

Home Care in Ontario: Unlocking the Potential



COVID-19 has exposed gaps in healthcare systems across Canada. In Ontario, Canada’s most populous province, the warning signs are even more pronounced – challenges experienced in institutionalized care for seniors, including Long-Term Care (LTC), acute care, community-based services, and home care, have revealed a system that requires urgent and substantive transformation. There is an intense, immediate need to strengthen home care models to support and protect capacity in other settings against rapidly growing demand. Above all, it is clear that a senior-centric care ecosystem needs to include home care, acute care, and long-term care in order to safely and effectively support Ontario’s seniors.

While the pandemic has brought many of the historic challenges – funding, workforce shortages, quality, and safety – to the forefront in Ontario, it has also resulted in unprecedented levels of collaboration and virtual care being normalized. During the pandemic there was a greater risk of infection in congregate settings with people being safer in their own homes. This exemplifies the importance of home care as part of a continuum of care that allows for safe and healthy ageing.

In response to these challenges and opportunities, CBI Health, Canada’s leading community-based healthcare provider, commissioned Deloitte to make the case for an evolution towards a senior-centric approach to care in Ontario. The report, entitled **Home Care in Ontario: Unlocking the Potential**, explores the role home care plays as a critical element in the health and social care sectors and proposes design elements which should be foundational to achieving a senior-centric care ecosystem in Ontario.

Perspectives* on senior centric approach to Home Care

“Today, Home Care is only accessed **when something ‘happens’ to the patient/client**. This ‘distressed purchasing’ model needs to change”

“We need a **community of practice** and rights-based approach designed around the consumer”

“Models for **navigation** need to be agile – otherwise they become waitlists”

*Perspectives from acute, community, Home Care and primary care organizations at a Deloitte facilitated visioning session.

What defines a senior-centric approach to care in Ontario?

Deloitte's Aged Care report *Making Canada the Best Place to Age by 2030* identifies four dimensions that should underpin a senior-centric care ecosystem:

Dignity and Respect:

63% of respondents said

they have been treated unfairly or differently because of their age, **while 80% agreed** that adults 75 and older are seen as less important and often ignored.

Choice:

91% of Ontario seniors

hope to stay in their own home for as long as possible and **75% believe the government** has a role to play in ensuring people make informed decisions about home care services.

Seamless Care Journeys:

Currently more than 40,000

Canadians are on wait lists for nursing homes and up to **20% of seniors experience** some degree of social isolation.

Financial Autonomy and Empowerment:

1/3 of working Canadians

have some form of pension coverage and **63% of respondents** were concerned their families are not in a good position to care for older family members.

Elements of a senior-centric approach to Home Care

Building on these dimensions, the CBI Health / Deloitte report proposes four key elements required for home care to successfully contribute to a senior-centric care ecosystem:

1. Client centricity and user driven design where seniors are the designers of their care and service providers are rewarded for designing care models that achieve excellent outcomes.
2. Care coordination and navigation that leverages the potential of an interprofessional team and brings care coordination closer to the point of care.
3. Lifecycle approach with expanded scope of services and focus on upstream services that keep seniors in their own homes.
4. Governed ecosystem where providers work with clear lines of accountability and are incentivized to deliver high quality of care.

Ontario will need to create up to **115,000** more long term care beds by 2041 to accommodate the province's increasing aged population.



Source: MOHLTC: Long Term Care Commission Report (2021)

Enabling a senior-centric model of Home Care in Ontario

These elements require enabling through policy, contracting and accountability; funding; and technology. Accountability measures should be developed to focus on holistic health outcomes for patients. A consistent approach for home care contracts should include central management, consistent standards and outcomes, and a defined renewal process. An enabling policy framework will empower seniors to make decisions about care and maximize access to services.

A modern approach to funding should engage across the sector to understand constraints and develop solutions. Further investments into training of the existing workforce need to be considered. New funding models should enhance uptake of services and not create disincentives across providers.

A coordinated approach to technology should enhance cybersecurity, digital health literacy with clearly defined roles across acute care, primary and community care, and home care providers. Based on lessons learned from EHR and EMR roll outs, common standards and interoperability for community-based technology investments should be developed. Investments should be prioritized to improve access, enhance coordination, support client-centric care, support communications and patient monitoring, and to support accountability and monitoring of outcomes.

The economic case for expanding Home Care in Ontario

There is financial disparity between sectors of the healthcare system, with limited home care funding resulting in a rationing of services and long wait lists to receive them. The report outlines an economic case for expanding the home care program in Ontario that will also support seniors and keep them safe. The average daily cost of a patient in home care is 87% less than the cost for a patient in other care settings. Annual cost of patients in acute care that are waiting for home care is enough to purchase 67,198 new days of home care. There is a role for a robust home care program with an array of options that requires a modification in how these services are paid for.



\$1 spent on LTC



= 0.54 if services provided in Home Care



\$1 spent on ALC



= 0.13 spent if services provided in Home Care

A call to action for Ontario

The following four key priorities should underpin a senior-centric approach to home care in Ontario:

- 1. Accelerate Pathways to the Home:** Utilize pilot project approaches to accelerate the transition of clients from acute care to home care and avoid unnecessary admissions to acute and long-term care; engage across sector to provide solutions; review provincial home care sector to connect modernization efforts in long-term care.
- 2. Strengthen Funding and Accountability:** Address wage inequity gaps between acute, long-term care, and home care; ensure further support and funding through a new model of system navigation; evaluate existing models of funding and propose new options.
- 3. Address Governance Challenges:** Implement governed ecosystem approach; maintain consistent cross-sector participation; create new contract management function built on accountability, value, and system integration.
- 4. Stabilize New Models of Care:** Design new model for home care navigation to close digital health literacy challenges; leverage home care infrastructure to support new client needs; support continuous evaluation of home care models. The opportunity for new models of care that leverage technology is now larger than ever.

Before the pandemic, Ontario's healthcare system faced significant challenges. In Home Care, there was a "crisis before the crisis" marked by inequities in care, disjointed experiences, inadequate staffing models, and disconnected pathways across the acute, residential and community sectors. Healthcare organizations across the globe are using the unique opportunity presented by the pandemic to initiate a transformation of care delivery, and recent structural changes in Ontario's health care system allow for new thinking in the home care space.

Where to from here?

We are excited to announce that starting this fall we will be implementing an **Expert Panel Series: Enabling the Future of Home Care**. Panelists will collaborate to provide answers to key enablers highlighted in this report as well as to some of the biggest opportunities in the home care sector that can support the demand for senior-centric care today and in the future.

If you would like to learn more about contributing as a panel member, would like to access the complete version of this report, or would like to receive future updates from CBI Health [click here](#).