

THE ADVOCATE



Government Affairs Advisory

A Publication of March of Dimes Canada

ONTARIO 2011 ELECTION

SPECIAL EDITION

The Ontario Election on October 6 is not about who takes power in Queen's Park. Rather, it is about you, your family and your community. And you can help make a difference.

The message we are promoting in this year's election focuses on improving home and community care, and freeing up hospital beds.

HOW?

We are asking that each Party Leader and every candidate commit to the following:

- 1) **Invest \$16 million immediately into Attendant Services programs.** This will have a profound impact on the health of Ontarians who use them, and produce substantial savings overall: a 50% reduction in waitlists across all LHINs.

This was the message we sent on August 17 to the 3 Party leaders, Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Tim Hudak and Andrea Horwath, asking for their positions on how we improve Ontario's strategy on aging with dignity.

In that letter we stated the following:

As a member of the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA), March of Dimes Canada is an ardent supporter of a comprehensive, affordable home and community service system that is available to all Ontarians regardless of where they live.

We are writing to you to let you know about a new website, www.agingwithdignity.ca, that OCSA member organizations like us are promoting during the 2011 Ontario election. It's all about engaging Ontarians in a discussion about the future of health care and the place of home and community support within it.

Specifically, we seek your views and your Party's stand on the following five objectives:

- Ontario needs comprehensive, affordable home and community care services that must be available to all Ontarians regardless of where they live.
- Ontario needs rebalanced healthcare funding so that it better reflects the significant contribution of home and community care.
- Ontario needs expanded research and public education efforts on the essential role of home and community care, and how it benefits the public health care system.
- Ontario's health care planning needs greater focus on individual and family needs.
- Ontario needs specific plans to address the human resource challenges in home and community care.

Please let us know if you would like more information or have any questions. You can find additional details on the Aging with Dignity information sheet following.

We look forward to your response.

Andria Spindel, President and Chief Executive Officer

These letters and election updates are also on our website at www.marchofdimes.ca/advocacy.

WHY DOES ONTARIO NEED COMPREHENSIVE, AFFORDABLE HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES? **To put it simply, so that we may Age with Dignity.**

The population is aging and the prevalence of chronic conditions and disabilities is on the rise.

- Ontario's seniors' population is expected to double in the next 15 years.
- Almost 80% of Ontarians over the age of 45 have a chronic condition, and of those, about 70% suffer from two or more chronic conditions.
- Persons with disabilities develop age-related diseases much earlier than the general population – at 50 years of age. They also have much higher incidents of chronic diseases.

Ontarians want to remain in their own homes and communities, not in hospitals or long term care facilities.

An Angus Reid Strategies poll for OCSA released today found:

- Six in ten Ontarians (62%) support giving funding for home and community support programs the same priority as funding for hospitals and long-term-care facilities and 21% believe home and community support services should be made a higher priority
- Six in ten Ontarians (59%) also agree with directing new funding designated for long-term-care to preventative home and community care services rather than bricks and mortar institution.

The Health Care in Canada Survey 2007 found Canadians would like:

- More home and community care programs: 78% (45% strongly)
- More funded wellness promotion and disease prevention education and intervention: 72% (42% strongly)
- Increasing investments to help patients manage their chronic illness: 72% (35% strongly)

By investing in home and community care, the province is investing in preventative health care, and can free up hospital beds, unclog emergency waiting rooms and reduce long-term care home waitlists the process.

Consider that many of those now on waiting lists for long-term-care homes do not need daily medical care. They just need help with things like bathing, household tasks or transportation to medical appointments. And they're not getting that help as they should.

What can you do? Commit to the following:

- Comprehensive, affordable home and community care services must be available to all Ontarians regardless of where they live.
- Rebalanced healthcare funding so that it better reflects the significant contribution home and community care does and could make to our health system.
- Expanded research and public education efforts on the essential role of home and community care and how it benefits the public health care system.
- Health care planning focused on individual and family needs.
- Specific plans to address health human resource challenges in home and community care.



Who represents the issues that matter most to you?



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Get involved and help make a difference. Did you know that, in recent years, upwards of 50% of Ontarians have not participated in elections and did not vote (at all levels).
- Remember: you can't make a difference if you don't participate.
- Your Voice Counts!
- Send this information to your contact list or friends and colleagues. Contact your local candidates and make sure they have copies of this information.
- Write to the editor of your local newspaper
- Attend All Candidate Meetings.
- Keep visiting our website for regular updates on the Ontario Election, as well as information on how to locate the campaign offices of local candidates.

We'll be covering all issues related to home and community care – and all issues in each Party's campaign platform related to Ontarians with disabilities.

You can also contact your candidate to see how well he or she approaches accessibility.

- Is your candidate including and reaching out to volunteers and voters with disabilities?
- Is the campaign office accessible to volunteers with disabilities?
- Are the polling stations in your riding accessible to voters with disabilities?
- Is the campaign literature available in other formats?
- Are the All Candidates Meetings in your riding accessible to those with disabilities?

Official election information, including where and when to vote, is available at www.elections.on.ca.

The Ontario 2011 Election Campaign starts with you.



On October 6th