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NEWS RELEASE

ONTARIO BUDGET TAKES STEPS TOWARDS IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF ONTARIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 26, 2008 (Ottawa, ON) - VON Canada was pleased to see Ontario's budget prioritize the health and social needs of Ontarians. Investments across the continuum of care, including the social determinants of health such as housing and poverty, are crucial in order to sustain our health care system and build healthy and strong communities.

"VON is encouraged by the increasing investments in health human resources, renewed support for long-term care and a commitment to the prevention and management of chronic disease, included in the budget," says Dr. Judith Shamian, President and CEO of VON Canada.

VON appreciates the critical role healthcare workers play in the lives of Ontarians each and every day. With increased investments in health human resources, such as nurses and personal support workers, the Ontario Government is helping to ensure that all Ontarians have timely access to quality care and supports.

While we welcome increased investments in long-term care, VON encourages the Government of Ontario to further invest in home and community care, for people at all ages and stages of life. We recognize the commitment of the Government of Ontario to increase funding for the home care agenda to support the needs of aging Ontarians through their recently announced *Aging at Home Strategy*. However, investment is also needed for other groups of the population who rely on the sector as well, such as disabled adults and children. Consequently, the home and community care sector needs to be improved for all Ontarians, not only seniors.

VON Canada understands that keeping people well and properly managing chronic disease is the most cost-effective, sustainable option for addressing chronic disease. The Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Strategy announced in this budget signals the Government of Ontario's commitment to a proactive approach to the prevention and management of chronic disease. We encourage the Government to incorporate the home and community care sector into the Strategy, ensuring all people, regardless of mobility issues, have access to in-home resources and supports.

"VON welcomes the supports for chronic disease management to allow individuals to stay in their homes," Sue Matthews, Ontario Vice President Operations and Chief of Practice and National Executive Director Disease Management. "We recognize that supporting people to live at home will prevent admissions to hospitals and prevent or delay admissions to Long term Care Homes."

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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