

Speakers Series

October 3rd, 2020

Education Committee Report

Michele Harding of Care Watch was the guest speaker representing Education. Since 1998, Care Watch, has been a strong advocate for quality Home Care and Community Care. Care Watch is a non-profit, volunteer run and senior led organization.

Michele's focus has been community planning, social policy, and legislation. She believes in the strength of community and values community action. Michele has undertaken leadership roles in many local, city-wide, provincial, and international non-profit organizations to advocate for community health and health equity.

Their work includes:

- Communicating with their community, politicians, decisionmakers, media and the public
- Informing and engaging their audience
- Influencing policies for quality home and community care
- Monitoring and responding to issues that affect home and community care for seniors

Home and Community care is provided through a mix of for-profit and not-for-profit corporations. It is the fastest growing business sector.

Home care relies on services provided by women, primarily racialized and immigrant women. In Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver 70% of care workers are immigrants and 87% are women. These jobs tend to be low paying less secure and less sick days.

Home Care suffers from inadequate funding: Provincial Spending estimates in 2020

- Home Care - \$3.2 Billion
- Community Supports - \$645 Million
- Assisted Living in Supportive Housing - \$341 Million

In Contrast:

- Hospital Operations - \$18.9 Billion
- Capital Funding - \$4.8 Billion
- Long Term Care Homes - \$4.62 Billion

The Home Care system is challenged by:

- staff shortages, high turnover
- Low pay minimal benefits
- Precarious employment in multiple locations
- Staff burnout
- Rural locations do not receive the same funding
- Increased privatization
- Spending more on LTC and not as much on Home Care

Care Watch is advocating for more seniors to be able to live in their own homes if it is safe to do so. They are unwilling to give up on vulnerable seniors who need a strong voice for quality and affordable care. It is important that seniors can connect socially and are respected for their contribution to society.

Women working in Home Care should receive more than minimum wage with benefits and safe working conditions. Work should be full-time with stable shifts and adequate training.

Palliative Care

Only 15% of Canadians have access to Palliative Care. Set up at home for palliative care is easy, but families must play a role. Many families find it difficult to cope.

Care Watch encourages CFUW Ontario Council members and clubs to advocate for Home Care that:

- Protects, promotes, and restores physical and mental – well being
- Accessible – access to all necessary services based on need and no financial barriers
- Equitable – all seniors receive the same care based on need, regardless of financial circumstances
- Accountable – costs are transparent, and providers are publicly accountable
- Cost – Effective – social investment reaps high benefit returns at lower costs.
- Let Government know that for-profit is unacceptable
- PSW's should be considered professionals
- Provides proper rehabilitation, therapeutic activities to stimulate seniors' minds

Respectively submitted,

Wendy Taylor

Education Chair, Ontario Council