

Patient Ombudsman’s Report Proves Safety of Home Care During Pandemic, Need for Immediate Investments in the Sector

- Ombudsman received fewest complaints about home care during Wave Two and Three of the Pandemic

(TORONTO) – August 23, 2021: The special report released today by Ontario’s Patient Ombudsman on the second and third waves of the pandemic has once again proved the safety of home care throughout the pandemic as well as the need for an immediate additional \$600M investment to stabilize the sector, said Home Care Ontario.

“We want to thank the Patient Ombudsman for his report and for his advocacy on behalf of patients. Ensuring home care patients receive safe, quality care is our top priority each and everyday,” said Sue VanderBent, CEO, Home Care Ontario. “Today’s report once again proves that care at home is a safe choice and allows people to avoid congregate settings – in a comfortable and familiar home environment – where they want to be.”

Home care delivers services to almost 800,000 Ontarians annually, more than any other part of the health care system. Today’s report cites findings from a July 2020 Home Care Ontario survey that demonstrated that 93% of seniors said they felt safe receiving care at home. This is a testament to the sector’s hard work and strong Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) measures. These measures include universal masking and the use of appropriate PPE for any home care patient receiving routine or complex care. The IPAC measures protect home care workers to keep them and their patients safe. These strict procedures and protections have resulted in home care having the lowest rate of virus transmission in the Ontario health care system.

The Ombudsman’s report does, however, also point to the negative impact that years of underfunding have had on the sector leading to a HHR crisis in home care. This crisis is largely being driven by the ongoing wage disparity between home care and long-term care for the same roles and tasks. The crisis must be immediately addressed through a \$600M investment to stabilize the sector and ensure that the quality care that Ontarians deserve will be available.

“Home Care Ontario has been sounding the alarm for months and today’s Patient Ombudsman’s Report is another clear indication of the HHR crisis Ontario’s home care sector is now facing,” concluded VanderBent. “We hope it serves as a catalyst for change and that government will immediately invest \$600M into the system to stabilize the sector and make sure Ontarians can continue to receive care where they want to be - in their own homes.”

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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.