

## ***Sparking Collectively Leveraged Action for Older Adult Care in Ontario***

The Behavioural Supports Ontario Provincial Coordinating Office and Provincial Geriatrics Leadership Ontario co-hosted a powerful event on February 21<sup>st</sup> in Toronto. The *2024 Aging Care in Ontario Summit: From Alternate Level of Care (ALC) to Collectively Leveraged Action (CLA)* brought together those with lived experience, leaders, administrators, researchers, clinicians, and government partners from across Ontario to imagine a health and social care system we all want to age in. Active participation by older adults and their care partners was an essential element of the event, grounding the discussion with real-life experience.

This gathering of thought leaders comes at a critical time – with roughly 2.6 million older adults (65+) living in Ontario and an estimated 35% of these individuals requiring supports to live at home. Rapid growth in the province and increasing numbers of older adults will continue over the next few years. According to Statistics Canada, the proportion of people over age 85, a cohort more likely to experience dementia and frailty, escalates rapidly starting in 2031 when the last cohort of baby boomers turn age 85. The need for collective innovation and collaboration amongst health and social care partners has never been more urgent.

This year's Summit, which highlighted more than 40 innovative practices in older persons' care, served as an excellent reminder that Ontario is teeming with bright passionate leaders and committed front line health and social care professionals who are already conceptualizing new ways to rise to the challenge!

Participants engaged in dynamic discussions surfacing current innovations and inspiring sparks to ignite new possibilities to transform the healthcare landscape for older adults living with complex and chronic conditions across Ontario. What emerged was the start of an action-oriented roadmap that leverages the collective efforts of all that gathered to enhance the system of care for older adults.

*“Enhancing care for older adults isn’t just about increasing service volumes; it’s about uniting our efforts, leveraging our resources, and crafting a collective roadmap to advance an integrated, aging care continuum. Today, at the Aging Care in Ontario Summit, we embrace innovative collaboration, knowing that together, we can create a brighter future.”*

*Brian Ktytor, Vice President – Ontario Health North*

When asked about the most beneficial and impactful aspect of the summit, we heard about many positive experiences, including:

*As an older adult, being able to be a partner in today’s discussions... what an amazing way to brainstorm topics with a variety of people.*

*I enjoyed the Crowd Sourcing Activity. This helped to get ideas flowing and it helped us think outside the box.*

The event served to harness the power of collective wisdom and creativity to drive progress that will make a lasting impact for Ontarians. As a valuable springboard to connect partners from across Ontario, the organizers and participants expect to inspire action long after the summit concludes, sparking renewed commitment to building a better system for generations to come.

