



Care Watch

May 2014

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Dear Candidate

The 2014 Provincial election is occurring as Ontario faces a number of challenges. How we address these will determine what kind of a society Ontario will be in the years ahead.

Frequently one hears concerns about issues that many people associate with population aging. **Care Watch** is an advocacy organization composed of Senior Citizens. Our sole purpose is to ensure that Senior Citizens receive the supports they need in order to sustain the quality of their lives as they age.

Enclosed are several short documents that outline key issues that are affecting supportive home care policies and programs in Ontario today:

- The rationale for implementing designated funding for supportive services;
- The impact of ageism on policies and programs;
- An election post card with questions that we are encouraging Senior Citizens to ask of all candidates during the campaign.

We are sending these materials to you to inform you of issues that are important to senior citizens -- major voters in the upcoming election. For further information, please visit our website <http://carewatchtoronto.org/> where we will be posting updates throughout the election period.

Finally, we welcome the opportunity to meet with you around issues affecting Senior Citizens.

Sincerely,

Lorna Mac Gregor

Lorna MacGregor
Chair

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WHY NOW?

The 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) across Ontario identified older adults (seniors) as a major local priority. The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) initiated the *Aging at Home Strategy* to be implemented by each LHIN. Broad community consultation resulted in many innovative ideas. However, a year later it became clear that hospital crises would determine Ontario's home care policy. The priorities became 1) fewer patients waiting in hospital for Alternative Level of Care (ALC) beds and 2) the reduction of wait times in hospital emergency rooms. Without designated funding this will continue to happen. We have been told that some programs initiated under the Strategy will be continued. There is absolutely no guarantee that the current funding will enable that to happen, let alone return to the original vision of a strategy that will allow people to age at home.

Ontario's ad hoc mode of providing home care is not working. Older people, service providers and the Province must come together to define a home and community care policy that is consistently accessible, open to innovation and based on a funding system that facilitates rather than impedes progress and innovative programs.

The time is NOW!

Contact YOUR Member of Parliament today and ask the candidate(s) in the upcoming election about Designated funding for Supportive Home Care

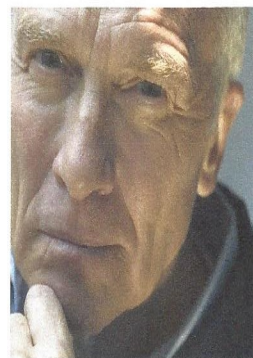
**Supportive
Home Care
requires
DESIGNATED
funding**

If you wish to receive this information in a different format or larger type please contact us.

Care Watch

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A Pragmatic Proposal



**Supportive
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Supporting Quality Home & Community Care



Care Watch

A Pragmatic Proposal

Designated Funding for Supportive Home Care

Introduction

We know that population change in North America is a reality. A growing proportion of the population is reaching 65+ (15.5%), with many reaching 85+ (1.5% in 2009). Eighty percent of people over age 65 are living with a chronic disease; 70% of those have more than one. These conditions do not require around-the-clock hospital care and many seniors are able to lead active lives at home and are engaged in their community with the support of family or paid caregivers.

More than seven million Canadians currently care for loved ones who are not their children. Increasingly, senior-directed health care will shift from demands for acute care to more supportive services that help them to manage chronic degenerative disorders and continue to be active participants in society. It is time for our public health care system to take proactive steps to address this coming reality.

As Figure 1 shows, when unpaid time is calculated, families spend \$6.50 for every \$1.00 spent by the government.



Our Plan

The quality-of-life value of supportive home care is irrefutable. Changing population demographics, the documented cost-effectiveness of home and community care and the current pressures on provincial budgets, must be reflected in policy debates NOW and the discussion must include a **new and stable funding plan for supportive home care** – a scheme that is equitably funded and provides for universal services.

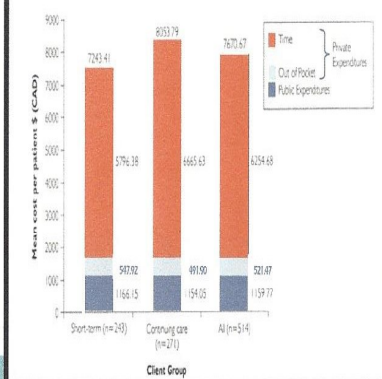
Importance of Designated Funding

Funding that cannot be used for anything except Supportive Home Care is essential if we are ever to realize its potential: dignity and maximum independence for people who wish to age at home, as well as considerable cost saving in the long run.

To propose this without recognizing that there are associated costs would be irresponsible. Thus, we suggest an insurance plan with contributions from employee and employer. (*with the usual low-income cutoffs*). Undoubtedly there are also other ways to ensure designated funding. For instance, a percentage of the health budget, or the Ontario Health Premium, about \$3 billion, could be designated for supportive services. All options should be considered.

The bottom line is that the funds be designated. Eligibility for the services financed by these funds would be universal and accessed, as now, through the Community Care Access Centres (CCAC's) on the basis of age-related and other functional deficits.

