

January 13, 2017

Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Health, Canada
Honourable Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health & Long-Term Care, Ontario

Dear Ministers:

Care Watch is a not-for-profit volunteer-run advocacy organization led by senior citizens. Our organization, which is comprised of and led by senior citizens, is focused on ensuring that ageing Canadians receive the services they require to remain living at home, thriving in their communities.

Canada's population is ageing. Older Canadians need programs and national standards that provide needed in-home and community support services that will ensure our continued health and independence, and prevents premature entrance to the acute care system. Care Watch is writing this OPEN Letter to urge both levels of government to develop and enact a National Home and Community Care Framework. We beseech you to move beyond political maneuverings to realize this goal.

Canada's seniors appreciate that the demands on health care budgets are fierce and competitive, and that money is not available to simply grow the provincial health budgets. However, within the dollars available, Canada's leaders must protect funding in support of in-home care and community support services because senior citizens across Canada – millions of us – will and must age at home. Private sector retirement homes are financially out of reach for many of us, and the availability of beds in publicly funded long-term care homes across Canada is limited. So, for most of us, ageing at home is not only the desirable option, it is the only option.

Protecting funding for home care services makes good financial sense! Many of us are living longer and healthier lives. With the right supports, we can continue to live safely at home. Research has shown that care in the home is significantly cheaper than care in medical or institutional settings. It makes sense, therefore, for governments to fund home care and community supports so that seniors don't prematurely seek more expensive hospital, rehabilitation and long-term care services.

Regardless of which government is providing the funding, the source of all funding is in reality, the Canadian taxpayer, many of whom are senior citizens, are caring for senior citizens, or will soon be senior citizens. Canadian taxpayers want and deserve a robust and lasting home and community care program.

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Historically, increases to the health budget (whether by federal transfer payments or from provincial treasuries) have not resulted in increases to home care services that parallel the growth in population need. So something must be done to ensure and protect home care funding and to establish national home and community care standards. We entreat you to make this happen now!

Sincerely

Josephine Grayson, Chair

Media contact: Michèle Harding, Director
