



Unleashing Attendant Services for People With Physical Disabilities Better Quality Service at a Lower Cost to the Health System

Ontario Attendant Services Advisory Committee
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ATTENDANT SERVICES: BETTER QUALITY SERVICE AT A LOWER COST TO THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The Problem

There are 4,000 people in Ontario with physical disabilities waiting 4 – 10 years for the Attendant Services required to assist them with the activities of daily living. This is costing the taxpayers and the health system millions of dollars every year because these people are:

- Waiting in hospital ALC beds
- Inappropriately placed in LTC Homes, forcing seniors on wait lists to stay in ALC beds (complicating another problem)
- Receiving CCAC services at a cost 33% higher than Attendant Services
- Waiting at home with increasing needs and elderly parents (with both parties facing coping challenges)
- Ending up in Emergency Rooms with secondary complications like bed sores and falls
- Prevented from pursuing work opportunities and contributing to the economy
- Suffering from poor quality of life with mental health and addiction issues

The Numbers

Service Location	Average Cost
Attendant Outreach in the community	\$1,200/month or \$14,400/year
Hospital ALC Bed	\$1,200/DAY or \$438,000/year

The wait list for Attendant Outreach and Self-Managed Attendant Services could be reduced by 50% in year 1 with an investment of \$16 million. This would mean 895 more people could be served with the existing infrastructure. At the moment, \$16 million is what is being spent to have 40 people with disabilities inappropriately in ALC beds/year.

How can the Government of Ontario afford NOT to act?

A Strategic Investment In Attendant Services Can Save Dollars And Improve Services And Value For Taxpayers

Recommendation #1.

Immediately invest \$16 million into programs that will keep people with physical disabilities out of ALC beds, rehab hospitals and LTC homes. Investment in existing infrastructure can quickly address needs and would mean a **50% reduction in Attendant Outreach wait lists** across all Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), and a **50% reduction in the provincial Direct Funding – Self-Managed Attendant Services wait list¹**. The three Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care programs that can deliver immediately are:

- Self-Managed Attendant Services – Direct Funding
- Attendant Outreach Services, and
- Supports for Daily Living – 24/7 clustered outreach services

Self-Managed Attendant Services funding could go out immediately to clients to purchase their own services. This could free up Attendant Outreach spaces, as well as CCAC units of service. There is excellent capacity for current

Attendant Service providers to ramp up immediately with additional Attendant Outreach Services in communities using current Attendant Service Outreach Programs as well as Assisted Living Services in Supportive Housing (ALSSH) providers using community cluster care models.

Recommendation #2.

Develop a Provincial Strategy for Persons with Physical Disabilities to be implemented across the province in all 14 LHINs. The strategy would redistribute health system financial resources targeting delivery of the most appropriate services at the least cost and the best value, thereby eliminating the remaining wait lists for attendant services: 895 people waiting for Attendant Outreach and Self-Managed Direct Funding, and 2,298 people waiting for Assisted Living Services in Supportive Housing.

1. Data as reported in Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care Quarter 3, 2009 chart.

Attendant Services as a Human Right

Canada, along with the provinces and territories, ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on March 11, 2010. Article 19 of the Convention states that:

“persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and prevent isolation or segregation from the community.”

A strategic investment in Attendant Services would not only be good for people and an appropriate use of the scarce health care resources, it would also show Ontario to be a leader in meeting Canada's legal obligations under the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

It's the right thing for persons with disabilities. It's what the taxpayers want. The time for action is now.

Attendant Services Stories

Waiting in a LTC Home:

Shelley, 44, the victim of a violent crime that has resulted in quadriplegia, is currently on the March of Dimes' wait list for Attendant Services and living in a long term care home. Very intelligent and articulate, Shelley is living with elderly patients with dementia and sharing a room with a verbally aggressive resident. In the absence of the range of motion exercises she needs, Shelley is having difficulty transferring due to diminished muscle tone. The environment is taking both a physical and psychological toll. All Shelley wants is an atmosphere that promotes good health and encourages progress and independence – something attendant services could more cost effectively and appropriately do.

Living Independently:



Nancy Skinner was 9 years old when she was diagnosed with Polio. As the effects of the disease progressed, Nancy needed a wheelchair and more support to remain independent. For 20 years, Nancy has been supported by Cheshire Homes of London's Outreach Attendant Services program in her own home – getting visits

each day to help her get going in the morning, get settled in at night and to give her a break in the afternoon while caring for her elderly mother until her mother's recent death. Nancy is very active in her community. “Cheshire gives me the chance to live independently in my own home and do the things that I enjoy.”

When Attendant Services are provided:



Matthew Arguin, 28, has just completed his Masters degree in Divinity and is on his way to becoming an ordained Anglican priest. Born with his umbilical cord around his neck, a lack of oxygen resulted in Spastic Quadriplegic Cerebral Palsy, resulting in Matthew needing to use a wheelchair for mobility. He receives Outreach Attendant

Services each day which has allowed him to live his dreams. Besides pursuing his studies, Matthew also volunteers at a retirement and nursing home.

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