



Wellness for everyday living
Pour un mieux-être

Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2022

About VHA Health & Home Support

VHA Health and Home Support is the largest provider of community support services in the Ottawa region.

At VHA, we provide personal care for the most vulnerable. Our services include assisted living in supportive housing settings, respite care for frail seniors and their caregivers and attendant services for people with physical disabilities. We serve more than 1000 clients at any point in time, supporting them with services such as physical care, bathing, mobility, and meal preparation.

Our clients are people with a wide diversity of need, from those with a severe disability who need 24/7 support – such as people with paraplegia and quadraplegia - to people suffering the infirmities of chronic progressive diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis, ALS and Arthritis, all of whom need progressive assistance with their personal care.

The services we provide are at the most intense end of the spectrum of community support services. We are not 'Home Care' services, but are often confused as such.

Current Challenges

Like all other providers of community support services in Ontario, we are a not-for-profit, operating with government funding to provide these services. Many of our clients would be unable to afford or access these services if we did not provide them.

In eight of the past ten years, community support providers have received no cost of living increases to their budget. For some services, the government has failed to provide any budget increases for 20-plus years.

Our reality is increasingly difficult to manage. Like other health sectors, we are experiencing unprecedented demand due to an aging population. But in 2021, community support services were not even mentioned in the provincial budget.

As a result of funding not keeping pace with rising costs, **every new client asking for service represents a net financial loss to our organization.** New clients will soon be shut out of the system, resulting in a loss of community-based services not only in Ottawa but across Ontario.

Budget Request:

Our ask is simple– we need more financial support to be provided to the community support sector so we can keep supporting those in need and take on new clients.

This financial support should include:

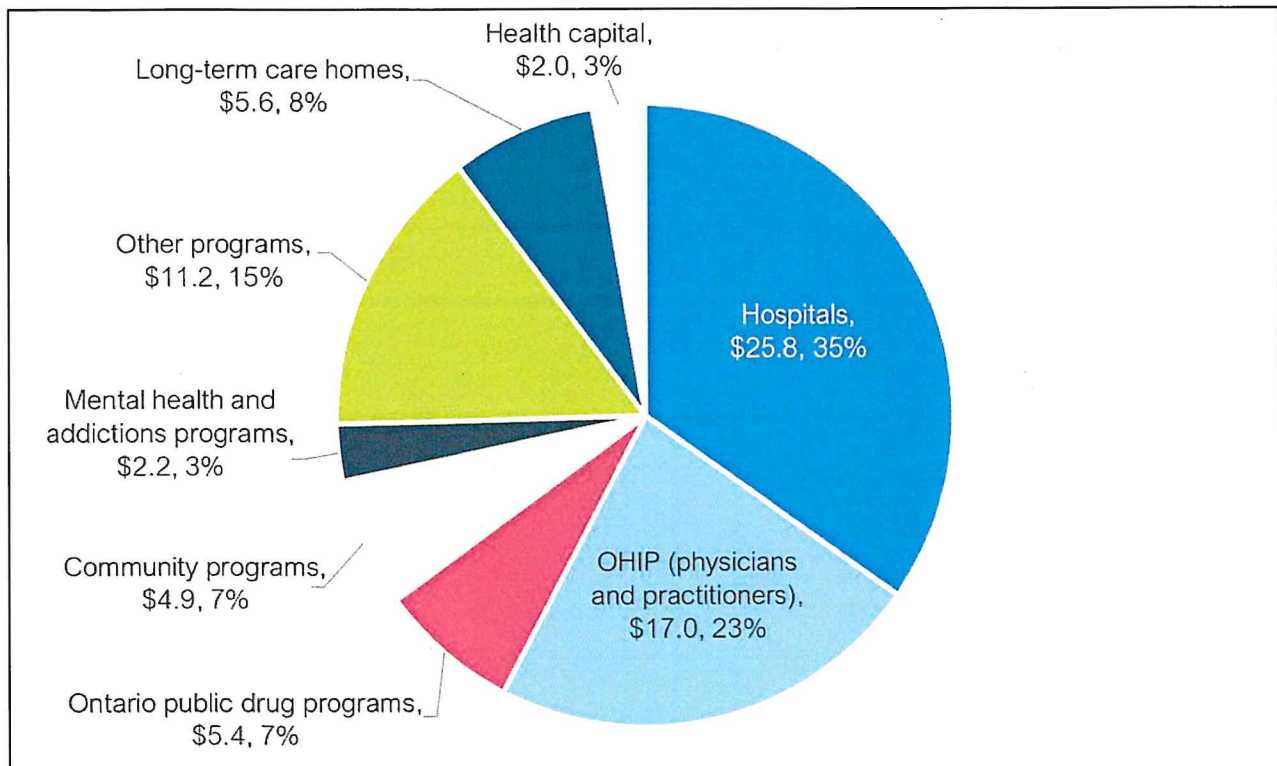
1. Immediately embed the PSW Temporary Wage Enhancement funding into base budgets of all PSW employers, including community support service providers; and
2. An immediate injection of +8% funding to raise base funding, in consideration of the absence of cost of living increases in the past 8 years; and
3. A commitment to cost of living increases to base funding for all community support service providers for the next 4 years.

Community support services are the most efficient providers of low cost, high impact health services. Every dollar invested in community support saves significantly more by keeping someone out of hospital or long-term care.

Nevertheless, funding to community support services is significantly outweighed by other areas of the health system (see Appendix 1 and 2). We need to ensure the sustainability of community support services not only now but for future clients that will depend on our services.

Appendix

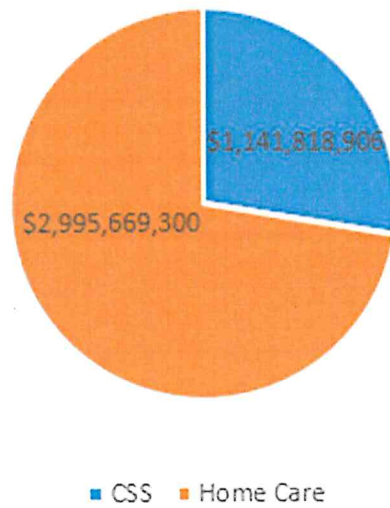
Appendix 1: Ontario Health Budget Breakdown (2021-22)¹



¹ <https://www.fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/2021-health-estimates>

Appendix 2: Breakdown of Home & Community Care Budget 2020-21²

2020-21 Home and Community Care Budget



² ibid