



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Ontario Has Programs To Help People Who Need Assisted Living Services, But It Doesn't Know If They Work: Auditor General

(Toronto) More than 23,000 Ontarians, mostly seniors, receive assisted living services funded by the province, but Ontario Health provides little oversight to assess if they are working, says Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk in her *2021 Annual Report*. These services, such as personal support, homemaking services and security checks, are for seniors and people with physical disabilities, acquired brain injury, and HIV/AIDS. They may require more support than those who receive home care, but do not need the direct medical supervision provided in long-term care homes. These people may be at risk because there is no clear responsibility for oversight of these publicly funded services.

“The Ministry of Health and Ontario Health require so little information from agencies and facilities that provide these services, they cannot be assured that clients are receiving the services they need,” said Lysyk. “Health regions were often unaware of how many hours service agencies are providing, or how many client appointments are missed, and they don’t follow up on complaints – even though these complaints may be about clients suffering from neglect or abuse.”

The Ministry spent \$389 million on assisted living services in 2020/21 but it has not effectively monitored the programs. It does not know if they work, if costs could be reduced, or if quality of care could be improved. Assisted living services are not well-integrated with services such as home care and long-term care, and without that integration vulnerable people may not be getting the right types of services or levels of care that they need.

As an example, the Ministry has not re-assessed its programming for assisted living for non-seniors, since it was established 27 years ago.

“Assisted living services can significantly improve the quality of life for seniors and people with certain health conditions. But without adequate information, there is no way of knowing if their lives are being improved,” said Lysyk. “This lack of understanding means vulnerable people may be falling through the cracks.”

The audit report contains 24 recommendations for improvement.

-30-

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