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## NEWS RELEASE

### **VON SUPPORTS THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO'S AGING AT HOME STRATEGY - INCREASED DOLLARS WILL HELP ENSURE QUALITY SERVICES IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS ONTARIO**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 28, 2007 — VON (Victorian Order of Nurses) is encouraged by the announcement of the *Aging at Home Strategy* by the MOHLTC. The increased dollars committed by the government of Ontario will expand community living options for seniors by investing more than \$700 million over three years.

Increased and enhanced resources will ensure that our older adults receive the support they need to remain healthy and living independently, consequently keeping Canadians in their homes and out of emergency rooms and hospitals. The *Aging at Home Strategy* will impact the way services are delivered by matching the needs of the local senior population with the appropriate support services.

“This strategy is a huge step in responding to the needs of our ageing population. Increased funding will help ensure that quality services are provided in our communities, allowing seniors to receive the right service, at the right time, in the right place and by the right person.” says Dr. Judith Shamian, President and CEO of VON Canada. “Statistics show that Canadians want to receive convalescent care, rehabilitation and chronic care at home rather than in an institutional setting. Clearly, the role of home and community care is growing and all levels of government have an opportunity to provide leadership in this field and to prevent the same situation in home care as we face today with hospitals – long wait times, shortage of staff, etc.”

According to Statistics Canada's *2006 Census - National Census Snapshot*, Canadians aged 55 to 64 are the fastest growing demographic, accounting for 3.7 million people - a 28 per cent rise from five years ago. The over-80 crowd was the second-fastest growing group in the latest census period, increasing by more than 25 per cent to 1.2 million over five years.

Statistics also show that between 1995 – 2002<sup>i</sup>, the demand for home care services grew by 60 per cent. The aging population, consumer expectation for home and community care delivery, technology which allows more care to be delivered in the home and a shortage of beds and buildings, all contribute to the increasing demand for home and community care. According to Roy Romanow's 2002 discussion paper, *Homecare in Canada*, predictions are that homecare expenditures will jump almost 80 percent between 1999 and 2026. Despite its growth, homecare still accounts for only one out of every twenty dollars the government spends on health.

“Increased resources to provide preventative health care will give people in Ontario the support they need to live independently in their homes,” says Dr. Shamian. “This investment by the MOHLTC marks a first step in addressing the increasing demand for home and community care services in Ontario.”

VON is dedicated to being a leader in the delivery of innovative comprehensive health and social services and to influencing the development of health and social policy in Canada. We are 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 is accredited by the Canadian Council of Health Services Accreditation.

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