



September 24, 2011

Ms. Andria Spindel
President and Chief Executive Officer
Ontario March of Dimes
10 Overlea Boulevard
Toronto, Ontario
M4H 1A4

Dear Ms. Spindel:

Thank you very much for the Ontario March of Dimes' 2011 provincial election questionnaire. I am pleased to provide you with the attached response, which outlines the Ontario Liberal Party's position on the issues you have raised.

Ontario Liberals understand and appreciate the importance of home and community support programs. We are committed to continuing to work with you and our partners to build on the progress we have made together.

Ontario Liberals are the only party with a positive plan to move Ontario forward. Together, we got through the recession the Ontario way: we protected education and health care, stood by workers in the hardest hit industries, and worked together to find new opportunities for our province and our families. Our strong leadership, experienced team and thoughtful long-term plan are getting results for Ontario families.

Eight years ago, during the dark days of Conservative cuts and conflict, Ontario was moving backwards. Today, our schools are rated among the world's best, our health care ranks first in Canada, and old jobs are coming back while new jobs are being created in emerging industries like advanced manufacturing and clean energy.

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Our plan is working and Ontario is solidly on track. The Hudak PCs would take us off track and put our fragile recovery at risk with their reckless schemes. We need to keep moving forward, together.

Ms. Spindel, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Ontario March of Dimes' questionnaire — and please accept my best wishes.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dalton McGuinty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D" and "M".

Dalton McGuinty
Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party
Premier

Enclosure

Questionnaire Response: Ontario March of Dimes

1. Ontario needs comprehensive, affordable home and community care services that must be available to all Ontarians regardless of where they live.

Ontario Liberals agree that Ontarians deserve equitable access to high-quality, comprehensive and affordable home and community care. We are committed to rethinking how we deliver health care to better serve our aging population in all regions of the province, so they can remain in their homes longer and so their caregivers can be better supported.

Since 2003, Ontario Liberals have taken great strides to improve access to community services. In 2010/11 we invested \$2 billion in Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) services, a 64 per cent increase over 2003. Over 600,000 clients are now receiving home care in the province. In 2007, we also launched an innovative Aging at Home Strategy, investing \$1.1 billion over four years. The program provides seniors and their caregivers with an integrated continuum of community-based services to allow them to stay healthy and live more independently in their homes. If re-elected we will continue to focus on enhancing the quality and accessibility of home care and community care.

2. Ontario needs rebalanced health care funding so that it better reflects the significant contribution of home and community care.

Ontario Liberals agree that to meet the needs of our aging population we must refocus investment to support greater capacity in the home and community care sector. We know that Ontarians want more community services — and we want to support their choice to be cared for at home. The shift away from expensive institutional care is part of the answer to containing health care costs but, even more importantly, it is essential to improving the quality of life for individuals and families struggling with the burden of complex chronic illness.

Since 2003, we have increased investment in the community sector at a greater rate than for the acute sector. We plan to continue with this strategy going forward. Our 2011 budget was the first ever to commit multi-year funding increases to the community sector. Despite the challenging fiscal environment, we will continue to invest three per cent more in the community sector in each of the next three years. This compares to an increase in hospital base budgets of 1.5 per cent in the 2011/12 fiscal year.

If re-elected Ontario Liberals plan to continue investing in home and community care. Our comprehensive plan to bring health care home includes a commitment to provide \$60 million per year to fund an additional three million hours of personal support for those in need. We will also provide funding to realign home and community care to provide expanded access to house calls, and online and phone consults for house-

bound Ontarians. Finally, we recognize that the health care system can be intimidating. That is why we will provide a Health Care Coordinator who will facilitate care between specialists and family doctors, hospitals and the community to assist seniors who have been hospitalized within the previous 12 months.

3. Ontario needs expanded research and public education efforts on the essential role of home and community care, and how it benefits the public health care system.

Ontario Liberals are dedicated to an evidence-based approach to health system planning. The *Excellent Care for All* legislation empowers the Health Quality Ontario agency to spread clinical best practices to improve patient outcomes and value for money. Significant existing research points to the value of community-based solutions as compared to acute system interventions. We plan to work with Health Quality Ontario to ensure that available research is translated into practice in Ontario.

Ontario Liberals will continue to publicly advocate that the most viable plan for health system sustainability and improved patient outcomes is to shift additional services to the community. This message resonates very strongly with the public, who tell us that they want to be able to access more health care services at home, close to family and friends.

4. Ontario's health care planning needs greater focus on individual and family needs.

Ontario Liberals have taken a number of steps to bring a patient-centered focus to health care through the *Excellent Care for All Act* and will continue to reform the health care system to be more responsive to patients and their families. We are revamping how our health care services are funded by shifting to a patient-based payment model where hospitals and other providers receive funding that is determined by the complexity of patients served and their outcomes. We have already piloted a patient-based payment project in the community sector in partnership with CCACs. The Integrated Client Care project provides bundled funding for community providers to improve care for patients requiring coordinated treatment. The initiative is initially targeting the following client groupings:

- Wound Care
- Palliative Care

- Frail Seniors (Seniors 75+ years old with two or more medical conditions)
- Medically Complex Children.

If the results substantiate it, we will expand this patient-focused model to clients with other conditions.

If re-elected we will also introduce new initiatives designed to improve care for individuals and families with particularly high needs. Ministry of Health data suggests that one per cent of Ontarians consume as much as 49 per cent of all hospital and home care resources each year. We can provide better care to these frail seniors, and we will, through our plan to improve access to house calls, personal support services and personalized care coordination.

We also recently announced plans to establish a Family Caregiver Leave policy, which would allow Ontarians to take up to eight weeks of job-protected leave to provide care for sick family members who require support. Those struggling to provide help to relatives afflicted with serious illnesses should never have to worry about losing a job if they need to take time off work. Ontario Liberals recognize this and will ensure job-protected leave for those in need. We will also work with the federal government to try to make certain that those who take time off under the plan are eligible to receive Employment Insurance (EI).

5. Ontario needs specific plans to address the human resource challenges in home and community care.

Ontario Liberals agree that increasing demand for community care will require enhanced health human resources (HHR) planning in the sector. We need to ensure that qualified staff are available to deliver these essential services. We will work with Health Force Ontario and our partners in the sector like March of Dimes to continue HHR planning in this area.

We will also develop a PSW registry to improve our knowledge of the personal support workforce. PSWs will have the opportunity to sign up with the registry and provide key information such as: contact information, current employment, educational background and years of experience. Employers and the public could use the registry to verify this important information, and employers would be better informed to meet patient needs.

We all want to know that the people we love are getting sensitive, responsive care that is aligned with their specific needs. The Ontario Liberal plan is about working with our system partners like the Ontario March of Dimes to transform the model of care — and provide the right care for the patient in the right setting. It is about increasing the quality of the care that patients receive. And, it is about giving families peace of mind.

Forward. Together.