FIGURE 1. Mean costs per patient by client group



Adapted from: Leong V., Guertler, D., Corford, R. & Coyle, P. (2007) The Magnitude, Share and Determinants of Private Costs Incurred by Clients (and their Caregivers) of in-home Publicly Financed Care. *Healthcare Policy*, vol.3(1): 2-19

While senior health support may include medical care provided by professionals (doctors, nurses, etc.) on-going help with ordinary daily tasks will become more and more important. A substantial body of research has documented the cost-effectiveness of home care (Beland et al. 2006; Hébert et al. 2010; Hollander & Chappell 2007; Williams et al. 2009), and there are numerous articles on how home care benefits senior wellbeing.

Supportive services, including cooking, shopping, laundry and bathing, are the critical, cost-effective difference between active living and hospital care that costs families and the province. It is imperative that the Provincial Government recognizes in-home support as an integral part of the health care mix and allocates appropriate funding and support for its delivery.



AGEISM

Don't be silenced by ageism:
Senior citizens need to be the leaders to change in-home care policy.

Expose ageism that:

- silences senior citizens
- deprives our families and communities from senior citizens' wisdom and contributions
- excludes senior citizens' contributions to policy decision-making
- views senior citizens as passive recipients of health and community care services

"We did not lose our license for citizenship when we retired. We need to sit in the front seat when it comes to making policy decisions about senior citizens."

Bea Levis, Senior Citizenship Activist and Care Watch Vice- Chair

Join Care Watch in their efforts to make a difference !

Care Watch is a not-for-profit, volunteer-run advocacy organization led by senior citizens.

We work with policy makers and those who influence policy. Through public events, research, and working with senior organizations, we raise issues relevant to older people.

SENIOR CITIZENS in ONTARIO must have:

CHOICES – Opportunities to make choices that will help them to live at home with dignity and to be as independent as possible.

A VOICE– The right to be involved in decisions about policies and practices that affect their lives.

SUPPORT – Access to services and programs that help them to be productive, active participants in their own communities.



For more information or to participate, contact us at:
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Social Sciences and Humanities
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Conseil de recherches en
 sciences humaines du Canada



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Senior Citizens

Driving Policy Change on
 Supportive Home
 Services for Senior
 Citizens



Guiding Principles

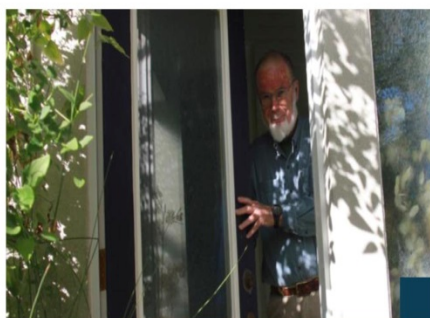
Universal publicly-funded health care is understood as a fundamental value in Canada.

As the health care system is being reformed, services are moving from hospitals to home care and other community services. The fundamental equity values that underlie our public health care system must be kept. Otherwise, reform covers up public health care being dismantled.

Public health care is about taking care of each other. We pay through our taxes for care when we are of working age and healthy — and we share the cost across society — so that the burden of care is not shouldered by the sick, the elderly and the dying.

Home care is a vital service, BUT....

supportive home services are no longer seen as a vital part of home care! They should be reflected in our public policy decisions about integrated home care services.



Supportive Home Services

Supportive home services include a range of preventive and maintenance services often provided in Ontario by personal support workers and volunteers.

Who should receive these? Anyone who lives at home and needs help to keep a good quality of life, strong family relationships, and supportive friends to stay socially engaged.

How to deliver these services?

- Community based organizations which reflect the diversity found amongst its senior citizens;
- Services from these organizations that focus on both social and physical health needs of senior citizens;
- Services that involve senior citizens in decisions about what is or is not needed.

Needing some help is not a disease. Physical limitations are associated with aging; they do not define the aging person.

Funding Supportive Home Services: How?

Changes and improvements in technology, in hospitals, in community health or home care services and programs are important. Supportive home services are a blend of health and social services based on a person's needs. Decisions about home care services and the funding for these must be made SOON.

Funding options are only limited by our imagination – and political will! Some options are:

- Designate a given percentage of the health budget to supportive home services;
- Institute a special tax;
- Establish an employer/employee lifetime contribution fund similar to CPP

Care Watch advocates for designated funding to ensure guaranteed supportive home care services.

A process for achieving adequate funding must be put in place...**NOW!**

WHAT DO SENIOR CITIZENS WANT

Does the candidate support additional funding for supportive home care services?

Senior citizens need supportive home care services in order to be independent and at home.

Does the candidate support user fees for health services?

User fees are a barrier for senior citizens who need care.

Does the candidate support funded restorative therapy (physio, occupational therapy, speech pathology) for senior citizens?

Senior citizens need restorative therapy in order to stay independent in the community.

What will the candidate do to facilitate the full participation of senior citizens in society?

Senior citizens want to be full and active members of society. Ageism prevents them from doing so.