**AGING AT HOME – Page 2**

**Key Message:**

Seniors are the fastest growing segment in Canada’s population. By the year 2040, those over age 65 will represent 25% of the total population. Unless current practices change, 71.4% of all health care expenditures will be allocated to the care of seniors. Canada already has a shortage of beds in long-term care homes (LTCH). In Ontario alone, there are 40 000 individuals on waiting lists for placement.

There must be a better way to serve our seniors. According to survey, 87% of seniors want to age in their own homes. With the appropriate government supports, this could transpire and could also expediate potential savings to health care costs.

**ASPECTS TO CONSIDER:**

1. **Benefits to the system**:

* Free up space in hospitals. Currently, 15% of hospital beds are occupied by seniors who are awaiting placement in long-term care homes.
* Reduce overall costs to the health care system by reducing the required number of beds in LTCH which will reduce the number of hospital staff required to care for those in hospitals.
* Reduce the pressure on assisted living and LTC residences, leaving space in these facilities for those for whom aging at home is not appropriate.

1. **Benefits to the Individual:**

* Remaining in one’s own home allows the individual to remain independent.
* Remaining in the familiar surroundings of one’s own home contributes to better mental health of seniors.
* Seniors will avoid exposure to infections and contaminants often encountered in a LTCH.
* Visits from family and friends can follow a more normal pattern.
* Seniors and their caregivers can select the level and timing of care.
* Costs of home renovations will likely be less than those associatedwith living in assisted-living or long-term care facilities.

1. **Potential Role of the Government in necessary changes:**

* Target healthcare funding to ensure a change in the system from a hospital/LTCH driven system to one of community/home service.
* Ensure that all seniors have adequate funds to age at home.
* Be proactive in promoting aging at home by ~~g~~ providing the appropriate support.
* Recognize the need for in-home care-workers by (1) providing targeted funding and (2) respecting the work that they do with appropriate salary and benefits.

The situation with seniors is already serious and will continue to worsen unless action is taken. Aging at home, although not feasible for all seniors, will result in a win-win scenario for both the government and for seniors.

Now is the time for action to support aging at home.