

Home Care Association

Facing the challenge of an aging community

Ed Murphy, President of the Home Care Association, (HCA), talks to the Sunday Tribune about the urgent need for quality care in the community.

One of the greatest challenges facing the world today is how to cope with our aging populations, says Ed Murphy, President of the Home Care Association, (HCA), the trade association representing quality home care providers in Ireland, who are urgently calling for regulation of this sector.

AN AGING WORLD:

"Even more worrying than global warming, world governments are desperately trying to cope with caring for an increasingly aging world, where birth rates are declining and we are all living longer," says Mr Murphy.

In 2006, there were 468,000 people age 65 and older in Ireland. Over the next three decades, that number is expected to more than double reaching almost 1.15m, or over 20% of the population age 65 and over, according to figures from the Central Statistics Office.

"On an international level, governments can no longer pay for healthcare, where a huge percentage, in some cases as much as 75 per cent of costs are being weighted down by the over 65s."

COMMUNITY VS HOSPITAL:

"I have spoken to hospital consultants who tell me they could clear up to 150 beds in most Irish hospitals if they had the confidence in community services to allow them discharge older people into community/home care," explains Mr Murphy, who is also a member of the Aging Well Network.

"Community care is where we have to go. Other countries have gone this route, and now we have to follow. When you consider that caring for an older person in their own home costs just 30 per cent of what it costs to keep them in hospital or nursing home care, it makes sense to invest in quality services

that support older people in independent living at home. And with advanced technology, it's now even possible to provide most nursing care at home."

REGULATION:

First and foremost, the HCA say that regulation is needed urgently says Mr Murphy.

"Following allegations of abuse and neglect in some of the nursing homes about five years ago, the Health Information and Quality Authority, (HIQA), was set up as an independent body to audit and inspect care standards in the nursing home sector. This has changed the face of nursing homes in Ireland, and we have been calling for something similar to be implemented in the home care sector since then," says Mr Murphy.

"At present there is no regulation of professional carers looking after people in their own home, despite the fact that thousands of older people receive professional assistance to allow them live independently at home. In other countries such as the UK the domiciliary care sector is heavily regulated."

However Mr Murphy points out that it may take several years for the sector to be regulated, but in the interim they are calling for the National Quality Guidelines for Home Care Support Services which have already been drafted and agreed by an HSE expert advisory group since 2008, to be implemented without delay by the HSE.

"Around 90% of elder abuse occurs in the community and the HSE board can improve the situation by approving these guidelines," says Mr Murphy.

HOME CARE VS HOME HELP

The ad hoc nature of how community care is delivered is an issue of serious concern to the HCA.

"The HSE spent €211 million on home help in 2010, which is low level home help services provided by the HSE themselves, and voluntary associations 100% funded by the HSE under section 39 Funding. In the same year just €130 million was spent by the HSE on home care packages, which is a more enhanced home care and personal care service which helps to keep many older people out of hospitals. Most home care, about 60 per cent is provided by the HSE themselves, while they outsource around 20 per cent to voluntary groups funded by the HSE, and 10 per cent is outsourced to private companies by the HSE or given to families as cash-grants to spend as they wish."

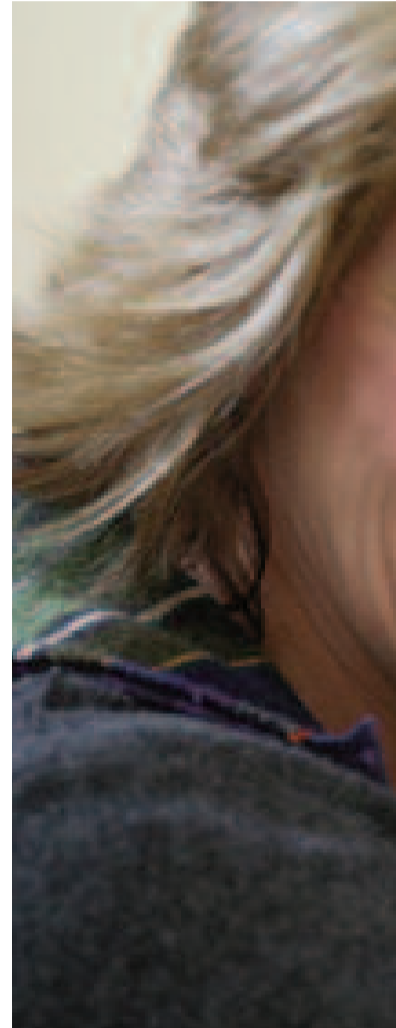
An older model of community care Home Help is based around light housekeeping rather than personal care services. But with 97 per cent of current Home Help staff recruited prior to rules regarding Garda vetting and Fetac training, most Home Help staff remain both un-trained and un-checked by An Garda Síochána.

"Most Home Help staff are excellent and well-meaning, but without monitoring or training there is no record of how long they stay, what work they complete, or what standards they adhere to," says Mr Murphy.

THE WAY FORWARD:

"Home-based care is the future of elder care globally," says Mr Murphy. "We would like to see older people in our community having more autonomy over the type of services they need; the provision of high-quality affordable care; and a system that entitles all older people to live independently in their own home for as long as possible."

www.hca.ie



Case Study

Following a second stroke, 75-year old widower Denny Corcoran lost a lot of his mobility.

Active on the music and theatre scene in Waterford throughout his life, and a contender for this year's Waterford Person of the Year, Denny missed his active life.

