

## Health Council Report Shows Progress and Promise

**Mississauga, Ontario, June 4, 2012** - The Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA) congratulates the Health Council of Canada on today's release of "*Progress report 2012: Health care renewal in Canada*".

The report highlights the activity to improve health care across the country using the 2003 First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal and the 2004 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care as the backdrop for health system priorities for the past decade. As outlined in the report, the commitments to short-term acute home care have been largely met, although it is acknowledged that more work is required to ensure equitable access to comprehensive end of life care in the home setting.

The report highlights promising practices in home care and expresses concern about the consequence of the emphasis on short term acute care. While reducing Alternate Level of Care bed usage and emergency room wait times the focus on short term acute home care has hampered long-term home care programs which address chronic disease prevention and management and support frail elderly to remain independent in their homes.

"The CHCA is delighted that both the Health Council and the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, in their reviews of the 2004 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care have recognized this challenge," said Nadine Henningsen Executive Director, Canadian Home Care Association. "The next priority for many home care programs is to increase care for the frail elderly and individuals with complex needs who can remain at home with support. "

The need for consistency in home care in Canada is generally accepted. To address this need, the CHCA is working with stakeholders across Canada to articulate harmonized principles for home care which will define a national home care program without prescribing how services should be organized or delivered. The principles will support the achievement of a level of consistency and provide a basis for the identification of common indicators, while respecting important jurisdictional differences.

The Council's report also included a review of the implementation of telehealth including, the value of using technology to support the delivery of health care and the challenge of transforming successful pilot project to sustained initiatives. "Technological advances have opened up new options for care delivery and have the potential to fundamentally change our approach to health care to support a more efficient and person centered approach regardless of the care setting," stated John Schram, CHCA President, "to support this opportunity the CHCA is examining the

potential for technological innovations to enhance independence and improve health outcomes in the home.”

The Health Council’s examination of progress in home and community care, health human resources, telehealth, access to care in the North, and comparable health indicators shows that targeted focus and coordinated effort can result in positive progress. The CHCA embraces the Council’s recommendations to accelerate this progress and looks forward to working with all stakeholders to advance home care as an important component of an integrated health system.

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#### **About the Canadian Home Care Association**

The Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA) is a not-for-profit membership association dedicated to ensuring the availability of accessible, responsive home care and community supports to enable people to stay in their homes with safety, dignity and quality of life.

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