

Note to file:

Background

We recently sent letters to the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Children, Community and Social Services and Health asking them to consider the participation of representatives from their ministries in our discussion regarding the need for a third-party resource to support caregivers planning for when they are gone.

We proposed a caregiver-focused approach and establishing a third-party resource to support caregivers in the development of a sustainable housing plan including community supports, personal supports and estate and financial planning assistance.

Our Proposal

Link our efforts regarding the above to the following initiatives focused on the inclusion of caregivers in the circle of care as essential care partners and as formally recognized through a caregiver identification (ID) tool:

- Essential care partners provide physical, psychological and emotional support, as deemed important by the patient. This care can include support in decision making, care coordination and continuity of care. Essential care partners can include family members, close friends or other caregivers and are identified by the patient or substitute decision marker.
- Caregiver Identification (ID) is a tool being used to foster family presence policies and principles of family inclusion and patient and family-centered care. The tool promotes a culture that embraces caregivers as partners in care. It's a visual way to acknowledge and identify caregivers in care settings and facilitate their role as a partner with the care team.

We understand that the initiatives described above are focused on encouraging hospitals and health care providers to engage caregivers in the circle of care. Our focus is all about what happens on discharge or once a treatment plan is in place when the caregiver assumes responsibility for providing essential care with or without supports. In many cases, over an extended period of time, the caregiver is often the only source of the essential care required to sustain rehabilitation, recovery and positive treatment outcomes.

What next

It begins with establishing the proposed third-party resource based on a phased approach as follows:

Phase 1 – Essential Care - the current situation

- Third party resource invites caregivers supporting persons living with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorder to apply for a Caregiver Id – it is an opportunity for the caregiver to:
 - Identify the person(s) the caregiver supports living with mental illness and/or substance use
 - Provide medical and mental health history of the person she/he supports
 - If applicable, indicate the person the caregiver supports has agreed that she/he be involved in her/his circle of care as a designated allied caregiver and informal health information custodian
 - Provide a summary of supports being provided by the caregiver considered essential to the well-being of the person she/he supports – from ensuring secure and safe housing and food security to well-being checks and continued access to mental health resources, programs and services

Phase 2 – Essential care - what happens when I am gone

- If response to invitation warrants sort out how best to support caregivers in the development of a plan that addresses the need for continued access to the essential care identified above including the required legal, financial and property management arrangements and funded on-going personal supports
- Proceed with planning in accordance with proposed caregiver approach and suggested mandate for the third-party resource