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## **Olde Forge Community Resource Centre to cut service to 95 patients as a result of Provincial underfunding, starting April**

OTTAWA, March 27, 2023 – The Olde Forge Community Resource Centre will start cutting service to isolated seniors and persons with disabilities starting this April, as a result of provincial underfunding. Said Colleen Taylor, Executive Director of The Olde Forge: “The recent provincial budget did not address our concerns over chronic underfunding by the Province in this sector, and we have no choice but now to start cutting programs.” Ninety-five patients in dementia day programs as well as drives to medical appointments will be affected.

Ottawa’s Olde Forge Community Resource Centre, a non-profit agency that has served the community in Ottawa’s west end for over 40 years, joined 30 other community support agencies in writing to the Ontario Government last fall about the impact of chronic underfunding. Save for a 3.5% increase this year, these agencies have been surviving on 2012 funding levels. Said Olde Forge CRC Executive Director Colleen Taylor: “Keeping our funding to 2012 levels doesn’t take into account not only inflation but also the growth in demand for our services by seniors in our community. Unfortunately, it means cutting back our programs when the need is growing.”

The Provincial Government has limited funding for Ottawa’s community care sector to 2012 levels, leading to cuts in services for all community support service agencies across Ottawa and the region, including the Olde Forge. The cuts will affect seniors and adults with disabilities living independently at home with community support assistance. The cuts are the result of years of chronic provincial underfunding despite increased demand and inflation, which were not addressed in the recent provincial budget.

Community Support Services (also known as CSS services) are a critical part of Ontario’s healthcare system. They facilitate hospital discharges, ensure a meal will be delivered to the home, the patient will be transported to a follow-up appointment, or a palliative patient will have support to die at home. CSS programs give relief to caregivers of loved ones with dementia, assist working adults with mobility challenges get ready for work, prevent isolation, and promote wellness of seniors through social and fitness programs.

Said Joel Vansnick, Chair of the Olde Forge CRC Board of Directors: “This action by the Ontario Government is short-sighted and damaging. It will slow down hospital discharges and increase Emergency Department visits to Ottawa’s hospitals when community providers start turning away referrals next month. Meanwhile, the Provincial Government is sitting on \$1 Billion in funding that was announced last year and never made it to the pockets of struggling agencies trying to keep people out of their more expensive and overburdened hospital partners.”

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