



Home Care Ontario Response to Support for Seniors and Caregivers Act, 2024 and Related Draft Regulations

Proposal Number: 24-MSAA003

Introduction:

Home Care Ontario is pleased to provide input on the Support for Seniors and Caregivers Act, 2024 (the Act). Home Care Ontario is a member-based organization representing the full spectrum of home care providers in the province. 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.

Background:

Home Care Service Provider Organizations (SPOs), along with home care workers directly contracted by family/residents, have been providing supports in Retirement Homes (RHs) for decades. These staff often provide personal care to residents along with the many other available services from home care professionals (such as nursing and therapy) all of whom work with residents and their families to establish goals for health care, wellness, and support functional improvement. Many of these relationships pre-date admission into the RH and continue to be provided 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in Retirement Homes to ensure continuity of care for optimal quality of life.

Input to Key Proposed Regulation(s):

Home Care Ontario has reviewed the proposals to amend the Retirement Homes Act, 2010 with particular emphasis on Schedule 2 s. 51(1) that would add the following paragraph to the residents' Bill of Rights:

12. The right to ongoing support from individuals who are, as determined in accordance with the regulations, the resident's caregivers to support the resident's physical, mental, social and emotional well-being and quality of life.



Home care staff are valued caregivers with whom the residents and/or families have developed a trusting relationship beyond the walls of the RH and often prior to their admission.

Recommendation:

Home Care providers support retirement home residents with thousands of hours of high-quality care each year. In this role they value and support the contributions of family members in caring for their loved ones as they age.

Home Care Ontario supports the formal recognition of caregivers and believes it is critical **that the definition of caregiver to be defined by the regulation explicitly include all persons providing home care services (regardless of funding source), including but not limited to, personal support, nursing, therapy and government funded programs.** This inclusion will ensure clarity for homes and consistent access to the high-quality care central to a resident's quality of life and independence as they age.

Home Care Ontario also believes that including home care staff in the definition is consistent with the stated intent of the Act that includes the following in its preamble: *"families and caregivers deserve support in caring for their loved ones as they age...(and,)....family and caregiver support should be enhanced, and that seniors should be protected while their social connections are fostered."*

Home Care Ontario thanks you for your consideration of these recommendations and would be pleased to meet to discuss in further detail.

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