"Someone told us about Home Instead Senior Care, and we discovered Dad was entitled to several hours care a week, which has literally transformed Dad's life and ours too," says his daughter Ann.

"We explained to Home Instead Senior Care that



Denny Corcoran with Danette Connolly of Home Instead Senior Care at the Anna Manahan Memorial Exhibition, during Positive Ageing week, 2010.

Dad really wanted to get out and about during the week while we were working. They matched us with the most amazing carer, Charlie who is like a family member. Two afternoons a week Charlie brings Dad into town or on an outing for two hours. Other afternoons, they spend an hour doing exercises and activities at home. At the weekends another lovely carer Vicky comes in for grooming and bathing, and gets Dad ready for mass. With the advice and support from their office and nurse, Home Instead Senior Care has changed all our lives, and we couldn't recommend them enough," adds Ann.

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About the HCA

Formed in 2006 and representing 50 offices across Ireland, the Home Care Association is the trade association representing professional home care providers in Ireland, who directly employ, train, Garda vet, supervise and

insure caregivers so as to provide a quality service to vulnerable people in their homes.

These clients are older persons, persons with disabilities, chronic health conditions and anyone whose quality of life can be improved by having a

trained and supervised care worker in their home. This includes help with every day tasks like meal preparation, bathing, dressing, and help with mobility, medication reminders, light household keeping, laundry and trans-

port.

Members also provide clients with personal care and assistance with activities of daily living to maintain independent living within the home. In the vast majority of cases our members deal with people who, if they were not receiving home care, the only alternative would be long stay residential care in a public/private nursing home.

Unlike other providers, HCA members adhere to a set of home care standards and are independently audited by a UK healthcare regulator to ensure adherence to these standards. HCA members also employ, train, background check, supervise and insure caregivers to provide a quality service to clients.

HCA are required to:

1. Adhere to the HCA strict Constitution and Code of Conduct.
2. Directly employ carers with authentic contracts of employment and proper insurance.
3. Implement the HCA Home Care Standards, which are inspected annually by an Independent UK Auditor. These HCA standards include:
 - a. Garda vetting of carers
 - b. Strict employee screening and minimum training standards
 - c. Client Assessment and risk assessment procedures
 - d. Client Care Support plans
 - e. Supervision, quality control and complaints procedures

For more information log on to <http://www.hca.ie> or call 01 484 7499.

Why should I choose Home Care?

- Home care is delivered at home, where we can enjoy familiar comforts, friends and neighbours etc.
- Home care keeps families together and avoids premature admission into long-term facilities.
- Patients recover faster in their own home and the risk of infection is greatly reduced according to research.
- Home care allows individuals to retain autonomy in their own home, and free to continue their normal activities.
- Home care is more cost-effective than institutional care and can be tailored to the needs of the individual.
- Home care clients receive one-to-one care and attention from the same carer.
- Studies have shown that 95% of those aged 75 and older prefer to stay in their current residence for as long as possible.

How to choose a Home Care provider

- Does the organisation have a code of conduct in place and are audited by an independent body to ensure best practice?
- Does the provider directly employ the carers and comply with employment legislation?
- Visit the provider's premises to ensure you see evidence of a professional organisation.
- Check that caregivers are trained, insured, thoroughly screened, Garda checked and matched to meet your needs.
- Inquire how the provider hires and trains caregivers? Is continuing education offered and encouraged by the organisation?
- Make sure you and your loved one feels comfortable and compatible with the caregiver and the care plan. Request that carers keep a journal of daily activities.
- How closely does the provider evaluate and supervise the quality of home care?
- Ensure you have 24 hour access to office staff and caregivers to schedule changes, arrange service, communicate with caregivers or arrange emergency or last minute over night or weekend cover.

Accessing HSE Home Care Services:

While nobody has a legislative entitlement, The HSE do fund home help and home care packages. People can access these by contacting their local Public health office.

- A Public Health Nurse will then carry out an assessment of your needs, based on your age, ability, and level of support you currently have or need to remain living at home independently. Services vary from 30-minute sessions per day to weekend or night assistance to fulltime live-in care.
- Home Help is a more basic service for older people needing some help with activities of daily living.
- Home Care Packages are aimed mainly at those requiring medium to high caring support to continue to live at home independently. There are no national guidelines on how to qualify for a Home Care Package or how income or means are assessed.
- Home Care Packages are tailored to meet individual needs.
- If HSE funding is not available, we recommend people ask the public health nurse for quality local Home care providers or select a provider from the Home Care Association (HCA) website.
- It is important to note that the state does contribute when you contract with a private provider, by giving tax relief on the cost of care up to €50,000 a year.



International trends in elder care: autonomy and control

With elder care posing a major challenge to policy makers around the world, a new model of provision, known as 'Individualised Funding' has been developed in many countries which allows people to arrange and fund their own personal home care services.

In the US, the 'independent living' or 'assisted living' movement has focused largely on consumer control and commu-

nity participation, while in the UK, a system of 'direct payments' was successfully introduced which allows individuals to control state-allocated resources (housing support, social care, local council funding etc) like a personal bank account.

The UK, Germany and the Netherlands offer clients a choice between services provided directly by state agencies or consumer directed home care.


Internationally evidence-based research shows that control, autonomy and independence promote well-being, with clients choosing their own level of care-package being the preferred model.

Globally elder care is moving towards a similar model of care, afforded to younger adults living independently with disabilities, with the focus very much on independence and choice.

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