
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services

NEW REGISTRY TO SAFEGUARD SENIORS, SUPPORT CAREGIVERS

VANCOUVER – B.C. is increasing safeguards to protect vulnerable British Columbians and creating supports for care aides and community health workers with the creation of a new registry that becomes operational on Jan. 29, 2010, Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon announced today.

“Care aides and community health workers are an important part of B.C.’s health-care delivery system,” said Falcon. “Not only will the registry protect the public and help to ensure that individuals working for publicly-funded employers are providing appropriate standards of care, but we are building in supports for workers to encourage career mobility and development.”

The BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker registry is believed to be the first of its kind in the country. Registration with the registry is a requirement for employment as a care aide or community health worker with publicly-funded employers in British Columbia.

To protect the public, employers will be required to report any alleged patient abuse by an employee to the registry at the time of suspension or termination of employment. This may result in a registrant’s removal from the registry and affect the individual’s eligibility to hold employment with publicly funded health employers.

“The new registry supports our goal of ensuring excellence in health care and we have worked closely with the Province and stakeholders, including unions, on its development to ensure that it will promote public safety and, at the same time, benefit members of the profession,” said Lee Doney, the Health Employers Association of British Columbia’s president and chief executive officer.

Care aides and community health workers in the public sector will have until April 28, 2010 to register. Individuals working in these positions will be able to maintain their current employment. Those registering after April 28, 2010 will be required to demonstrate they have the required knowledge and patient-care skills, before they can work for another publicly funded employer.

“We know that B.C.’s population is aging and growing and it is important that we have the tools in place to ensure excellence in seniors’ care,” said Ed Helfrich, CEO of the BC Care Providers Association. “With this new mechanism to register care aides and community health workers, B.C. is helping care providers achieve excellence by establishing supports to advance the professional goals of our members while protecting vulnerable British Columbians.”

Once fully operational, the registry may incorporate a number of other features, including assistance with assessments for internationally educated care aides and community health workers and may offer information on job and educational opportunities. The Province is also working with educational institutions to standardize care aide and community health worker education in B.C. to ensure all new graduates have the entry to practice skills required in today's health-care environment.

“Our members fully support training standards for care aide and community health worker education programs,” said Judy Darcy, the Hospital Employees’ Union’s secretary business manager. “Bringing all training to a higher standard represents a real step forward for patients and staff. It will provide B.C. families with the assurance that front-line care workers have the education and skills they need to provide the frail elderly and other vulnerable populations with the quality care they require and deserve.”

In the initial phases of the registry, registration will be optional for care aides and community health workers employed by facilities or organizations that do not receive public funding. However, in order to ensure standardized levels of care for all British Columbians, the Province will work with Health Match BC, the BC Care Providers Association and other stakeholders to encourage registration for all B.C. care aides and community health workers, regardless of where they work. The vast majority of care aides and community health workers in B.C. work for publicly-funded or partially publicly-funded employers.

"The registry will provide a consistent process for residential care aides and community health workers to deal with allegations of abuse in the worksite, in a manner that is fair and timely" said Darryl Walker, president of the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union.

The BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry supports government’s commitment to ensure seniors and other vulnerable British Columbians, who have the highest level of needs, receive the care they require. The Province has opened more than 6,000 net-new residential care beds, assisted living and supportive housing units since 2001.

The ministry worked on the development of the BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry in partnership with the Health Employers Association of BC, an organization that co-ordinates the human resource and labour relations interests of over 300 publicly funded health-care employers in B.C. The registry will report directly to Health Match BC, a free health professional health-care recruitment service funded by the Province.

For more information on the BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry, please visit www.cachwr.bc.ca or call 1-877 867-3061.

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