



Chairs' Annual Report – 2025

Care Watch believes that older adults should be able to remain in their homes and communities for as long as they wish and as long as they can. This choice is possible only if home care:

- Is accessible and affordable for everyone who needs it
- Is delivered by people who are treated with respect and compensated fairly for their work
- Is required to meet province-wide standards that are rigorous, consistent, and enforced
- Is provided primarily by non-profit community-based agencies that are subject to a fair and transparent selection process

Our activities in 2025 drew public attention to these needs as well as to the problem of ageism – one of the last seemingly acceptable forms of discrimination. It lies at the root of much of the neglect and inaction we see and continues to impede progress on the issues that concern older adults.

Communication and Advocacy

- ***Our January pre-budget submission*** and supplementary submission in March called for additional investment in home care services, pay and benefits for community-based personal support workers equal to those for workers in hospitals and long-term care, provincial home care standards, and reforms to the process for selecting home care providers.
- ***In January, we expressed support for the proposed Supporting Seniors and Caregivers Act.*** We applauded improvements in dementia care; stronger supports for caregivers with additional investments in respite care, day programs, and seniors active living centres; and increased protection for older adults by adding new offences related to abuse and neglect to the *Fixing Long Term Care Act*. We proposed that the provincial government go further by instituting a caregiver benefit. We also identified potential weaknesses in enforcing the new offences against abuse and neglect and called on the government to address ongoing issues affecting access to home and community care.
- ***Our March submission to Ontario Health raised concerns about Operational Direction: Home First,*** which seeks to reduce the number of alternative level of care (ALC) patients in hospitals by accelerating access to home and community care. Our questions touched on: 1) how the initiative would be funded and how that funding would be used; 2) how the impact on the number of ALC patients, as well as both successful and unsuccessful discharges, would be tracked and reported; and how home care wait times for people living in the community would be affected.
- ***Our May bulletin and July submission to the federal Secretary of State for Seniors in July called on the federal government*** to: adopt and implement the UN Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons; increase federal funding for home care to bring Canada into line with the top five countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; establish national standards for home care, including fair and equitable wages for home and community workers; and develop a national strategy for older adults that would organize initiatives within a single principled framework.
- ***Our June bulletin drew attention to the ageism, condescending tone, and lack of meaningful action characteristic of Seniors Month in Ontario.*** We pointed out that the tokenistic awards ceremonies and

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extensive publicity of relatively minor government accomplishments carry little benefit for older adults. Instead, we suggested the government should make greater efforts to work together with older adults on home care and on other issues that have the greatest effect on their lives.

- ***Social media became increasingly important in expanding our reach.*** The number of Care Watch followers on Instagram and Facebook rose significantly, and we made our social media strategy more effective by switching from X to Bluesky.

Partnerships and collaborations

- ***Care Watch served as a research partner for three projects:*** one exploring age-friendly communities, one studying the regulation of retirement homes in Ontario and British Columbia, and a third using a diversity and equity lens to examine retirement home policy. All three projects have completed their work and are currently winding down.
- ***We participated in consultations on the Toronto Seniors Strategy.*** We also continued to be represented on the Ontario Seniors Liaison Committee and benefited from valuable ties with allied organizations including the Ontario Caregiver Coalition, the Ontario Community Support Association, and the Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

Winding Down and Looking Forward

Care Watch began in the early 1990s, and our advocacy for high quality, accessible, and affordable home and community care for older adults continued throughout successive governments – some more and some less favourably disposed to our message.

During the past year, decisions were looming. We are primarily a volunteer organization with very modest operating costs. A legacy from Charlotte Maher, one of our founders, has been sustaining us until now. That legacy has dwindled and, despite our efforts to decrease costs and find alternative financial resources, we knew we could no longer continue. Reluctantly, the members of our board decided that the best course of action was to dissolve Care Watch as an organization and transfer its remaining financial and other resources to an allied organization, the Ontario Caregiver Coalition.

The work of Care Watch has come to an end. However, issues relating to home and community care have not. If anything, we expect them to take on even greater public importance in the coming years. The importance of home care in political life gives us reason to be optimistic that those of us who have been involved in Care Watch, as either board members or supporters, will find new opportunities. Our goal is to continue working with others to make the changes needed so that older adults can age safely and productively in their homes and communities.

Sincerely,



Fiona Green
Co-chair, Board of Directors



John Bagnall
Co-chair, Board of Directors

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