

## **Canadian Assistive Devices Association** Supporting Access for People with Disabilities

The Canadian Assistive Devices Association (CADA) represents this country's manufacturers, distributors and vendors of medical devices and supplies. The scope of products include mobility items like wheelchairs and walkers, incontinence products, hearing aids, masks, gloves, portable oxygen supply devices, patient transfer systems, and feeding tube devices. These products are used in homes, hospitals and long-term care facilities and promote independence for seniors as well as individuals with disabilities.

### **The Assistive Devices Program (ADP)**

In Ontario, assistive devices are funded through the Assistive Devices Program (ADP), an arm of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. ADP funds products in the following categories: medical supplies (e.g. oxygen, ventilators), mobility (wheelchairs, walkers), prosthetics and orthotics, sensory (hearing aids, visual aids). Most other provinces in Canada have variations of this funding process.

There are different funding models within ADP, including the leasing of products such as ventilators, as well as a grant system, as is the case for ostomy reimbursement. However, the major model under which ADP operates is the 75/25 co-pay model. Under this model, ADP pays 75% towards the purchase of a product to a qualifying client, and the client or a third party funding agency, such as the MS Society or the March of Dimes, pays the 25% client portion. Most mobility products, ambulatory aids, positioning aids, and their related products fall within this funding model.

While CADA recognizes there is increased pressure on Ontario's healthcare budget, ADP is key to keeping Ontarians healthy, independent and safe at home, which in turn has a measurable impact on provincial healthcare expenditure. It is clear through numerous published studies that the effective use of assistive devices helps people who require these devices to stay in their homes longer and stay out of costly health care institutions. The assistive devices industry plays a strategic role in helping patients improve their health outcomes while at the same time saving the Ontario Government money. The Assistive Devices Program allows Ontarians to experience a tangible benefit of their tax dollars on a daily basis as they use these devices.

### **We exist to help Canadians**

CADA and its members understand the challenges faced by government as the aging population grows and health care spending increases each year, both in actual dollars spent and as a percentage of our GDP. We understand the reality of deficit reduction and cost containment facing all levels of government within Canada.

The Canadian Assistive Devices Industry provides vulnerable Canadians with devices which keep them safe and improve their quality of life for many years. These products prevent injuries and hospital stays due to falls as the population ages and deals with medical impairments and disabilities.

The innovative devices designed, manufactured and supplied by our industry helps keep Canadians safe and out of hospital. This allows federal and provincial governments to contain growing health care costs. There are numerous independent studies which quantify the significant savings to government when the disabled and aging population is kept safe and healthy in their homes, rather than in costly facilities.



## **We are part of the Solution to contain Health Care Costs**

CADA and its member companies are able to enable Government to save millions in health care costs by providing citizens with easier access to assistive devices which keep them safe in their homes.

The average cost of treating a hip fracture in Ontario is between \$12,505 and \$15,648. In Canada the direct health cost of hip fracture care is estimated to be \$650 million, growing to \$2.4 billion by 2040. The average cost of a walker to prevent these falls is approximately \$400. This does not factor in the socioeconomic benefits of keeping the elderly in their homes in surroundings they are most familiar with.

We encourage all provincial governments to conduct their own study / economic assessment of the benefits of providing assistive devices proactively to those at risk for injury prevention, not just during rehabilitation. We see all stakeholders involved in such a study, including medical professionals, social workers and economists to ensure a balanced approach with accurate and tangible outcomes. The outcome may include leveraging the current programs such as the Assistive Devices Program (ADP) in Ontario and the Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL).

## **The importance of product Innovation to the patient**

Ontarians benefit by the newest technologies provided by the health care sector. These new technologies provide the patient with more efficient and effective means to regain health or maintain their existing health. Currently there are major delays in the new product approval process at ADP that prevent new products being approved in an timely and efficient manner. These delays prevent patients in Ontario access to these devices that could improve their quality of life.

In the mobility sector this access to new and innovative products is compromised significantly due to delays in having new products approved in Ontario. It takes months of testing to have new products approved to be listed for reimbursement in Ontario. Many of these tests are redundant and have been performed and documented in other jurisdictions by independent internationally recognized organizations such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Before a new product can be approved for reimbursement by ADP a detailed documentation must be submitted to ADP at their testing office in at the Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Center.

Our industry association would recommend that the Government implement responsive product approval timelines that take into account prior testing as well as involving the multi- disciplinary ADP Equipment Sub- Committee to oversee the process. If the volume is too great at this center contracting out testing to third party center approved by ADP would expedite the process.

Allow Ontarians in need with access to these new technologies!

## **The assistive devices industry is part of the health care solution**

Our manufacturers, distributors and service providers play an important role in healthcare in Ontario. Through the Canadian Assistive Devices Association our members feel that they have an important part to play in the planning and delivery of healthcare in Ontario. CADA wants to be part of that discussion with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. There are various consultations, studies and initiatives that the Government is undertaking in healthcare delivery. Please include CADA in these discussions on the future of healthcare delivery in the province.