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Survey Shows Many Seriously Injured Auto Accident Victims Running Out of Benefits before Recovering

TORONTO (May 8, 2013) – A survey released today reveals the devastating impact of the 2010 auto insurance reforms on the recovery of many motor vehicle accident victims.

Premium relief will be welcomed by Ontario drivers but the rate reductions should be accomplished by addressing fraud in the system and lower insurer profits and not by further cuts to no - fault benefits says the Ontario Rehab Alliance.

A survey of health care providers who treat auto accident victims, conducted by the Ontario Rehab Alliance, suggests that any further benefit reductions will cause more victims to run out of treatment funds before recovering. Currently, only 17 per cent of seriously but not-catastrophically injured victims attain their rehabilitation goals. This recovery rate is dramatically reduced from the 57 per cent of victims who attained rehab goals prior to the cuts made in September 2010. The cuts amounted to a 70 per cent reduction in insured benefits that was not accompanied by lower premiums.

Optional benefits, introduced at the time of the cuts to basic coverage, provide for higher levels of coverage. The Alliance believes that these optional benefits are over- priced and poorly understood by drivers. Very few drivers choose these, leaving most policyholders with inadequate coverage in the event they are seriously injured in an accident.

“Many drivers are unaware of how little their auto insurance now covers and they are in for a big disappointment when injured” says Nick Gurevich, President of the Alliance.

The survey results also show a distressing decrease in the proportion of victims who are able to return to at least half of their pre-accident roles and levels of function following treatment. Only 31 per cent of seriously but non-catastrophically injured clients who were injured and treated after the 2010 accomplished this, as compared to 56 per cent under the pre-reform benefit structure.

“We certainly support reduction in the premiums paid by Ontario’s drivers and the fight to eradicate all fraud from our system, however, with the second poorest benefit system in Canada (and the poorest when it comes to minor injury) there is simply no room to offset reduction in premiums with any reduction in the benefit system without dire consequences to victims” adds Gurevich.

About the Ontario Rehab Alliance

The Alliance represents approximately 90 companies and about 3,500 health care providers including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, chiropractors, psychologists, rehabilitation therapists, social workers, nurses, personal support workers and



case managers. It is these individuals who are the primary providers of healthcare and rehabilitative services to Ontarians who are injured in automobile accidents. Ontario Rehab Alliance members help victims of automobile accidents to put their lives back together and regain function and dignity in the aftermath of the 65, 000 crashes which affect Ontarians every year.

For further information, visit **www.ontariorehaballiance.com**

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