

Task-shifting: Unregulated Care Providers' Expanded Role in the Care of Complex Patients in Home Care

Margaret Saari RN PhD Candidate, Erin Patterson RN PhD Candidate, Robin Harry BScN Student, Julia Raffaghello BScN Student, Ann Tourangeau RN PhD

Introduction

For most Canadian seniors aging at home is desired. However, for many seniors, this is only possible with support from family, friends, and the health care system. Ontario's home care system is continuously growing and to accommodate the increasing demand for home-based care, many services traditionally performed by nurses and allied health professionals are now being shifted to personal support services (PSS) workers.

Purpose

- ✓ To describe the range of tasks currently being performed by PSS workers in home-based care
- ✓ To understand the process of formal delegation and teaching and assignment of home-based patient care in the community

Methods

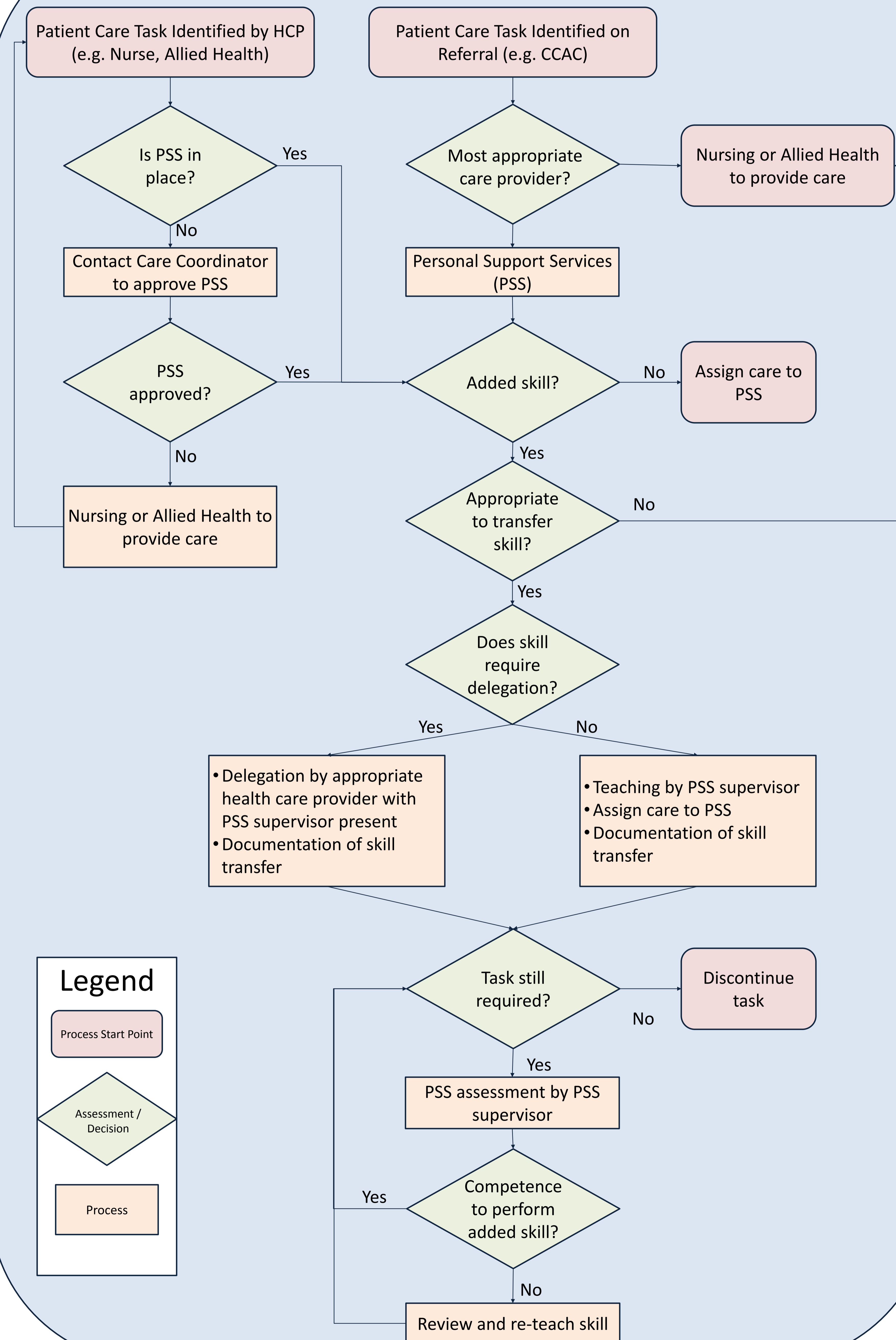
A series of 13 focus groups were conducted at two CCACs and five home care service provider organizations (SPOs) across Ontario with:

