

Ministry of Health

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November 30, 2022

Mr. Kenneth Joseph (“Joe”) Parker
Board Chair
Home and Community Care Support Services
via email

Dear Mr. Parker:

I am pleased to share our government’s 2023-24 priorities for Home and Community Care Support Services organizations with you.

As Chair, you and your Board of Directors play a vital role in helping Home and Community Care Support Services organizations achieve their mandate. It is important that your agencies’ goals, objectives, and strategic direction continue to align with our government’s priorities and direction. As you begin planning for 2023-24, and we adapt to managing and living with COVID-19, we will continue to look to your collaboration as we transform and modernize Ontario’s health care system to improve patient access to care, including the implementation of new home and community care regulations, and the successful transition of home and community care delivery to support the work of Ontario Health Teams (OHTs).

As part of the Ontario government, agencies are expected to act in the best interests of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value for money to taxpayers. Agencies are also required to adhere to government policies and directives.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, this letter sets out my expectations for the 14 Home and Community Care Support Services organizations for the 2023-24 fiscal year. The direction outlined in this letter is consistent with our government priorities, your agencies’ mandate, key policies and directives. These government priorities include:

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1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

- Identifying efficiencies and savings through innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability.
- Operating within each agency’s financial allocations.
- Complying with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization, including contract harmonization for planned and pending procurements, accounting practices and realty interim measures for the agencies’ office space.
- Leveraging and meeting benchmarked outcomes for compensation strategies and directives.

2. Transparency and Accountability

- Abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting.
- Adhering to accounting standards and practices, and responding to audit findings, where applicable.
- Identifying appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support each board’s role in the agencies’ governance and accountability.

3. Risk Management

- Developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment, and mitigation of each agency’s risks, including COVID-19 impacts and any future emergency risks.

4. Workforce Management

- Optimizing organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery, including aligning resources to priority areas, where needed.

5. Diversity and Inclusion

- Developing and encouraging diversity and inclusion initiatives by promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace.
- Adopting an inclusion engagement process to ensure all voices are heard to inform policies and decision-making.

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6. Data Collection

- Improving how each agencies use data in decision-making, information sharing and reporting, to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery.
- Increasing data sharing with Supply Ontario when applicable regarding procurement spending and planning, contract arrangements and vendor relations to support data-driven decision-making.

7. Digital Delivery and Customer Service

- Exploring and implementing digitization for online service delivery to ensure customer service standards are met.
- Using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations, including pursuing delivery methods that have evolved since Covid-19.

These are the government-wide commitments for board-governed provincial agencies. Please see the attached guide for further details of each priority.

In addition to these government-wide priorities, for the 2023-24 fiscal year, I am asking the Home and Community Care Support Services organizations to focus on the following key priorities:

1. Continue to work with the ministry, Ontario Health and health system organizations to plan, develop and implement activities to address health care recovery and respond to pressures, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Activities include supporting response in other sectors of the health system and restoration/recovery activities such as an increase in scheduled surgeries.
2. Continue to provide home and community care services and manage the placement of persons into long-term care homes, supportive housing programs, chronic care and rehabilitation beds in hospitals, and other programs and places where home and community care services are provided. Refer patients to health service providers of home and community care services, where applicable.
3. Continue to streamline, and standardize where appropriate, the organizational processes, contracts, quality measures and internal resources to ensure operational stability, and support continuity of high-quality home and community care services. Continue to engage with Service Provider Organizations’ leadership to review performance, quality and assess risk within the system.

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4. Continue to work with the ministry and Ontario Health to advance home and community care modernization, including supporting the implementation of the new Home and Community Care Services Regulation under the *Connecting Care Act, 2019*; based on ministry guidance, contributing to or developing updated or new policies and guidelines; implementing policies, directives, guidelines and other requirements to support the provision of home and community care services.
5. Continue to work with the ministry, Ontario Health and the Ministry of Long-Term Care to consider and implement long-term care home placement improvements, including:
 - Supporting the improved transition of hospital patients designated as alternate level of care to long-term care homes where appropriate; and
 - Planning for and supporting the transition of Long-Term Care placement functions from Home and Community Care Support Services to the future state model.
6. Following further direction provided in 2022-23, continue to work with the ministry and Ontario Health to plan for and implement the successful transition of the agencies’ assets and liabilities functions and responsibilities to OHT/other health service organizations.

The Home and Community Care Support Services organizations’ plan to address these priorities must be outlined in the agencies’ Annual Business Plan to be submitted to the Minister of Health by January 1, 2023, and cover the period from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. In addition, as part of ongoing operations, Home and Community Care Support Services organizations are expected to operate within their respective budget allocations set by the ministry and to demonstrate openness and transparency by publicly posting governance documents and information related to expenses, as well as Board meeting minutes.

Together, we will continue to build a health care system that is patient and family-centered, will improve the patient and provider experience, provide better, more connected care, improve health outcomes, and capture better value for health care dollars so Ontarians can rest assured there will be a modern, integrated and sustainable health care system for them, when and where they need it.

Thank you for your continued leadership and service and I look forward to working closely with you, the Boards, and Home and Community Care Support Services staff to achieve these objectives. Your work and ongoing support is invaluable to me and the people of Ontario.

Mr. Kenneth Joseph ("Joe") Parker

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Amy Olmstead, Director, Home and Community Care Branch, Strategic Partnerships Division, at Amy.Olmstead@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Original signed by the Minister

Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health

c: Dr. Catherine Zahn, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Ms. Nancy Matthews, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care
Ms. Cynthia Martineau, Chief Executive Officer, Home and Community Care Support Services
Ms. Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Health Integration and Partnerships, Ministry of Health
Ms. Rhonda McMichael, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Partnerships Division, Ministry of Health