

# Facing the Facts

## Issue

HOME CARE IN ONTARIO

User profile & areas for improvement

## Facts

- An aging population<sup>1</sup>, deinstitutionalization, new technologies, and growing expectations for community services are increasing the demand for home-care services in Ontario.
- In 2005, home-care services were provided to approximately 774,000 people in Ontario.<sup>2</sup>
- Home care is the preferred place of care for Ontarians. A 2005 survey showed that 88% of surveyed Ontarians prefer home care, and 84% prefer home care for loved ones.<sup>3</sup>
- 59% of Community Care Access Centre clients are elderly; 10% are children<sup>4</sup>, and 15% have Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.<sup>5</sup> (An estimated 75-90% of home care is provided by informal caregivers<sup>6</sup>.)
- 57% of home-care referrals come from hospitals.<sup>7</sup> There are over 1 million discharges home annually from over 200 hospital sites.<sup>8</sup>
- 58% of Alternative Level of Care days (medically unnecessary days in hospital) result because community services aren't available or patients awaiting discharge have been unable to finalize arrangements.<sup>9</sup>
- Safety in home settings remains a concern, and needs more robust research. An estimated 23% of patients discharged from hospital to home or seniors' residence experience at least 1 adverse event (AE); 12% are preventable; 12% lead to hospital re-admission; 72% are due to medication errors.<sup>10</sup> More studies are needed to understand AE incidences in the home and develop prevention safeguards.
- Lack of uptake of data in some areas of home care (quality indicators) and absence of data in others (adverse events) inhibit evidence-informed decision-making. Filling in those gaps would help guide the resource allocation decisions we need to achieve the goals of an integrated health system.

## Response

The Change Foundation will focus on: improving patients' transitions from hospital to community; establishing a reporting system for adverse events in the home-care sector; and understanding the pressures and needs of informal caregivers.

The Change Foundation is a policy think tank that generates research, analysis and informed discussion on key and emerging health system issues, starting with the integration of health-care services in communities across Ontario.

[www.changefoundation.com](http://www.changefoundation.com)

<sup>1</sup> The population age 65 and over more than doubles from 1.6 million, or 12.9 per cent of the population, in 2006 to 3.5 million, or 21.4 per cent, in 2031. Source: Ontario Population Projections Update 2006–2031

<sup>2</sup> MOHLTC, *Results-Based Plan 2007/8*

<sup>3</sup> Pollara, CCAC Procurement Review Quantitative Survey, 2005

<sup>4</sup> Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres—[www.ccac-ont.ca](http://www.ccac-ont.ca)

<sup>5</sup> Alzheimer Society Ontario (2005). *A Profile of Ontario's Home Care Clients with Alzheimer's Disease*

<sup>6</sup> Health Canada (2005). *The Information Needs of Informal Caregivers Involved in Providing Support to a Critically Ill Loved One*

