

Topic Overview

Meeting the Future Home and Community Care Needs of Older Adults in Ontario

Citizen panel
20 August 2014

The McMaster Health Forum convened a citizen panel on the subject of meeting the future home and community care needs of older adults in Ontario. The panel was organized with the support of McMaster University's Labarge Optimal Aging Initiative, the Government of Ontario (through a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Health System Research Fund grant entitled Harnessing Evidence and Values for Health System Excellence), and the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres. The panel brought together fourteen citizens from across Ontario to examine the problem, options for addressing it, and key implementation considerations.

Discussing the problem

Panel participants discussed the challenges related to meeting the future home and community care needs of older adults in Ontario. During the deliberations, the following five challenges were consistently raised:

- 1) caregiving is essential but challenging, and inconsistently or inadequately supported;
- 2) home and community supports often do not provide what's needed to allow older adults to stay at home;
- 3) most people don't know about available services, and those who do often face challenges in accessing them;
- 4) electronic health records and e-health initiatives are long overdue; and
- 5) a lack of planning at the individual and system levels.



The views expressed in the panel summary are the views of panel participants and should not be taken to represent the views of McMaster University's Labarge Optimal Aging Initiative, McMaster University, the Government of Ontario, the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres, or the authors of the panel summary.





Fourteen citizens from across Ontario gather during a McMaster Health Forum event on 20 August 2014.

Discussing the options

Participants reflected on three options (among many) for designing a system that meets the home and community care needs of three groups: 1) older adults who make it to 85 in good health (option 1); 2) older adults who have two or more chronic health conditions but still enjoy a good quality of life (option 2); and 3) older adults who are socially isolated and suffering from many chronic health conditions (option 3). Several values-related themes emerged throughout the discussion about these options, including: fairness (in terms of access to affordable home and community care, to coordination support, and to personal health information); patient-centredness (home and community care attuned to the specific needs of patients); empowerment (through information sharing and work opportunities); population-health orientation (a system designed to promote active lifestyles and maintain good health); collaboration (between the health system and other sectors, as well as among providers and citizens); competence (of volunteers and personal health workers); and solidarity (involving socially isolated and vulnerable older adults).

Discussing the implementation considerations

When turning to potential barriers to address the future home and community care needs of older adults in Ontario, participants focused on two key barriers to overcome: one financial (i.e., financial sustainability of the system to provide the full range of home and community care needed) and one attitudinal (i.e., people relying too heavily on the government to bring about change). Panel participants also suggested two strategies that could be used as facilitators to change: involving the mass media to raise public awareness about the issue and developing an intersectoral strategy.

Panel deliverables

To learn more about this topic, consult the [citizen brief](#) that was presented to participants before the panel and the [summary of the panel](#). For an electronic copy of the citizen brief or panel summary, visit our website mcmasterhealthforum.org and click on 'Products' along the sidebar.



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