light," said VanderBent.

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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. Home Care Ontario members include those engaged in and/or supportive of home-based health care. 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.