
A Message from the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario

April 2022

The Provincial Election: Your chance to talk about individualized funding and adequate in-home supports for elders and people living with disabilities!

The issue of providing adequate funding for people living with disabilities, and for elders who want to stay in their own homes, has again come to the forefront in Ontario. Many individuals, families, and older adults are asking that funding be adequate and 'individualized' so they can 1/ live their best life and 2/ choose their own supporters – supporters who would be accountable to them and not a system. We are hearing a 'shout out' for a great deal more flexibility and less institutional-think in Ontario. Whether it be about the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and funding for Special Services at Home (SSAH), Passport or other types of individualized supports OR the Ministry of Health, for direct funding or self/family managed home care. All of these areas are needing new investments. To see recent data compiled by People for Personalized Funding, go to: [Information regarding Passport and SSAH funding](#).

The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario is hearing the 'call' for a doubling of the current budget for 'Home and Community Care' from groups like Seniors for Social Action Ontario (SSAO) <https://www.seniorsactionontario.com/>.



We are also hearing about the importance of expanding the option of direct funding like self/family managed home care within that budget. Such an investment would mean this flexible option could be made available and accessible to more elders (and also others) needing health support at home. **These requests are timely with more than 90% of older adults recently surveyed in Ontario saying they do NOT want to live in a long-term care institution.**

More and more we are hearing that older adults would rather have home care support in their homes. Yet, as citizens-at-large in Ontario, we are not hearing about large scale investments by the government to increase, enhance and transform home and community care supports and services in Ontario – despite what older citizens are asking for.

Leaders with IFCO, and other provincial groups, have concerns about the financial investments being announced to build additional long term care institutions in Ontario – what many call the warehousing of our citizens. One question being asked: “Where is the balance to this expansion of institutions without widespread investment and expansion for more adequate, flexible, and responsive home and community care. Where is choice for Ontario citizens?”

There are groups calling for the abolition of long term care institutions through the investment of other options, and stopping future investments in long term care. See this article by the Disability Justice Network of Ontario which does a comparison between long term care institutions and prisons: <https://www.djno.ca/timeline-of-ltc-and-prisons>

Different statistics have been shared, but it is safe to say that more than 5,000 people with various disabilities who are NOT older adults are living in long term care institutions in Ontario. This is usually by default, which means there is no other support available. Additionally, we hear about many young adults with developmental disabilities languishing on couches without support, and parents leaving their jobs, because there are no funds to pay a support worker to assist them. Or, they have a \$5,000 Passport allotment, which gives them enough funding to pay a support person only 1.5 – 2 hours each week. This is not nearly enough for the majority of people living with a developmental disability, many of whom also have other complex challenges/ issues. **Some young adults with disabilities go into the long term care system when their families can no longer provide support, or they have no family.**

For those who had hoped to do some planning with an independent facilitator to help them create a positive vision for their life and make connections – another individualized approach to living – that option is not available either (unless individuals want to spend half of the \$5,000 allotment on planning instead of a support worker).

To summarize and keep it simple: Needed within both Ministries is adequate, portable and flexible individualized funding (no matter the program name or term used). This is true for citizens who need such support – whether in home, health supports and/or supports for participation and contribution outside the home. In addition to increasing budgets for adequate, individualized funding programs, new investments are needed from: 1/ ‘health’ to enhance, expand and transform the home and community care system; 2/ ‘community and social services’ to fund independent facilitation and planning to listen to and assist individuals living with developmental disabilities to move forward in their life, knowing parents will not always be there.

Candidates running in your riding during the upcoming election may be interested in hearing about individualized, and respectful approaches for supporting citizens in Ontario. The results: more flexible, community-think, less institutional think, and healthier, happier citizens!