- ✓ 23 PSS workers
- ✓ 18 Personal Support Services (PSS) Supervisors
- ✓ 17 Home care nurses
- ✓ 12 Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) Care Coordinators

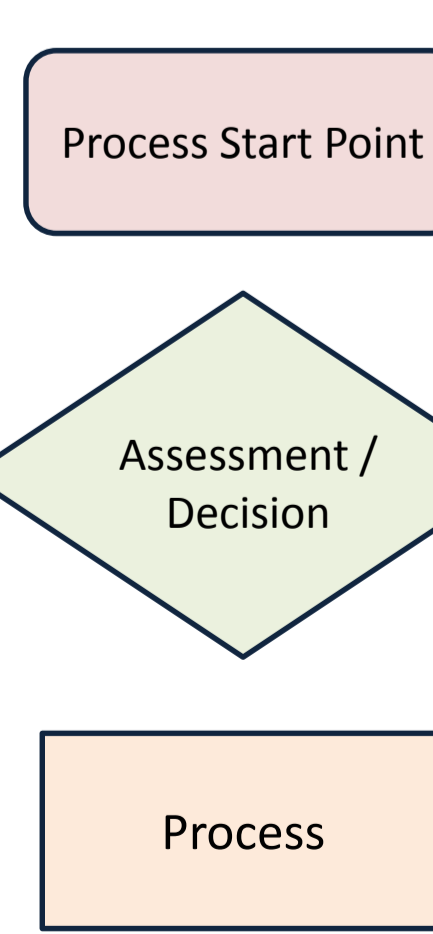
What Tasks are Being Shifted to PSWs?

Task Category	Examples
Compression therapy	Compression stockings and wraps
Transfers	Mechanical lifts, two person transfers and transfers with special equipment
Physiotherapy	Range of motion exercises
Medications	Cueing and administration of oral medications eye drops, ear drops, medicated creams
Urinary catheters	Emptying bag, bag changes and intermittent catheterization
Diabetes care	Blood glucose monitoring and insulin administration
Ostomy care	Bag and appliance change
Assessment and monitoring	Skin assessment, blood pressure monitoring
Bowel management	Digital disimpaction and suppositories
Other	Enteral nutrition, oral suctioning

Process Map: Formal Delegation, Teaching & Assignment



Legend



Findings

- ✓ The range of tasks being delegated / taught and assigned to PSS workers varies across regions and home care SPOs
- ✓ While many added skills are delegated / taught for each patient, less complex skills are now being taught to PSS workers in classroom settings (e.g., application of compression stockings)
- ✓ PSS supervisors (most often Registered Practical Nurses) are responsible for delegation / teaching and assignment of added skills, while nurses and allied health professionals provide client-specific training for more complex tasks (e.g., intermittent catheterization, ostomy care and range of motion exercises)
- ✓ Procedures for monitoring the ongoing need for added skills / competency of the PSS worker to perform added skills varies across SPOs

Implications

- ✓ To ensure equitable access to care across Ontario, standard policies and practices regarding the delegation / teaching and assignment of tasks to PSS workers should be implemented
- ✓ To maintain a high level of care quality home care SPOs should ensure standard and consistent practices exist with regards to training and monitoring tasks shifted from nursing and allied health care providers to PSS workers
- ✓ To ensure ongoing provision of quality care PSS workers should be provided with additional time to perform the added tasks



Ethics Approval / Acknowledgements

Ethics approval was obtained from the University of Toronto Research Ethics Board. The researchers gratefully acknowledge funding from the Government of Ontario.