

## **ONPEA/Ontario Action Plan for Seniors**

In Oct. 2013 an RTO PAC member attended a conference hosted by the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the sessions covered issues considered high priorities by RTO members, so what follows are a few highlights to be shared with Districts as liaisons see fit.

Seniors have a right to dignity, privacy and choice, including health care choices. They should retain the right to make their own decisions on as many areas of their lives as possible and Powers of Attorney should reflect real need based on a proper assessment of mental capacity, not just convenience for everyone else.

Care workers have a duty to report neglect, whether it be physical, emotional, financial, etc., or neglect.

Many care home workers are PSWs with 3 months training and would benefit from more in-service education on working effectively with the elderly. Of those aged 65+ in Ontario, it is only the 10% with the most complex health needs who account for about 60% of our collective health care spending, so seniors should not be regarded as a single entity in terms of need.

Those seniors waiting in hospital beds for Long Term Care placements cost the system about \$1000 a day versus the \$130 it costs to be in a nursing home or the \$55 cost of home care service. In general, those with more complex needs have longer waits for beds in nursing homes equipped to serve them. Most regions do not have a shortage of retirement home beds serving those with fewer needs and paid for by individuals.

There are an increasing number of programmes aimed at keeping seniors in their homes longer which has resulted in a decreasing percentage of people waiting for Long Term Care placements. There has also been an increase in the number of short term placements available in LTC homes.

It is important that all older Ontarians have access to a primary care provider and there needs to be a further expansion of programmes such as Community Paramedics and Hospital at Home.

Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors is based primarily on recommendations by Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Geriatrics at Mount Sinai. These include developing more senior friendly communities and the recent announcement by the premier of the Seniors Community Grant Programme is in keeping with this. The main goals of the Action Plan are as follows:

### 1) Healthy Seniors

- Improved exercise and falls prevention programmes
- Improved access to short-stay long-term care “assess and restore” services
- Enhanced long-term care
- Improved access to primary and community care
- Hospital at home

### 2) Senior-Friendly Communities

- Age-friendly communities
- Elderly Persons Centres and Active Living Fairs
- Life leases
- Better access to government programmes

### 3) Safety and Security

- Elder abuse prevention
- Elder abuse training for Police
- Fire safety
- Wandering prevention programme
- Education about Power of Attorney

It is also part of the plan that people can access a single source of information about seniors’ services at [ontario.ca/seniors](http://ontario.ca/seniors) or by calling 1 800 910 1999.

**Observations:** If District reps are speaking with their MPPs/LHINs/CCACs about seniors’ health care matters they could use the material in the Action plan and/or Dr Sinha’s report to illustrate that the government has stated goals in keeping with those of many of our members.

Anecdotal evidence shows that the effectiveness of LHINs and CCACs varies from region to region, e.g., many CCACs do an excellent job of making clear the options available when someone is transitioning from hospital to long term care, and there are appropriate placements available within a reasonable time frame, or, as applicable, a good level of home care. Districts experiencing a level of dysfunction within their local services may wish to take this up with their MPPs.

### References

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/seniors\\_strategy/docs/seniors\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/seniors_strategy/docs/seniors_strategy.pdf)

<http://www.ontario.ca/health-and-wellness/ontarios-action-plan-seniors>

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