



*Touching Lives Since 1897*  
*Au coeur de la vie depuis 1897*

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **BRIDGING THE HEALTHCARE GAP: LACK OF BEDS AND BUILDINGS MEANS MORE EMPHASIS NEEDED ON HOMECARE** *New look - VON meets changing homecare needs*

**For immediate release**

**OTTAWA, April 28, 2006** - By choice or by default home care is becoming a growing reality for Canadians. VON Canada (Victorian Order of Nurses), the country's longest serving national, not-for-profit, charitable, home and community care organization, is repositioning itself to reflect its role as a vital component of today's health care system.

"There simply aren't enough hospital beds and buildings to cope with patient needs, and the gap is growing," says Dr. Judith Shamian, VON President and CEO. "At the same time, not every ailment requires hospitalization, and more and more patients can be properly cared for in a home or community setting. VON has grown to provide more than 50 home care and community services to meet these needs on a national basis".

While more and more Canadians in rural and urban centres are in need of home care and other community services, not everyone is aware that VON offers more than nursing care, and is often just around the corner. To remind people of the breadth and scope of VON's services, the organization today unveiled an eye-catching new logo, tagline, print and television ad (see [www.von.ca](http://www.von.ca)). Radio ads will follow.

The accompanying tagline – *Touching lives since 1897*– reinforces VON's core philosophy that clients are at the centre of home and community care. The new television ad and print campaign features the story of a patient whose wheelchair is now "for sale" because he no longer needs it thanks to the care of VON.

"For more than 100 years, VON has provided innovative, dynamic and responsive community-based care, and our services have evolved and grown to meet changing needs", says Dr. Shamian. "VON is the only national, not-for-profit, charitable organization that fills the inevitable gaps in the health care system in communities across Canada. VON's charitable character ensures that we can deliver services so that Canadians receive a seamless continuum of care – as close to home as possible. Studies show people recover faster at home and are happier."

VON's revitalization campaign is multi-pronged and includes:

- A growth strategy to increase primary health care, improve workplace wellness, deliver integrated disease management programs to assist people to manage conditions like diabetes and improve health services to aboriginal Canadians;
- Renewing the organization to allow us to build a better workplace, to increase our ability to recruit and retain quality people at a time when Canada faces a shortage of health human resources in the home and community care sector;
- Raising awareness of the role of home and community care and the need for increased resources to support this neglected sector of the health care system. An OECD Long-term care study shows that Canada spends very little on home care. Sweden spends 0.72% of its GDP on home care, Canada spends 0.16%<sup>i</sup>;
- Highlighting the impact of the voluntary sector;
- Highlighting the impact of an estimated 2.85 million caregivers<sup>ii</sup> who save the system an estimated \$5 billion<sup>iii</sup> annually; and,
- An upcoming launch of a model of care that will revolutionize the way care is delivered in the home and community.

VON's campaign to highlight the integral role of home and community care comes at a time when the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories are exploring ways to reduce wait times and increase access to health care.

“Homecare can reduce wait times, plain and simple”, added Dr. Shamian. “When VON cares for Canadians in their homes or in their communities, it means they are not in hospitals, leaving the possibility for those that are in greater need of hospitalization to be seen more quickly. A strengthened home and community care system benefits patients at home and patients in hospital. We continue to urge governments at all levels to put in place the policies that reflect these realities”.

Demand for home and community care rose by an astounding 60 per cent between 1995 and 2002<sup>iv</sup>, clearly demonstrating the need for additional resources targeted to these services. Based on historical trends, today's \$4 billion home care market in Canada is estimated to grow to \$10 billion by 2010<sup>v</sup>.

In 2005 alone, VON volunteers gave 667,146 volunteer hours providing meals on wheels, caregiver respite and school breakfast programs among other programs. VON's more than 19,000 staff and volunteers deliver more than 50 programs to millions of Canadians 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through more than 55 branches and 1,400 communities across Canada. VON's staff and volunteers include specially trained Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Certified Health Care Aides, Personal Support Workers and Home Support Workers.

VON is a national health organization and registered charity offering a wide range of community health care solutions that meet the needs of Canadians from coast to coast. VON is committed to continuous quality improvement and has earned Canadian Council of Health Services accreditation.

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<sup>i</sup> M. Huber, OECD, October 2004, Estimating Expenditure on Long Term Care

<sup>ii</sup> Cranswick, 2003

<sup>iii</sup> Eales et al., 2001

<sup>iv</sup> Canadian Home Care Association, 2004

<sup>v</sup> Historical data from 1998/99 CIHI Public Expenditures on Home Care projected for home care market for 2005 (\$4B) and growth in 2010 (\$10B).