



2025-26 Federal Pre-Budget Recommendations



Introduction:

Seniors across Canada are increasingly choosing to age at home. Research shows that this trend will continue, with 96% of Ontario's seniors saying they want to stay in their homes as long as possible. To help make the dream of aging at home a reality, our Association estimates more than 150,000 families in Ontario currently support their loved ones with over 20 million hours of family-funded home care services every year.

Family-funded home care supports seniors to live more independently, to remain in their homes for longer, and avoid accidents and illnesses that could cause them to leave their homes unnecessarily.

As identified by a recent study from the Ontario Caregiver Coalition, financial assistance is rated as caregiver's most important unmet need, "ranking this higher than more traditional policy priorities, such as navigational or mental health supports."¹ Now more than ever, family-funded home care services are essential, and families need help.

For the 2025-26 federal Budget, Home Care Ontario recommends the government take two important steps to help reduce the cost of receiving care at home and help seniors age and receive care where they want.

Summary of Recommendations:

1. Eliminate the requirement for a disability certificate to claim part-time attendant care in the home to ensure the new OSCAH reaches as many Ontario seniors as possible who need this assistance to help them stay in their homes.
2. Expand the GST/HST exemption in the *Excise Tax Act* for services rendered to individuals by certain health care practitioners to include professional services rendered by personal support workers (PSWs).

¹ Ontario Caregiver Coalition, 2023 Pre-Budget Submission, January 2023

Recommendation #1: Remove Disability Certificate Requirement to Claim the OSCAH Tax Credit for Part-Time Attendant Home Care

Background:

Seniors across Ontario are increasingly choosing to age and receive care at home. This means that the home care system is now delivering more care than any other part of the health care system combined, yet demand continues to outpace available government funding. As a result, more and more seniors and their families have begun funding their own care or supplementing the care they are already receiving. To help offset these costs, the Ontario government introduced the new Ontario Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit (OSCAH) in 2022. This is an important change as in-home care services are critical supports that help keep seniors healthy, safe at home and out of hospitals and other publicly-supported facilities. Often, just a few hours of care a week is enough to keep seniors living independently at home and prevent unnecessary illness or accidents.

The Issue:

The OSCAH is a refundable personal income tax credit that is tied to the federal process for approving the medical expense tax credit, with eligible recipients receiving a maximum credit of \$1,500. The issue is, however, that eligible expenses for the OSCAH must also qualify for the federal medical expense tax credit which requires a disability certificate (Form T2201) in order to claim part time attendant care at home which must be approved by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). While many seniors living with physical and brain health issues receive home care, we understand most do not have the level of physical or mental impairment to meet CRA's stringent eligibility tests for a disability certificate.

These seniors will therefore not be able to claim expenses related to the in-home care they depend on to keep them healthy, safe and living at home. This could mean some of these seniors would not be able to afford these necessary and critical services. The loss of access to these services would both undermine their own health and may force families to consider permanent placement in long term care. It could also put further strain on our overburdened ER's, hospitals and broader health care system.

Recommendation:

Home Care Ontario respectfully asks the federal government to **eliminate the requirement for a disability certificate to claim part-time attendant care in the home in the upcoming budget** to ensure the new OSCAH reaches as many Ontario seniors as possible who need this assistance to help them stay in their homes.

Recommendation #2: Expand the GST/HST exemption in the *Excise Tax Act* for services rendered to individuals by certain health care practitioners to include PSWs.

Background:

The *Income Tax Act* has not been updated to reflect the changing role of home care in the health care system since 2013. The current provision allows for an HST exemption only when a client is also receiving government funded support. This approach puts a difficult onus on providers, to verify if government funded supports are provided to clients before exempting HST from their invoices. As a client's medical circumstances can change quickly, or may even transition to a different care setting, it is very difficult for providers to know if their client's care is being publicly subsidized on an ongoing basis in order to qualify for an HST exemption.

The Issue:

Government officials have previously stated that this exemption is typically reserved for regulated health services (including chiropractor, OT services, midwife). However, professional oversight is not required across the entire country to receive an HST exemption.

The [*Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority Act, 2021*](#) (HSCPOA Act), was enacted by the Ontario government to support public protection and confidence that registered PSWs will deliver safe, competent, ethical, quality care to recipients in their homes, hospitals, long-term care facilities, or other health care environments. The legislation came into force on December 1, 2024.

HSCPOA also established the [*Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority \(HSCPOA\)*](#) as an independent oversight body accountable to the Ontario government.

With this new oversight in place, PSWs are now regulated or certified in four provinces ([Nova Scotia](#), [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#) and [Ontario](#)), it is now an appropriate time for the Government of Canada to move forward on an HST exemption for services rendered by registered PSWs and all home care services.

Recommendation:

Home Care Ontario recommends that the federal government expand the GST/HST exemption in the *Excise Tax Act* for services rendered to individuals by certain health care practitioners to include professional services rendered by personal support workers.



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.