



JULY 13, 2009

JACOB MKSYARTINIAN, POLICY ADVISOR
MINISTER'S OFFICE
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG TERM CARE
HEPBURN BLOCK, 10TH FLOOR
80 GROSVENOR ST
TORONTO ON M7A2C4

RE: PROPOSAL TO ATTRACT MORE WORKERS TO PERSONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Dear Jacob,

As a follow up to our recent meeting, I am forwarding a proposal for your consideration. We are in a crisis situation with regard to an insufficient supply of personal support workers. This situation has been identified by home care providers in all parts of the province. It has also been the subject of numerous recent newspaper articles. There are too many workers leaving the field, and too few students enrolling in PSW training programs to provide sufficient workers to meet the demand.

With the support of the Ministry, we would like to improve this situation by creating resource and marketing materials that can be used by service providers, training bodies, associations and other stakeholders wishing to promote personal support as a career option.

Our proposal supports several MOHLTC priorities:

- Aligns with government priorities for healthier Ontarians, equitable access to services, and improved health system sustainability
- Enhanced training capacity in urban and rural areas in Ontario for PSWs will support the Aging at Home Strategy
- Skilled PSWs can assist in:
 - reducing pressure on hospitals including ED wait times and Alternate Level of Care days;
 - supporting alternatives to long-term care home admission;

Attached is a proposal for your review. I look forward to connecting with you soon on how we could move this project forward as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Lori Holloway Payne
Director, PSNO



Director, Communications, Marketing and Strategy, OCSA

A PROPOSAL FOR PROMOTING PERSONAL SUPPORT AS A CAREER

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

This proposal has been developed in response to the current situation in health care in which the demand far outstrips the supply of Personal Support Workers. There is a need to attract new students to the field of personal support to enable the effective delivery of home care, community support services and long term care in Ontario's 14 LHINs.

To meet this need, the Personal Support Network of Ontario (PSNO), a division of Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA), proposes to develop and distribute marketing materials that outline the valuable role personal support workers play in health care and the merits of this as a career in order to attract individuals to Personal Support as a career. The materials will also provide information about how to access training. These materials will be available to Boards of Education, community colleges, private colleges, Second Career, Employment Ontario as well as service providers and other stakeholders who have an interest in attracting new workers to the field.

The materials developed in this project will:

- Help training organizations and employment agencies, Employment Ontario and Second Career present personal support as an attractive employment opportunity for those looking for a career change or a second career
- Help develop common understanding and messaging of the role personal support workers play as the back-bone of the health care system
- Present the range of employment opportunities for personal support workers
- Provide comprehensive information on how to access personal support worker training

Much of the content for the materials has previously been developed by PSNO. This project will leverage this content thereby reducing the development costs for the campaign materials.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW AND WHY

As the need for PSWs escalates in all sectors including hospitals, we believe the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has an important proactive role to play in ensuring sufficient personal support workers are available to adequately resource the health care system across Ontario.

Currently, there is no coordinated effort to promote personal support as a rewarding career in the province of Ontario. Without coordination and consistency of messaging,

we are missing opportunities to reach thousands of unemployed Ontarians who could be appropriate recruits for a career as a professional caregiver. There are many individuals with life experience and a desire for new career which provides the satisfaction of helping others that would be attracted to PSW as a career if they knew about it.

There is an underutilization of existing PSW training resources. We estimate that Ontario is training about 7,000 PSW students a year yet we are losing through attrition approximately 9,000 PSWs per year. Ontario is in desperate need of a strategy to ensure that there are sufficient individuals trained to deliver required personal care services now, well as the higher demands projected in the future.

Second Career Staff at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities provided the following information on the uptake on PSW training:

- There are 892 people currently enrolled in PSW training through the Skills Development Program (SDP). This is a short term training opportunity that many people are able to access through Employment Insurance
- Currently 38 individuals in the Second Career program out of 10,000 in total are accessing PSW training. Second Career is for those who do not qualify for Skills Development Training because they are not eligible for Employment Insurance. Typically, these individuals are cyclical workers and new Canadians.
- Private career colleges offer 6 more spring and summer intake sessions for PSW training through career colleges. Unfortunately due to a lack of awareness and promotion of Personal Support as a career, enrollment has not been optimized for these programs.
- The Boards of Education which have in previous years trained approximately 2000 PSW students per year, report a 20% decrease in enrollment.

By adapting the current content and building upon the communication mechanisms at PSNO, the project will be able to leverage existing resources and utilize the existing connections and recognition of the Personal Support Network of Ontario. (see www.psno.ca for examples of communication materials).

