

BACKGROUND: Attendant Services in Ontario

What are Attendant Services?

Attendants provide people of all ages with disabilities the support required to do activities of daily living such as bathing, grooming and dressing. Attendant services are an essential resource to assist people with long-term employment and broader participation in the community. Generally speaking, there are three types of government-funded, attendant services:

Outreach services are supplied by agencies that hire attendants on behalf of people with disabilities. The agencies oversee administration-related details for the services delivered.

Assistive Living Services are also supplied by agencies but in a supportive housing environment where many clients receiving these services live in their own, separate homes.

The Direct Funding program provides people with disabilities with funds to hire and train their attendants, as well as oversee administration-related details for the services they receive.

NOTE: Community Care Access Centres contract out to attendant service providers – but many CCACs do not provide as wide a range of services such as bladder and bowel care.

What is the Demand for Publically Funded Attendant Services?

There are approximately 5000 Ontarians waiting to receive appropriate attendant services in the community. Recent government investments have been made in Direct Funding programs across the province, but waitlists for services remain.

How Do Wait-Lists affect Ontarians?

The attendant services wait list issue is costing the tax payers and the healthcare system millions of dollars each year. Without the appropriate support set up in the community, an individual can either stay in a hospital setting using more medical resources than necessary, or move to long-term care forcing a senior onto a wait list.

Once in the community, if the resources are not appropriately suited to the individual's needs the results can include family breakdown due to the physical and mental demands, lost work opportunities and/or hospital emergency visits due to secondary complications such as pressure sores and urinary tract infections.



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