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## **Written Submission to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Legislative Assembly of Ontario**

### **Re: Bill 283, Advancing Oversight and Planning in Ontario's Health System Act, 2021**

**Prepared by Miranda Ferrier, President of the Ontario Personal  
Support Workers Association (OPSWA)**

**May 13, 2021**



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On behalf of the Ontario Personal Support Workers Association (OPSWA), I would like to extend our appreciation for allowing us to put forward our written submission on **Bill 283: Advancing Oversight and Planning in Ontario's Health System Act, 2021.**

OPSWA was created by PSWs for PSWs. It was created in June of 2010, by the original founders of PSW Canada, now known as the Canadian Support Workers Association. It is the first chapter of the Canadian Support Workers Association and now represents more than 45,000 personal support workers (PSWs) in Ontario.

As the professional association of Ontario's Personal Support Workers (PSWs), we have advocated for the past 10 years for the regulation of PSWs. Currently, Ontario's PSWs need a regulatory model that would provide this profession with a stabilizing element that it is currently lacking. We have worked tirelessly toward a regulatory model that validates the valuable workforce of PSWs who have continued to step up throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and one which reflects and uphold current best practices enjoyed our members.

Specifically, we have advocated for a regulatory model that would satisfy the following current industry thresholds:

1. Demonstrate clear public safety mechanisms
2. Ensure title protection for PSWs
3. Standardize this profession for the benefit of all Ontarians



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Through the establishment of a regulatory model, it becomes clear that PSWs are recognized as legitimate members of the health care system. A regulatory body will allow PSWs to be formally recognized as equal members of their health care teams. It will also level the playing field between long-term care and community care PSWs.

As the Government of Ontario knows, PSWs have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and have continually sprung to the front lines to protect our most vulnerable citizens.

We were encouraged to hear that the Ministry of Health was actively investigating different regulatory approaches to help stabilize this profession earlier this year. We applaud the announcement from the Government of Ontario to implement a regulatory model for the province's PSWs, the Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority.

This proposed Authority would stabilize the PSW profession, while still offering the public the necessary protections and oversights. Through this regulatory model, the hardworking PSWs of Ontario would finally receive title protection that we deserve.

The OPSWA hopes this regulatory authority to maintain continuity with the current standards and best practices already employed by our members and partners (professional liability insurance, annual police record checks, ID Badges, education verification standards) and prevents any new financial burden upon them.



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Furthermore, this model would help solve the staffing crisis, a current ongoing issue throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, by attracting more workers to the field and encouraging PSWs who have left the field to rejoin.

We hope to see Bill 283 pass in the House and work with this government on the development of the regulations to implement this regulatory body. The OPSWA looks forward to working with the Ministry of Health and our active and vibrant professional community.