

News Release • Communiqué

New web portal to help millions of Canadians care for loved ones

October 2, 2007, Ottawa - Canadians who care for family and friends will soon have access to an innovative web portal tool that will equip them with information they need to provide the care their loved ones deserve.

The bilingual (French and English) web portal tool will contain information on providing care, respite supports, financial advice, discussion boards for connecting with one another and a Caregiver Electronic Record (CER), which will serve to connect caregivers to home and community care sectors. The CER will provide caregivers with an electronic way to help them monitor their personal caregiving issues and the details about the care they are providing. This record will take into consideration the needs of the caregiver, the care recipient and the community care professional.

"This portal is an important step toward supporting millions of caregivers in Canada", said Judith Shamian, President & CEO of VON Canada. "VON Canada has for many years recognized the important role family and friend caregivers play in the delivery of health care. This portal is an important step in connecting this community to one another and to other sectors of the health care system".

The initiative is supported by a \$1 million investment from Canada Health Infoway (*Infoway*) and designed to support the 3 million Canadians who provide a staggering 2 billion hours of care to loved ones. These caregivers give their time at home or in the community, saving the health care system an estimated \$5 billion a year.

"The caregiver portal is one of many examples of emerging technologies that are managing the vast flow of information that is critical to delivering quality care," said Richard Alvarez, President and CEO, Canada Health Infoway. "It's important to recognize the important role of family and friends who care for their loved ones. This project is about equipping these caregivers with a tool they can use to support the important work they do."

To ensure the portal offers insight into the future needs of caregivers, assesses how technology can help deliver health care and allows policy makers to plan for the needs of caregivers, the portal will feature an evaluation component guided by the Waterloo Institute of Health Informatics Research (WIHIR).

Additional benefits include enhanced care at the home and in the community and reduced visits to clinics, physician offices and emergency departments. The portal is expected to be launched in June, 2008.

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. A national health organization and registered charity, VON offers 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.

Infoway is a federally-funded, independent, not-for-profit organization that is leading the development and implementation of electronic health projects across Canada. *Infoway* works with provinces and territories to invest in electronic health projects, which support safer, more efficient health care delivery. Fully respecting patient confidentiality, these private and secure systems provide health care professionals with immediate access to complete and accurate patient information, enabling better decisions about diagnosis and treatment. The result is a sustainable health care system offering improved quality, accessibility, productivity and cost savings.

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