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IMPROVING ONTARIO'S COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRE SYSTEM

In May 2005, former Ontario health minister and federal cabinet minister, Elinor Caplan, released her comprehensive review the Request for Proposals process used by Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) to select service providers to deliver home care services. CCACs use this process to obtain nursing, medical supplies and equipment, personal support and homemaking, and therapy services for their clients.

The scope of *Realizing the Potential of Home Care: Competing for Excellence by Rewarding Result*, was two-fold:

- To determine the impact of the current procurement process to acquire client services on quality, price and workforce stability, including determining if the ministry policy is achieving the intended outcomes and if CCAC's are adhering to the policy
- To make recommendations for potential improvements to the procurement process for clients services.

Caplan consulted with CCACs and service providers throughout the province, along with hundreds of interviews with members of the public, home care clients and home care employees. The government today announced it is supporting 68 of 70 overall recommendations by investing a total of \$30 million.

The adoption of these recommendations will have the greatest benefit for individuals employed in the home care field as personal support workers (PSWs). Personal support workers provide personal support and homemaking services to people to remain living at home, assist people being discharged from hospitals and reduce their need for hospitalization and placement in long-term care homes. Once the government implements these recommendations PSWs will have greater work place stability and improved compensation and employment benefits.

The government will also expand the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care LTC Action Line to hear home care complaints. To this end, the government is hiring up to five independent complaint coordinators

The government will provide funding for a research chair specific to home care to ensure that research continues to inform and improve the quality of home care services. The acceptance of this recommendation is aligned with the government's ongoing efforts to build a high-performing healthcare system.

In addition the Caplan report has also highlighted the need to promote quality services in home care by identifying, validating and sharing best practices, developing performance indicators, setting performance benchmarks and producing an annual report for the sector as part of the broader health system report.

A copy of of Caplan's recommendations, and the government's response, can be found on the Ministry's website, at www.health.gov.on.ca.

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