



HOME CARE ONTARIO'S

PRE-BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS
2025-26



INTRODUCTION

It's time to break the cycle of hallway healthcare.

Every year, as fall turns into winter, we hear the same story – hospitals overwhelmed by patients, our loved ones stuck in waiting rooms for hours or being treated in hallways where they languish.

Meanwhile health care professionals continue to burn out and the waitlist for long-term care beds keeps getting longer.

Every year, the same old “solutions” are used to buy a little time until next winter comes again, and the pattern repeats. Hallway healthcare keeps happening over and over, despite the largest increases in hospital capacity in decades.

It's time to break the cycle.

A new approach is needed and Home Care has capacity to help.

Ontario's Home Care system is ready to step into a new bigger role – one that makes care in the home a priority.

Home Care Ontario recommends the government take the following three steps in the 2025-26 budget to significantly boost the amount of Home Care available to Ontarians:

1. Expand Capacity
2. Attract and Retain Staff
3. Expand the SC@H Tax Credit

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

The simple truth is that the 3,500 hospital beds added since 2019 and the 7,026 new LTC beds added by the province since 2019, cannot keep up with a population that is both growing and rapidly aging. Research shows us that Ontario's seniors' population will grow from 2.8 million to 4.4 million by 2026.

Further, new research shows that regardless of age, Ontarians are getting sicker, with more people suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes and cancer. In fact, by 2040 1 in 4 adults over the age of 30 will be living with a major illness, requiring significant hospital care, up from one in eight.¹

The health system is not ready for this added pressure, and the same old approaches simply will not get the system ready.

The good news is there is another option.

Despite new capacity, the health system cannot keep up with increasing demand



+3,500 new
Hospital Beds



+ 7,026 new
Long-term care
beds



HOME CARE HAS CAPACITY

For the last three years Ontario has been purpose-building the Home Care system to deliver more care. These investments have built the foundation of a much-needed shift to occur – for care to move from hallways to homes.

Ontario's Home Care system is ready to step into a new bigger role – one that makes care in the home a priority.

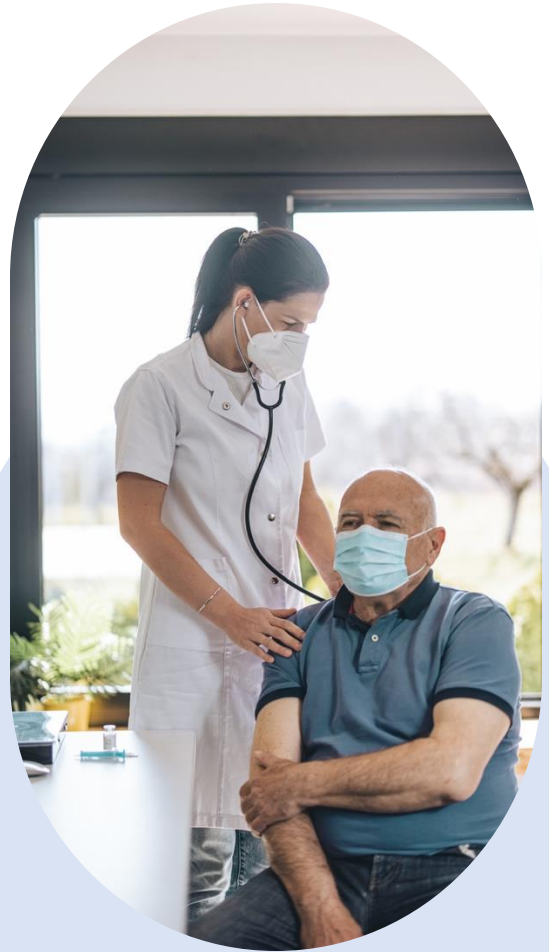
HOME NOT HALLWAYS

To prepare the health system for the pressures that are growing, Ontario should substantially increase the amount of Home Care available.

By significantly boosting the number of visits and hours of home care by 10% a year over the next three years, Ontario can deliver almost 16,500,000 more hours of care where people want it – at home.

This will reduce hospital wait times, avoidable ER visits and LTC wait lists by providing more patients with more care at home.

Ontarians want more Home Care. They deserve more Home Care. The Home Care sector is ready to deliver more Home Care.



Create
16,500,000
more hours of
home care

HOW TO CONTINUE TO GROW HOME CARE

Home Care Ontario recommends the province grow its home care capacity by investing in three main ways:



Expand Capacity

Invest a cumulative amount of \$1.9 Billion over the next three years to increase capacity by 10% a year along with adding 1% annually for base funding through a further investment of \$208 million. This will result in more than 16,500,000 additional hours of home care being delivered.



Attract and Retain Staff

Invest \$624 million over three years to provide a 3% contract rate increase targeted towards compensation.

Invest \$59.5 million to establish a PSW mentorship program as well as a specific stream for home care in the next round of the Skills Development Fund.



Enhance the SC@H Tax Credit

Remove the requirement for a disability certificate for the Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit and expand the eligibility and benefits of the credit to support more care at home.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The impact of these investments will be felt across the health system, including:

Move ~4,500 off the LTC Wait List

Today, Ontario's LTC wait list sits at 45,000 people and approximately 1 in 10 newly admitted LTC patients could be cared for at home with the proper home care supports.¹

Assuming an average need of four hours a day, it would take an additional 6,570,000 hours of home care to support 4,500 LTC destined patients at home.

Free Up 625 ALC Beds

There are an estimated 6,250 patients designated ALC in hospital beds in Ontario, and approximately 1 out of every 10 patients have their hospital stay extended while they wait for home care.¹

That means 625 beds could be freed up every year if more home care was available to support patients at home.



COSTING

Significantly boosting the number of visits and hours of home care by 10% a year

The following is a cost breakdown of Home Care Ontario's Pre-Budget recommendations:

Category of Support	Budget Measure	Year 1 Cost	Year 2 Cost	Year 3 Cost	3 Year Cumulative Cost
Expand Capacity	10% Annual Volume Increase	\$295M	\$325M	\$357M	\$1.892B
	1% Annual Base Funding Increase	\$32.5M	\$35.7M	\$39.3M	\$208M
Attract and Retain Staff	3% Annual Compensation increase	\$97.4M	\$107.1M	\$117.8M	\$624M
	Mentorship Fund (annual cost)	\$18.5M	\$18.5M	\$22.5M	\$59.5M
	Skills Development Fund (annual cost)	\$13.5M	\$13.5M	\$13.5M	\$40.5M
Support Family Funded Care	Enhance the OCSAH Tax Credit	--	--	--	--
	TOTAL Annual Incremental Cost	\$457M	\$468M	\$514M	
	TOTAL Cumulative Cost	\$457M	\$925M	\$1.443B	\$2.824B

Conclusion

Create 16,500,000 additional hours of home care over the next three years

The pressures facing Ontario's health care system are substantial. However, the recent investments the government has made to stabilize and grow the home care workforce has created the capacity for the sector to do more.

The province must seize this opportunity and fund a 'home first' approach that greatly expands the home care system, so it can meet the increased demand that is coming.

Seniors want more home care. They deserve more home care. And the home care system is ready to deliver it.

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The only thing better than having care close to home is having care in your home.

**Your Health:
A Plan for Connected
and Convenient
Care, 2023**