

## Why Choose a Quality Home Care Organization?

Many families that want to purchase more care at home for a loved one consider hiring private individuals rather than working with a reputable home care organization. A poll by the Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA) in 2010 showed that 65% of respondents either were unaware or unsure as to the risk inherent in directly hiring an individual to provide care. By working with a home care organization, families can minimize their workload, mitigate the potential threats and be free to spend their time in the context of the family relationship.

Home care organizations that belong to an association, such as the OHCA, are typically concerned about practice standards and engaged in achieving excellence in all aspects of service. The majority of the members of the Ontario Home Care Association are accredited through Accreditation Canada, CARF Canada, and/or registered with the International Standards Association (ISO). The Association annually publishes a Balanced Scorecard collectively identifying members' performance on key indicators reflective of continuous quality improvement. OHCA members have many measures in place to protect families who have made the decision to bring additional help into the home. These measures include:

- **Selection** - A home care organization undertakes the advertising and process of recruiting staff with the proper training, qualifications and temperament. References (personal, work and criminal) are thoroughly checked and personal identification and certificates verified.
- **Supervision & Education** – Job descriptions, ongoing education and training on tasks specific to an individual's care needs are essential for all staff in the home. The provider will work with the family to develop a plan of care and address the management of issues such as the handling of cash, transportation and medications.
- **Labour Practices** – Ensuring that staff are fairly compensated and provided with the labour protection required by law is important to the delivery of safe care and to fulfilling the responsibility of as employer.
- **Financial Reporting** – The onus to ensure tax obligations falls to the employer. Home care organizations are familiar with reporting requirements, make the requisite employee deductions and submit the appropriate filings.
- **Coordination of Care** – Care needs can change frequently. Home care organizations are able to increase or decrease services on short notice and can cover unexpected personnel absences assuring continued service. Home care organizations will assume responsibility for communicating with other members of the health care team and assist with the identification of sources of funding for the home care service.
- **Staff Liability Coverage** – Guarding against injury to staff and maintaining appropriate worker compensation insurance is critical as most often caregiving tasks include lifting, transferring or bathing.

The decision to purchase care should be made as carefully as with the purchase of any other service. For families seeking home care service, it is wise to choose reputable organizations that guarantee high quality of service provision and fair labour practices. OHCA offers information including a listing of members by geographic location; considerations in the selection of a provider; a client 'bill of rights'; and a glossary of terms.

### About Ontario Home Care Association (OHCA)

The OHCA, *the voice of home care in Ontario*, is a membership association representing providers of quality home care services from across Ontario. OHCA is dedicated to promoting the growth and development of the home and community health care sector by helping to shape health care policy, supporting members to excel, and being a leading source of information on home and community care.

#### For more information, contact:

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