



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Ontario Physiotherapy Association Applauds and Supports Minister Matthews' Plan to Reform Public Funding for Physiotherapy**

**(Toronto, April 18, 2013):** The Ontario Physiotherapy Association (OPA) applauds today's announcement by Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Hon. Deb Matthews) to reform publicly funded physiotherapy in Ontario because it will mean that more Ontarians, especially vulnerable seniors, have access to the quality physiotherapy they need, when and where they need it.

The OPA is pleased that the new funding and delivery models not only enhance access to physiotherapy for more Ontarians, but also improve equitable access to all regions of the province and strengthen accountability and sustainability by better aligning physiotherapy delivery with health system priorities. The new plan will improve outcomes in long-term care homes, while enhancing Ontarians', particularly seniors', access to clinic and in-home physiotherapy. The OPA is particularly pleased with the Minister's commitment to integrate physiotherapists into Family Health Teams.

"The OPA has long advocated for reform of the funding and delivery models for physiotherapy. We are pleased that Minister Matthews has recognized the importance and value of physiotherapy and demonstrated the political will to act," said Amanda Smart, OPA President and a practising physiotherapist. "This change was needed as the previous funding model was not fiscally sustainable nor fully accessible to the most vulnerable population, Ontario's seniors living in the community."

Unchanged since the late 60's, the existing physiotherapy model has not responded to population growth and demographic changes. Many Ontarians are unable to receive publicly-funded physiotherapy or face lengthy wait lists.

"Over the past 20 years, access to publicly funded physiotherapy has declined dramatically. More and more people who need physiotherapy have been forced to pay for treatments out of their own pockets, or go without." said Ms. Smart.

"Essentially what the Minister has done is redistribute current expenditures for publicly-funded physiotherapy to increase access for those who are most in need and where evidence exists to support the provision of physiotherapy services in communities, such as with falls prevention, and chronic disease management" explained Dorianne Sauvé, the OPA's Chief Executive Officer and a registered physiotherapist.

This new plan will also mean greater transparency and accountability in the delivery of physiotherapy. OPA is happy to help support the Ministry in the implementation of this plan.



The OPA is the leading voluntary professional association for physiotherapy in the province, representing over 5000 registered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and physiotherapist assistants who practise across Ontario and in all sectors of the health system.

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