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Background:

In April 2005 the provincial government announced that Schedule 5 OHIP (Ontario Hospital Insurance Plan) physiotherapy services would be de-listed from Medicare's payment plan.¹

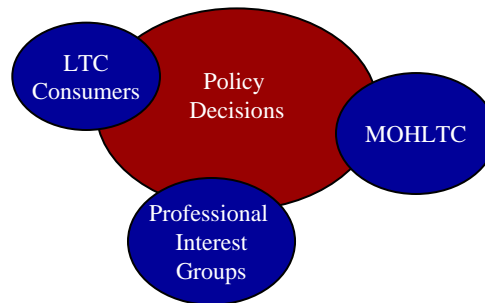
This cutback resulted in comprehensive changes in public policy concerning an individuals' ability to access publicly funded physiotherapy services.

Reduced funding to seniors in Long Term Care (LTC) facilities has caused concern within interest groups representing LTC facilities, physiotherapy service providers, and physiotherapist who are fighting to preserve services to this vulnerable group.



Objectives:

1. To determine what factors lead to Schedule 5 OHIP Physiotherapy services being de-listed in Ontario.
2. To determine what forces were at play when this policy came about.
3. To determine whose interests have been served.



Methods:

- This historical case study utilizes qualitative analysis of a variety of documents and corroborating interviews with key informants.
- Kingdon's² interest group theory was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of how this specific health care reform was perceived by: interest groups representing healthcare professionals, consumers of physiotherapy services in LTC facilities, and representatives from the MOHLTC.



Qualitative Analysis

Three broad themes emerged from document analysis:

Limited Resources and New Demands

"To improve cancer care and cardiac care, home care and long term care, some less critical services will no longer be covered by OHIP [Physiotherapy]" (Government of Ontario, 2005)

The Definition of "Home"

"[physiotherapy services] "are required to be rendered in the insured person's home because of the insured person's condition, illness or injury"(552 HIA, 2006)

"allowing prompt access to care, most LTC residents are seen within 24-48 of receiving a [physiotherapy] referral from their physician" (Schedule 5 Association, 2005)

Top Priorities

"More Physiotherapy and other rehab services – 10,425 votes" (OLTCA, April 23, 2004)

References:

1. Sorbara, the Honorable Gregory, The 2004 Ontario Budget. Transforming Health Care; Making Services Responsive, Affordable and Sustainable.
2. Kingdon, J. (1995). Agenda, alternatives, and public policies. (2nd ed.). New York: Harper Collins.

Research Question:

Why have Schedule 5 Physiotherapy services been partially de-listed in Ontario?