



Care Watch Ontario Budget Submission 2016

Care Watch, a not-for-profit, volunteer-run advocacy organization led by senior citizens, advocates for quality home and community services in Ontario. The following initiatives are our priorities for budget funding.

1. Increase investment in the Home and Community Care Sector to Support System Change

The Government, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), has determined that it will restructure the planning, management, funding and delivery of home and community care services within the larger health services system, which includes primary, secondary and tertiary health services and population health.

Community social and support services are a critical component of primary health care and the continuum of care. Services which support autonomous living for seniors, people with disabilities and persons with chronic illnesses – like transportation, home-making, meals-on-wheels, adult day programs and respite care – are critical to the success of any home and community care plan.

Care Watch advocates increased funding to the home and community care sector to keep people healthy at home and to prevent entry to as well as support effective discharge from the acute care sector. Numerous reviews have identified that such investment would be cost-effective when linked to better coordinated acute care services within a comprehensive continuum of care.

2. Ensure Dedicated Funding to Set Up and Support Local Service Coordination at the Community Level

The system restructuring proposed by MOHLTC is extensive and complex, and will require intensive planning, support and evaluation, especially during transition periods, to establish and operate the necessary local coordination mechanisms for effective service delivery. These activities require investment. Perhaps in the long run the savings generated by eliminating the CCAC structure may be sufficient to support the enhanced responsibilities of LHINs and other organizations, but this is unlikely to be true in the short term.

To ensure effective planning and system change, Care Watch recommends that dedicated funding be established to assist community agencies to undertake the necessary research, planning and organizational changes required for successful system restructuring.

3. A Dedicated Envelope of funding for Community Care Sector and Services – not Integrated Funding

The integration of funding across community support, primary care and acute care sectors is also proposed. In order to remain affordable, Ontario's health system needs to respond to the demographic implications of an ageing population. Service users live in the community and that is where services must be provided. However, hospitals and acute care services consume the lion's share of health budgets. The influence of the acute care sector, with its powerful advocates, easily drowns out the voice of the community services sector.

We advocate that instead of bundling funding, the government establish a protected budget envelope that is dedicated solely to home and community care services; a budget envelope that cannot easily be reallocated elsewhere, even when increasing hospital, physician or pharmaceutical costs stretch existing resources.

For more information:

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