



## **It is Time to Care for People at Home, not in Hallways**

*New campaign calls on government to invest in millions more hours of home care for Ontarians*

(Hamilton, ON) – December 13, 2024 – Ontario’s growing home care sector is ready to take on a greater role and deliver over 16 million more hours of home care to Ontarians.

A new campaign launched today by Home Care Ontario entitled “*Home Not Hallways*” says it is time to break the cycle of trying the same old solutions year after year that have only resulted in worsening hallway health care and an ever-longer Long-Term Care (LTC) wait list, despite the largest increases in hospital and LTC capacity in decades. With 45,000 seniors now on a long-term care facility waitlist<sup>1</sup> and an estimated 6250 hospital beds<sup>2</sup> filled with people who belong in a different care setting, Ontario needs a new approach. The campaign makes it clear that home care is the only solution and the only part of the system with immediate capacity to deliver more care where Ontarians want it delivered - in their homes not in hallways. Moving to a ‘home first’ approach will reduce hospital wait times and the LTC wait list by safely providing more patients and seniors with more care where it makes sense: in their own homes.

“Every year we are seeing rising numbers of patients seeking care in Emergency Departments because they lack support at home. It is time to change that,” says Sue VanderBent, CEO, Home Care Ontario. “We’re launching the ‘*Home Not Hallways*’ campaign because more home care is the only solution that can meet the needs of our rapidly aging population. We have highly skilled professional home care staff in place that can deliver significantly more home care. A home first approach will take pressure off all other parts of the health system and improve the care we provide to our seniors at home, where they want to be.”

Specifically, Home Care Ontario is calling on government to significantly increase the number of visits and hours of home care by 10% a year for the next 3 years. This translates into delivering 16.5 million more hours of care where people want it – at home. In addition, Home Care Ontario is calling for continued investment to support the home care sector to grow a larger workforce by:

- Further improving front-line compensation;
- Providing ongoing specialized training and mentorship to help retain existing, skilled home care staff; and,
- Enhancing the Ontario Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit and removing the existing barriers to support increased Home Care services for Ontarians.

The new campaign is anchored by an informative website, [www.homenothallways.ca](http://www.homenothallways.ca).

“Ontarians want more home care. They deserve more home care, and the home care sector is ready to deliver,” concluded VanderBent. “The government’s historic investments over the last three years have now put the sector in a position where it could provide thousands more seniors with more than 16 million additional hours of care with the right investments. We need to seize

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA), “*The Data: Long-Term Care in Ontario*,” 2024, <https://www.oltca.com/about-long-term-care/the-data/>

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Health, “ALC Data load,” 2024 as cited in Ontario Hospital Association, 2024

this opportunity and fund a 'home first' approach that greatly expands the home care system so we can meet the increased demand that we know is coming. That is truly what our aging seniors deserve – to receive care at home.”

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**About Home Care Ontario:** Home Care Ontario is a member-based organization representing the full spectrum of home care providers in the province, including publicly-funded, not-for-profit and family-funded organizations. Our members are united by a singular mission to provide outstanding 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 to people in the comfort of their homes.

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