

The members of the Ontario Association of Independent Living Service Providers (OAILSP)¹ have been leaders in person-centered service delivery and partnership-enabled innovation for over 50 years. We are excited to build on this track record as key players in the provincial government's plan to modernize the health system as outlined in *The People's Health Care Act, 2019*.

Designed to support people with physical disabilities to live and work as independently as possible in their communities, the Independent Living model of service has been successfully adapted to support growing numbers of persons of all ages with life-long complex health and personal support needs, including those with acquired brain injuries (ABI).² Independent Living (IL) service providers have done so by:

- partnering to create innovative systems of person-centered care that improve access and equity across urban and rural/remote areas of the province (e.g. post-acute transitional care, caregiver respite care, mobile supports, ABI specialized therapeutic support);
- helping the individuals we serve navigate the system and access the mental health, addictions, primary care and other health services they require; and
- participating in complex and integrated care planning.

Independent Living service providers are successfully providing long term support to Ontarians who, as a result of the amount and/or complexity of the support they receive, would otherwise be required to live most or all of their lives in institutional settings. In addition to offering improved quality of life and enhanced opportunities for the individuals we serve to participate in and contribute to the communities they live in, IL services are effectively generating system efficiency through the avoidance of higher-cost institutional care and by assisting patients to quickly transition from hospital to home or rehabilitation. We look forward to expanding on these system contributions, in partnership with others, to advance the Ontario Health Team agenda and contribute to the achievement of health system stability and sustainability.

We applaud the government's commitment to person-centered service delivery as a critical success factor in the modernization plan. From inception, and as we have innovated and evolved, IL providers have demonstrated our sustained and deep commitment to ensuring that the *Independent Living Philosophy* remains core to our models of service delivery. This philosophy affirms that the people we serve should make decisions about their own care to the extent they are able and, as such, encourages independence by engaging patients and caregivers as active care partners. We look forward to sharing our 50 years of experience and expertise with others so that we can work together to truly create a system centered on the needs of patients, families and caregivers.

¹ OAILSP is the voice of community-based provider organizations across Ontario that deliver essential supports for daily living to persons with physical disabilities and therapeutic/rehabilitative supports to those with an acquired brain injury

² This includes persons living with combinations of Cerebral Palsy, Arthritis, Stroke, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Spinal Cord Injury, Spina Bifida, Huntington's disease and those living with the effects of an Acquired Brain Injury. It also includes individuals designated as complex 'ALC patients' in acute care settings and growing numbers of high needs older persons, and their caregivers, at risk of losing independence.

