



Hon. Christine Elliott
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
College Park 5th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

February 17, 2021

Dear Minister Elliott,

Re: Protect home and community care – save care coordinator jobs

Given the crucial role that care coordinators play in reducing hospital overcrowding and ensuring dignified and quality care for clients at home and in the community, we urgently ask that you change the regulations under Bill 175 to ensure they do not threaten our care coordinator jobs.

As the COVID-19 pandemic depletes the health-care system, care coordinator jobs are needed now more than ever. If care coordinator jobs are lost, or devalued, Ontarians will see more hallway health care during and after the pandemic. As well, the quality, scope and dignity of care at home and in the community will be undermined.

Minister, Ontario's hospital leaders are sounding alarm bells about their ability to weather the COVID-19 storm. Our jobs have never been more important to Ontario – now and beyond.

More than ever, the government has the duty to use every tool to reduce pressure on hospitals, including by expanding and strengthening the home and community care sector. More than ever, care coordinators play a critical role in unlocking hospital beds and capacity, strengthening the resilience of the health-care system and ensuring dignified care for clients at home.

However, the proposed regulations under Bill 175 threaten all of that. Bill 175's regulations jeopardize care coordinator jobs by strongly suggesting our jobs will either be cut entirely, as they are currently structured, or privatized to for-profit health service providers. Transferring our jobs to profit-making home care corporations would mean lower pay and benefits and poorer working conditions, while the profit-margins of the corporations prosper. It also poses a clear conflict of interest if the corporation delivering the care is also responsible for determining the amount of care that is approved. If this transition proceeds, it risks sparking a major retention crisis among the ranks of care coordinators, as our colleagues seek to preserve pay and working conditions by moving to hospitals or other public sector jobs. No one can afford this, least of all the clients who depend on our full scope and experience as care coordinators.

On behalf of the care coordinators from the Central East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), who ensure that thousands of home care clients receive the vital care they need, we urgently demand that you listen to our message for the sake of the Ontarians who depend on our home care system. We ask that you amend the provisions in the regulations under Bill 175 to guarantee the protection of care coordinator jobs and the continuity of vital care for their clients.

Sincerely,

ONTARIO NURSES' ASSOCIATION



Vicki McKenna, RN
President

On behalf of 419 care coordinators – 81% of Central East LHIN care coordinators.

The Central East LHIN's 517 care coordinators support 1.5 million Ontarians living in Durham Region, Haliburton County and City of Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland County, Peterborough City and County, and Scarborough. Together, these communities are home to over 11.5 per cent of the province's population.

Local Health Integration Network care coordinators connect patients and their families with the right health care in a complex system. These nurses and health-care professionals provide a single point of contact for patients to get acute, chronic, mental health, rehabilitation, maintenance, and end of life/palliative care in the home. An in-depth face-to-face assessment process is used to develop a comprehensive and customized patient-focused care plan, including the input of individuals and their families. Assistance is also provided with finding a family doctor, resources for patients and caregivers, and care in schools and community such as assisted-living settings. Care coordinators determine the eligibility for applications, wait list management and admission to long-term care homes. While assisting patient and families, LHIN care coordinators ensure the allocation, accountability, and integrity of our home care system – holding service providers to the highest standard. In the most challenging of times, families, patients, and communities have depended on care coordinators to divert emergency room visits from over-capacity hospitals and for ongoing reassessments of patient needs, while working with limited resources and a commitment to assisting patients to manage their health care at home.

- C. Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Heather Watt, Health Minister's Chief of Staff
Laurel Brazill, Health Minister's Director of Stakeholder Relations
Beverly Mathers, RN, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Nurses' Association
Liza Maw, RN, ONA Bargaining Unit President, Central East LHIN