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Bill 277

**An Act to amend the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act
with respect to assistive devices to support individuals with mental health needs
in their homes and communities**

Mr. T. Kernaghan

Private Member's Bill

1st Reading April 15, 2021

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



**An Act to amend the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act
with respect to assistive devices to support individuals with mental health needs
in their homes and communities**

Preamble

New technological devices are emerging to support individuals with mental health needs who are living at home. Assistive devices for mental health needs may allow individuals to access medical and counselling appointments on a virtual basis, have their heart rate, physical activity and sleep data electronically relayed to health care providers and have their medications dispensed automatically at prescribed times.

A pilot study recently conducted through St. Joseph's Health Care London in London, Ontario, determined that a hospital bed for one individual with mental health needs costs \$454 per day, or \$165,710 per year. Conversely, providing assistive devices for mental health needs to that same individual living at home, including licensing and billing fees, costs \$12,000 per year. The pilot study also determined that study participants who lived at home but had access to assistive devices for mental health needs felt more empowered, more mobile, more integrated in their communities and less isolated. The assistive devices also supported greater independent living, greater self-care, less pain and fewer visits to a health or social service provider or a hospital's emergency department.

The pilot study concluded that 78 per cent of the study participants found assistive devices for their mental health needs improved their overall health.

Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

1 Section 6 of the *Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act* is amended by adding the following subsection:

Devices to support mental health

(3) The Minister shall ensure that the Assistive Devices Program established under paragraph 4 of subsection (1), or any other similar program established to provide access to assistive devices to support individuals with health needs, includes assistive devices to support individuals with mental health needs and any related data plans required to connect those devices.

Commencement

2 This Act comes into force 90 days after the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

3 The short title of this Act is the *Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Amendment Act (Supporting Individuals in their Homes and Communities with Assistive Devices for Mental Health)*, 2021.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill adds a new subsection to section 6 of the *Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act* that requires the Minister to ensure that the Assistive Devices Program, or any other similar program established to provide access to assistive devices to support individuals with health needs, includes assistive devices to support individuals with mental health needs and any related data plans required to connect those devices.