

An Updated Outline with additional ideas from families for a

Letter to Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health about Family-Managed Home Care

Instructions/guidelines/ideas

Currently, families cannot receive direct funding from the Family-Managed Home Care (FMHC) program unless they have power of attorney or guardianship for their adult loved one with a developmental disability. Because many people living with a developmental disability cannot do a power of attorney, the only recourse their families/caregivers have is to obtain guardianship.

*The call from grassroots groups in October 2021 for a first round of letter writing highlighting issues of concern, led to a number of families and supportive groups putting forward letters to the Minister of Health, Christine Elliott. It appears this may have led to a possible exploration around these concerns by the Ministry of Health, but there have been no changes made as of yet, and there are no guarantees. **To ensure that the concerns of families and friends continue to be at the forefront – additional letters are needed NOW!** A second round of letter writing from an expanded tent is critical for the future in Ontario, and for those individuals and families who are being asked to get guardianship in order to receive Family Managed Home Care. Every month leads to more people with developmental disabilities being stripped of their rights, and lives being changed forever – all for one reason - a ‘support’ program.*

There are many families across Ontario who have not wanted to take away human rights from their sons, daughters, sisters, and brothers through guardianship. They know that guardianship does not protect people into the future; it can put their loved ones at more risk! They also know there is another way and that it has been working within other ministries in Ontario.

Please consider sending a letter to the Minister of Health, Christine Elliott to ask for changes that will enable access to Family Managed Home Care for ‘EVERY ELIGIBLE CITIZEN’ in Ontario – and changes that will not discriminate against one particular group.

If you have already written a letter, or even if you haven’t, consider talking to a neighbour, extended family, friends, paid supporters, colleagues, or supportive agency representative. Let them know what is happening and ask them to write a short letter. For those who would like assistance, you might want to help them put a letter together.

Below are a few points to consider and information you can use for sending your letter:

1/ Consider emailing your letter to the following people, as well as your own MPP:

Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
College Park 5th Flr
777 Bay St, Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
christine.elliott@ontario.ca

Cc:

Dr. Catherine Zahn, Deputy Minister catherine.zahn@ontario.ca
Melanie Fraser, Associate Deputy Minister, Health Services melanie.fraser@ontario.ca

2/ Key points to choose from and/or to include, along with anything you would add yourself:

- **Family-Managed Home Care (FMHC) is an excellent program that allows people to source and manage health and personal care supports that are closely tailored to their needs.**
- With such a progressive program in place, it follows that all citizens in Ontario who fit the criteria, would have access to this program without having to be stripped of their human rights and decision-making.
- Unfortunately, FMHC excludes many people who have a developmental disability. People with developmental disabilities who are considered incapable of managing the financial aspects of FMHC cannot access the program unless a family member becomes a Guardian of Property for the person needing support. That means obtaining guardianship through the courts – a long, expensive and unnecessary process; it means more hardship (and sadness) for families.
- As the **parent / sister / brother / grandparent** of a person who has a developmental disability, I can't ask my loved one to give up their human rights – the result of guardianship. For every part of their life, they would have no choice and control – everything would be in the hands of the 'guardian'. And I can't expose my family member to the risks of guardianship into the future.
 - As a **(friend / neighbour / sister / cousin / grandparent / supporter / colleague)** of someone I care about who lives with a developmental disability, I am shocked to learn that the Ministry of Health is requiring they lose their human rights in order to receive a needed support program. Insisting that my **(friend's / neighbour's / etc.,)** rights be taken away, to receive needed funds to pay their home health care supporters, doesn't make sense. It is wrong. It will turn their life upside down. It feels like discrimination.
- The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) has for many years allowed trusted family members to receive and manage funds on behalf of people who have a developmental disability – without recourse to guardianship. This approach has been successful with Passport, with Innovative Residential Funding, and other forms of individualized funding. Accountability measures are always in place for reporting the expenses. There is no reason to have different rules by different Ministries within the same government. There is no reason to create a barrier, when a viable model has existed in Ontario for decades.
- My family **(or my friend's family / my neighbour's family / my colleague's family, etc.)** is in desperate need of reliable, flexible health care support in the home. Family-Managed Home Care can assist with providing that support. Asking families to apply for guardianship in order to access the program is unnecessary. It will result in negative life-long repercussions.
- This requirement is not consistent with movements focused on developing supportive decision-making frameworks in other Canadian provinces and territories, and other parts of the world. It is not consistent with what the United Nations has declared regarding the rights of persons with disabilities. To paraphrase: to live their lives with all their human rights intact, like other adult citizens, and to receive support with decision-making where needed by those who care about them and are in their life.
- **This is a solvable problem. Solving it will have positive outcomes for potentially thousands of families across the province. The solution cannot come soon enough.**