



How to Bring Health Home & Stabilize Ontario's Health Care System

Bring Health Home is a joint initiative of four of Ontario's largest and leading home care organizations: VON Canada, SE Health, Bayshore HealthCare and Closing the Gap Healthcare. Combined, we have over 200 years of experience in delivering front-line home care services. Our front-line staff provide approximately 50% of all home care services in the province, serving more than 633,000 Ontarians each year. Across Canada, we make over 24.6 million home care visits each year.

Recommendations

Stabilizing the Existing System: Relieving Pressure on Ontario's Hospitals and Long-Term Care Homes

The recommendations below focus on not only improving health system performance, but also include rapid improvements to stabilize hospitals, manage long term care waitlists and most crucially stabilize health human resources.

- Refocussing home care spending toward cross-sector integrated funding and new service models (e.g. target 30% in year one) that enable Ontarians with more complex health needs to stay safely in their homes longer;
- Giving clients and families more choice and flexibility through client-directed care-models;
- Reducing surgical backlogs through surgical-bundled care programs;
- Stabilizing the home care workforce; and,
- Scaling successful "hospital to home" models to enable ALC patients to safely transition home.

Setting Ontario Up for Success: Transitioning to a Modern and Innovative Home Care System

Governance and stakeholder consultation is key to the success of any implementation. The recommendations below focus on key areas our four organizations see as priorities for setting Ontario up for long term success, and most importantly for patients to see the maximum benefits of Ontario's considerable investments being put to good use.

- Solidify internal government leadership and accountability structures;
- Partner with those with direct experience in delivering and receiving services in discussions around how to implement change;
- Include the perspective of home care in broader multi-sector health system transformation discussions;
- Do not wait on full OHT "maturity" to devolve services; and,
- Ensure that home care modernization results in measurable reductions in red tape and bureaucracy.

"Status quo is just not working."

– Premier Ford, 2022

Using Budget Investments to Drive Change

Funds to be directed	Initiatives for funds to be directed towards
\$500 million	Toward new integrated funding models that support the long-term life care needs of older adults in the community including those on the waitlist for LTC. Pilot, evaluate and scale these programs in partnership with primary care, home care, community support service and OHTs.
\$350 million	Toward transitional bundled care programs, enabling ALC patients in hospital to be safely discharged home.
\$150 million	Toward expanding client-directed funding programs to support independence and healthy aging.
\$100 million	Toward surgical bundled care programs to support surgical recovery and the continuum of care
\$340 million	Toward contract rate increases to level up frontline wages and support critical infrastructure costs within home care service provider organizations.

Timeline

YEAR ONE	YEAR TWO	YEAR THREE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring freeze on HCCSS care coordinators • 30% of home care funding going towards integrated models that include direct referrals from hospitals, primary care providers, and clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of home care funding going towards integrated models that include direct referrals from hospitals, primary care providers, and clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of home care funding going towards integrated models that include direct referrals from hospitals, primary care providers, and clients • 100% of care coordination function transferred to other care settings

Executive Summary

Ontario's health care system is under tremendous pressure, with hospitals and long-term care homes at capacity, staffing shortages pervasive through the system and a significant surgical backlog resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these challenges are exacerbated by Ontarians being forced to receive a level of care that is not appropriate to their needs. Those without appropriate primary or community care are ending up in the emergency room, and patients with long-term challenges are in hospital rather than long-term care. However, the limited access to home care in Ontario is also playing a significant role in Ontarians ending up with the wrong care at a higher cost.

Our group believes that there is a tremendous opportunity to unlock the vast potential of the sector to ensure that Ontarians are offered the opportunity to age at home, with appropriate supports. This is not only what the public wants (96% of older adults in Ontario want to stay in their home as long as possible), but what our system needs to deal with the rapidly escalating demand for care associated with an aging population.

Our four organizations have come together with the sole objective of ensuring the front-line perspective and

experience of service providers is considered in discussions about how we can build a better home care system for the people of Ontario. The status quo simply isn't working in our health care system. Fundamental change is needed to improve public access, health outcomes and value for money. Perhaps no sector is as ripe for transformation in Ontario as home care, which alleviates burden on hospitals and other institutional care and is a key ingredient in a successful health care system. For decades the sector has been stuck in an outdated funding and regulatory model that prioritizes visit levels over patient outcomes; rigid adherence to process over innovation; and cost control over public value.

While the current situation in our health care system is clearly challenging, we are optimistic that there is a clear case for and imperative for change. Over the past year, the Ontario government has communicated a clear commitment to home care modernization. Legislation has been introduced to enable significant structural reforms and Budget 2022 allocated an additional \$1 billion over 3 years (on top of \$500 million previously announced) to support the transition to a more efficient and effective system. This is a very positive foundation for transforming our sector.

The transition to a new model of home care delivery will take several years to complete, however there is a

compelling need to immediately scale up home care capacity to address system problems such as overcrowded emergency departments, surgical backlogs and high alternate level of care (ALC) rates. While it takes years to build new LTC homes or open new hospital units, home care service levels can be scaled up almost immediately and cost effectively. In addition, rising interest rates are making investments in capital builds even more challenging than before.

Above, we present a series of recommendations that are designed to stabilize and build capacity in the existing home care system, while simultaneously and progressively shifting to a better overall model for the future. We recognize this is a delicate balancing act - akin to building a plane while flying it - and we stand ready and willing to partner with the government as we work through the transition to a more efficient and effective home care system.

These two groups of recommendations are designed to provide a roadmap to support successful home care modernization. The first group considers **what** we need to do differently to stabilize the current home care system and develop and scale both new and proven models that will rapidly, effectively, and efficiently address major health system performance issues such as ALC, LTC and surgical wait times. These recommendations

include clear investment guidance regarding how the government's critical \$1.5 billion investment can best be directed to effect change. The second group of recommendations considers **how** we work differently throughout the multi-year process of home care modernization to ensure effective collaboration and consistent execution as we transition to a new model of care. All recommendations are outlined in greater detail in our position paper.

We sincerely hope that these recommendations serve as the starting point for productive collaboration as we work, jointly, to improve care for Ontarians.

For further background, supporting detail and analysis, please refer to our full white paper – **enclosed**.