



# AGING AT HOME

**Key Message:** Seniors are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population.

- Most seniors prefer to remain in their own homes, but they need the supports that would enable them to do so. Their home is their familiar comfortable environment. They are much happier when they can maintain their independence and control their daily lives.
- The current situation for many seniors is already serious and will continue to worsen unless action is taken. Aging at home is a better way to serve them. Appropriate government supports will provide a desirable option and will achieve potential savings to health care costs.

## **SPECIFIC ASPECTS TO CONSIDER:**

### **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 (LTCH).
- Reduce overall costs to the health care system by reducing the required number of beds in LTCH which in turn will reduce the number of hospital staff required to care for those in hospitals.
- Reduce waiting times for those for whom aging at home is not appropriate.
- Accommodation to meet seniors changing needs will be less disruptive.

### **Benefits to the individual:**

- Seniors' independence remains intact.
- Familiar surroundings contribute to better mental health.
- Exposure to infections and contaminants are reduced.
- Family and friend visitations 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 associated with living in assisted-living or long-term care facilities.

### **Potential role of the Government in necessary changes:**

- Target healthcare funding to ensure movement away from a hospital/LTCH model to one of community/home service.
- Ensure that all seniors have adequate funds to age at home.
- Proactively promote aging at home by 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.
- Recognize the unpaid work of family and friends who act as caregivers