

August 15, 2024

Office of the Auditor General of Ontario  
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Care Watch writes to express alarm about Ontario Health's prequalification process for home care service providers. We are a non-profit, non-partisan volunteer-run organization that advocates for high quality, accessible, and affordable home and community services for older Ontarians. We have reviewed the August 1, 2024 analysis by Seniors for Social Action and strongly support their request that the Auditor General immediately review the prequalification process.

When home care providers are being selected to bid on contracts, the most basic requirements of the process, which the current prequalification process did not meet, are:

- 1) **Transparency.** The current process was hidden from the public, so we have no way of knowing how or why organizations were deemed eligible or ineligible to bid on contracts.
- 2) **Clear selection criteria** - the hallmark of administrative fairness required by Ontario procurement rules. Specifically, criteria for bidding on home care contracts should include measurable, province-wide standards. As a condition of being allowed to compete, prospective providers should demonstrate commitment to achieving those standards. Standards would cover the quality of services to be provided as well as the compensation, working conditions, and training of the personal support workers and others who deliver services.
- 3) **Public accountability.** Information on the process and its results must be publicly available. Members of the public need to know the criteria, how they are weighted, and how providers have been selected.

We also have an additional recommendation. When new funding contracts are awarded, non-profit home care providers should be prioritized. Non-profit providers are embedded in their communities and better able to provide locally sensitive and linguistically and culturally appropriate home care services. Their reporting processes are also more transparent than those of for-profit providers. They need ample opportunity to compete successfully.

Care Watch calls on Ontario's Auditor General to conduct an audit of the home care prequalification process and for this audit to consider both administrative fairness and value for money.

Sincerely,



Fiona Green  
Chair, Board of Directors



John Bagnall  
Vice-Chair, Board of Directors

cc: Matthew Anderson, Ontario Health  
Louise Verity, Ontario Health