The PSNO is eager to work with the Second Career Office Action Centres, which provide short term access to information and resources to communities where a large layoff has happened. There are also 4 regional Offices for Employment Ontario who we wish to connect with and provide additional resources and assistance to attract more students into the programs.

DELIVERABLES

Communication and marketing materials to be created as part of this project include:

- A brochure on role, working environments and benefits of a career in personal support services translated.
- Posters and newspaper ads on the valuable role personal support workers play in the health care system and a call to action on how to find out information in their area.
- Re-formatting and optimization of the online job board at www.psno.ca along with an updated listing of training organizations and how to access tuition support.
- A poster presentation that can be utilized for job fairs, career days, etc.
- Video and powerpoint presentations on personal support as a career. The presentation would be suitable for delivery by PSNO staff, employers, training organizations, guidance counselors or the video could be used to deliver the message directly to the audience.
- A collection of testimonials from caregivers, PSWs, employers and clients on their personal experiences.

HOW THE MATERIALS WILL BE DISSEMINATED

To ensure successful dissemination of materials from this project, PSNO will work with Second Career and Employment Ontario to distribute information to all offices involved in the outreach to potential students for personal support. This will include Employment Ontario Centres across the province and Second Career Action Centres as they are established.

PSNO will also link with all community colleges, private career colleges, boards of education and non-profit training organizations to provide them with the resources. These will be available as free downloadable files for reprint, presentation materials and fact sheets. The materials will be useful in a variety of situations such as open house events and new student inquiries. They will enhance the student recruitment officers' ability to respond with strong communications materials promoting the benefits of personal support as a career.

PSNO will link with the Ontario Association of Guidance Councilors to provide presentation materials, pamphlets, career day materials and free downloads to assist them in their role to educate students interested in a career in personal support.

PSNO will link with Skills for Change and CARE - Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses to circulate the materials in order to promote personal support as a career opportunity for those individuals with high skill sets waiting for recognition of credentials or wanting a career in caregiving.

PSNO will link with CCACs and provincial provider associations and will make the materials available for use locally when attempting to coordinate a recruitment campaign for workers.

WORK PLAN

The work plan for this project will involve the following activities:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Time-frame</i>
Project Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize proposal & deliverables Develop agreement to proceed Recruit human resources 	Month 1
Development of Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop curriculum for the presentation materials, rework existing marketing materials at PSNO 	Month 2
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete graphic design, formatting & printing of materials for distribution Develop comprehensive contact list for distribution Finalize logistics of dissemination Market materials to key audiences Summarize proceedings 	Months 3 & 4
Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate materials Presentations at conferences etc. Keep contact list and job site up to date 	Month 5 and onward
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey participants and partners and report on the impact of the project Develop and submit a report on the evaluation to the funder 	Month 10

FUTURE APPLICATIONS

This work will provide employers and stakeholders with the capacity to attract more human resources to personal support. The project will ensure that this recruitment effort is based on a common understanding of what a personal support worker does, the value of the role and a common structure on which all those with interest in recruiting PSWs can base their recruitment activities.

The evaluation and report will provide information to inform future activities to support recruitment of health care workers. Materials in electronic format will have extended life and will continue to be available to stakeholders after the completion of the project.



BUDGET

Budget Item	MOHLTC	OCSA (in-kind)	Total
Program Development Costs Research, content development and expert content development	20,000	2,000	22,000
Logistics computers, phone, e-mail, database, AV equipment etc		2,000	2,000
Creation of master contact list, listing for training outlets and tuition supports	5,000		5,000
Marketing and Materials - Materials development & Graphic Design	20,000		20,000
Supplies and printing of marketing materials, DVD presentation, testimonial booklet	20,000		20,000
Dissemination Communications, maintaining material posted on website, conference presentations, outreach, etc.)	10,000		10,000
		5,000	5,000
Evaluation Survey & report	5,000	2,000	7,000
TOTAL	\$80,000	\$11,000	\$91,000



BACKGROUND ON THE PSNO AND OCSA

The Ontario Community Support Association is the voice of Home and Community Support in Ontario. Our members include the providers of LHIN funded community support services that assist seniors, people with disabilities, and individuals who cannot function independently because of a disability, illness, or other limitations due to aging, mental health, or addiction. OCSA also represents home care direct service providers who are funded by Community Care Access Centres. OCSA has a wealth of knowledge and understanding of health system management, home care and community support services.

The Personal Support Network of Ontario (PSNO) is a division of OCSA which strives to help personal support service professionals carry out their work more effectively by offering access to information, resources and tools as well as providing opportunities to connect with a network of professionals in the field. PSNO's vision is to build a strong, cooperative personal support service sector where providers, managers, trainers and employees are equal contributors to strengthening the profession.

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