

ALS-HRS Providers Service Network

Meeting Notes
26 March 2025

Attendees:

Jennifer Lalonde (Co-Chair), Su'ad Ahmed & Billie Jo Williams (Ottawa West Community Support), Sandy Woodhouse (Co-Chair) & Michelle Hamilton (Thrive Housing & Support), Valerie Bishop de Young & Stacey Norris (VHA - Visiting Homemaking Association, Ottawa), Lindsay Selleck (J.W.MacIntosh, Winchester), Jessica Chong (Perley Health, Ottawa), Monique Thibodeau-Laflamme (Montfort Renaissance- Centre des Services Guigues, Ottawa), Casey Dixon, & Kim Lu (Carefor Ottawa), Sara Hess (Carefor, Eastern Counties), Sheila Roy (Groupe Action), Christine Wassing (Marianhill), Isabelle Lalonde (Service Communautaire Prescott-Russell), Augusta Goldie & Diane Coulas (Barry's Bay & Area Home Support), Teresa Sheckel (Community Care City of Kawartha Lakes), Jenni Poulin (Carebridge), Helen Esilman (NRLTC), Emily Hamilton (Renfrew Victoria Hospital), Michaela McClymont (Arnprior Regional Hospital), Stacey Moore (March of Dimes, Canada), Rachel Levesque (PSS, Community Care City of Kawartha Lakes), Ayan Mohamed (Community Care Durham), Isabelle Meunier (OH@H), Chris Cobus (CSS Shared Resources, Ontario East).

General topics discussed:

1. Welcoming Remarks

Sandy Woodhouse, Co-Chair, welcomed everyone.

2. Agenda – accepted as circulated.

3. Last Meeting notes (22 Jan 2025) – accepted as circulated.

4. Casellholme Award

Sandy acknowledged the summary provided by OCSA re: the decision involving SEIU and Casellholme mandating the application of the \$3.00 wage enhancement to **all** hours worked, not just direct hours of care, directly challenging the current policy governing the \$3.00 per hour wage enhancement for PSWs which limits its application to direct hours of care only. OCSA recommended that any agency entering into labour negotiations seek independent legal advice to ensure compliance with current regulations and best practices. In the meantime, OCSA will continue to advocate for a broader application of wage enhancements to include all hours worked, which they believe is consistent with how this enhancement is applied by other health sectors.

She welcomed discussion from the group. Participants commented on how their respective Boards/Agencies applied the wage enhancement for PSWs. The group was split, in that some agencies applied this wage increase to all PSW hours while others applied it to only direct hours of service as defined by the Ministry.

Sandy reminded the group of the letter sent on their behalf to both the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health acknowledging the negative consequences of the current policy. While the group is split on their current application of the wage enhancement, **all** agreed in principle, that wage enhancements should apply across all hour worked by PSWs in all sectors.

5. Defining direct and indirect hours of work – is there value in OHE ALS-HRS providers aligning?

It was suggested that there could be value in voicing, as a sector, what is considered 'direct vs indirect' hours of care and why. The **impact** of defining 'direct vs indirect' hours of care differs depending upon the various work settings involved, i.e., unionized vs non-unionized, congregate ALS vs community ALS, and urban vs rural programs.

It was suggested that a sub-committee be formed to dive deeper into the varied impacts and bring back their recommendations to the larger group on the matter. **Action:** Helen Eisman, Jessica Chong, Michelle Hamilton, and Sara Hess agreed to form a sub-committee to examine this further. Chris to coordinate an online meeting to do so.

6. **24:7 On Call**

Participants shared their various means of addressing the requirement of providing 24:7 on call service for ALS clients. The discussion included how they also deal with 'scheduling' when having to respond to sudden changes in availability of staff and wages paid for on call and response time.

Solutions varied, e.g, utilizing an 'on call' service and/or staff available in a residential setting (LTC, Hospice/Palliative setting, Supportive Housing) to assist in responding to client calls overnight, with coordinators/supervisors available for back up as needed.

7. **Agency Highlights**

Thrive Housing and Support (Sandy Woodhouse) – recently updated their 'community room' by recruiting the skills of an Indigenous Artist to paint a mural welcoming all who enter. This room is used for a variety of programming, as it is equipped with roll away desks and island, to enable the space to be adjusted as needed.

Marianhill (Christine Wassing) – Has been running a 'nursing home without walls' program in Eganville, allowing community clients in need of a bath to access therapeutic tub in the Fairfield Residence assisted by staff involved with the ALS program. Definite need for this in community.

8. **Update from Ontario Health at Home (OH@H) – Isabelle Meunier**

Isabelle provided a brief update, as the OH @Home representative from the Champlain region. She acknowledged the excess surge in hospital numbers has been an area of focus recently, but lately seems to be subsiding somewhat. She posed a question to ALS Providers asking if it makes sense for OH @Home to refer to a neighbouring program if the program in a given geography has no capacity?

It was suggested that this question may be answered differently in the various sub-regions of OHE, and that it might be helpful to first ask how referrals from OH @Home are received in the various sub-regions? Discussion followed, indicating that in Champlain, all ALS referrals originate from OH @Home, while in Central East, referrals are not received from OH @Home, but rather from a variety of community providers. There are pros and cons to both processes, and it was recognized that when a central point of access was established by OH @Home (LHIN) in Champlain several years ago, it was done to support equitable access, even though at times it has caused inefficiencies. In light of the Auditor General's report suggesting a need to consider efficiencies, this topic will be revisited at a future meeting.

Action: In the meantime, Chris to take back to Nathalie Lafreniere, Director, CSS Shared Resources, Ontario East, the group's interest in incorporating a question re: referral sources in the current "Apples to Apples" project getting underway.

9. **Next Meeting – 28 May 2025 at 1 pm.**

Topics for consideration: Sub-Committee update on direct vs indirect hours of care; OH Capacity reporting; update on 'apples to apples' project.