<sup>7</sup> Home Care Database, 2006

<sup>8</sup> CIHI, Discharge Abstract Database, 2004/5

<sup>9</sup> Provincial Health Planning Database, 2005

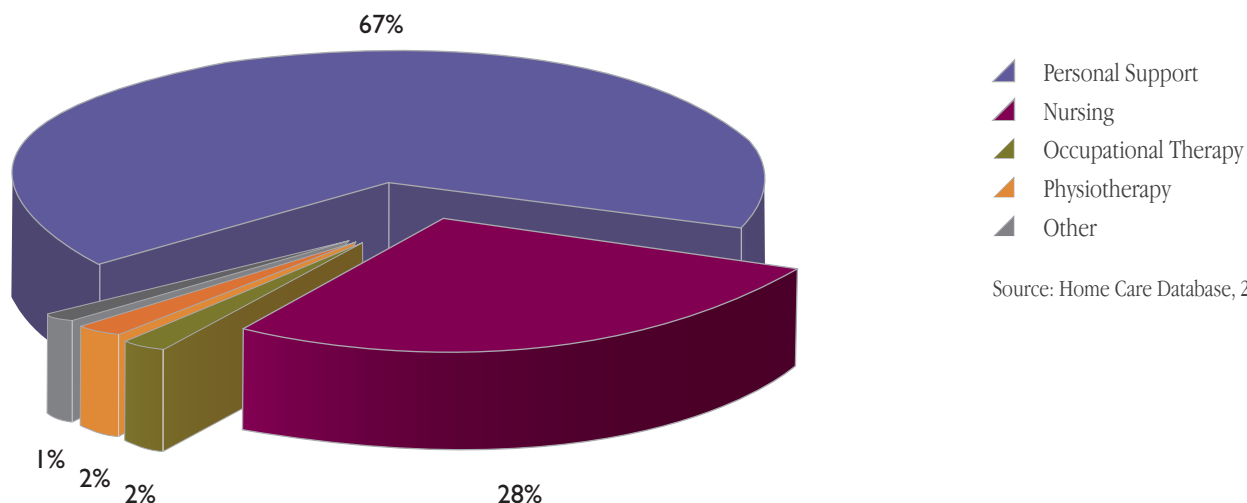
<sup>10</sup> Forster, A. (2004). *Adverse Events among Medical Patients after Discharge from Hospital*



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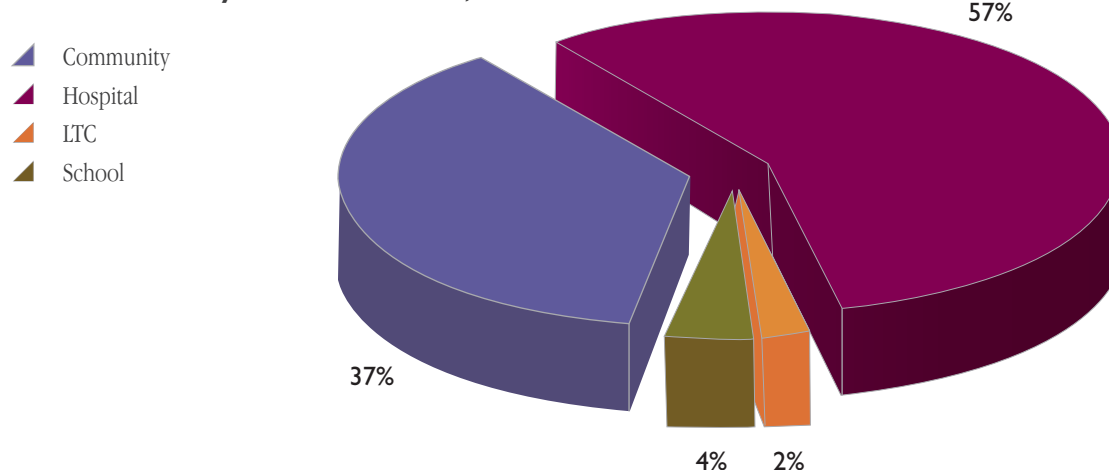
HEALTH CARE DESERVES  
OUR FINEST THOUGHT

**Table 1: Home Care Visits by Service Type in Ontario, 2005**



Source: Home Care Database, 2006

**Table 2: Home Care Referrals by Source in Ontario, 2005**



Source: Home Care Database, 2006

**Table 3: Total Public Home-Care Expenditure in Ontario**

	Total Expenditure	% Total Health Care Budget	Real per Capita \$
1999/0	1,378 M	5.8	116.5
2000/1	1,326 M	5.0	104.7
2001/2	1,349 M	4.8	107.9
2002/3	1,394 M	4.2	102.3
2003/4	1,405 M	4.2	99.8

NOTE: Although provincial funding for home care has significantly increased during the last decade, it continued to be a small component of the overall health-care budget in 2003/4 (4.2%). It has also declined as a percentage of total health expenditure and per capita funding.<sup>11</sup> In 2007, the Ontario government announced an Aging at Home Strategy. Over the next three years, \$700 million will be invested in improving the support services for seniors to help them live independently in their own homes.

Source: CIHI, Public Sector Expenditures and Utilization of Home Care Services, 2007; www.cihi.ca

<sup>11</sup> CIHI (2007). Public-Sector Expenditures and Utilization of Home Care Services in Canada: Exploring Data.