



*Ontario Community
Support Association
Association ontarienne
de soutien communautaire*

104 - 970 Lawrence Avenue
W.
Toronto, ON M6A 3B6
(416) 256-3010;
1-800-267-OCSA
Fax: (416) 256-3021
www.ocsa.on.ca

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ONTARIO GOVERNMENT MAKES SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO
KEEPING PEOPLE LIVING INDEPENDENTLY**
***Ontario Community Support Association Positive about First Time
Medical and Diagnostic Equipment Funding for The Community Sector***

(Toronto, ON, March 4, 2005) – The provincial government has moved one step closer to providing hundreds of Ontarians with disabilities and frail elderly persons the opportunity to live independently with the assistance of new medical and diagnostic equipment. This is the first ever investment in medical and diagnostic equipment to Community Support Services from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

During an announcement earlier today by Peter Fonseca, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health, Ontario revealed it's investment of \$9.1 million to Community Support Services (CSS) and Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) around the province. The money will be used to purchase medical equipment to assist people in their own homes, in supportive housing and adult day programs in the community. The equipment includes mechanical lifts, bathing equipment, intravenous and feeding pumps, as well devices designed to increase mobility and independence such as door openers and wheelchairs.

The \$9.1M will be split among those Community Support Service agencies and CCACs that applied for eligible funding. In total, 186 CSS agencies will receive \$5.5M. CCACs will receive a total funding of \$3.6M.

"We applaud the government's efforts to ensure the safety of Ontarians and enable access to services so that people have the supports they need to stay independent in their homes and communities. This is one of the many stepping stones necessary to build up capacity in the community to achieve the government's goal of a community-based delivery of health care", says Valerie Bishop-de Young, OCSA President.

"This critical funding will go a long way to improve the safety of both clients and workers while improving the quality of life for hundreds of people with failing health and disabilities", explained Joe McReynolds, OCSA CEO.

Community Support Services include a broad basket of services such as Meals on Wheels, adult/Alzheimer day programs, personal and home support, transportation and supportive housing programs.

Last year the government invested \$29.2M in Community Support Services. This is a good start, however a great deal more is required to ensure that frail elderly persons and those living at home with life-long disabilities or illnesses receive appropriate levels of home and community care. OCSA remains optimistic that priority will be assigned to this sector in the upcoming provincial budget and funding will be allocated to these essential health care services.

The Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) represents 360 community support agencies. Member agencies have 25,000 staff and 100,000 volunteers. 750,000 people of all ages across Ontario receive community support services each year. These important, cost-effective services prevent unnecessary hospitalizations, ER admissions and premature institutionalization.

**For more information, contact:
Lori Payne, Communications, OCSA
416-256-3010 Ext 242 lori@ocsa.on.ca**