

## **BC Care Providers Association: Action Plan Update #2 (September 2009)**

### **Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) – Mitigation**

As noted in our previous report, BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA) representatives met with Finance Minister Colin Hansen earlier this month to discuss the impact of the HST on the senior's care sector. Last month, BCCPA estimated the HST represents an annual tax increase of \$10.5 million for BC non-profit and private seniors' care providers.

During our meeting with Minister Hansen, we made the case that without mitigation, the HST will force care providers to lay off staff and reduce service. Since our discussion with Minister Hansen, BCCPA officials met with senior officials in the Ministry of Finance to discuss mitigation options and we have achieved some initial positive results.

During the course of our discussions, the Minister and his officials have confirmed the following mitigation measures:

- Residential care providers will be included in the HST exemption for hydro costs
- Non-profit care providers will be eligible for a 57% HST rebate
- The provincial government is prepared to support a request to the federal government to extend additional HST relief in the health sector

Both the Minister and his officials have also agreed to ongoing discussions regarding additional HST mitigation for the health sector – particularly for private care providers. We will also continue our work with other provincial care provider associations. At last week's meeting of the Canadian Alliance for Long Term Care (CALTC) in Victoria, we agreed to implement a national strategy for HST mitigation.

We will keep you posted on developments in the coming weeks.

### **Health & Safety Guidelines - National Recognition**

Earlier this year, BCCPA introduced new health and safety guidelines to support care providers who were feeling pressure from health authorities to accept complex care residents that they did not have the full staffing to care for properly.

Since this safety tool was introduced, more than 70% of our members have decided to use the tool in their facility – with success. We have received many reports of smoother admission discussions with local health authorities.

Last week, the Canadian Health Care Association recognized the leadership of BCCPA in a new national report on long-term care. The report recognizes the BCCPA health and safety guidelines as a "leading practice" in Canada and recommends they be widely disseminated across Canada.

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In addition to recognizing BC leadership, the 150+ page report makes a series of specific recommendations about the crisis in Canadian senior's care, including:

- federal government must show leadership and establish a facility-based long term care fund to address growing challenges of aging society
- establish mandatory accreditation in facility based long-term care
- develop pan-Canadian minimum staffing levels for long-term care facilities and a strategy to attract people to work in facility-based long-term care
- allow funding to follow residents so that provinces with massive in-migration do not experience excessive costs

These are recommendations BCCPA support, and in some cases we are ahead of the game – particularly as it relates to accreditation, establishing a registry of care aides and recruiting people into nurse and care aide training. A full copy of the report is available at [www.cha.ca](http://www.cha.ca)

### **Voluntary Membership in Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC)**

Over the past few years we have received a growing number of reports from our members who are dissatisfied with centralized bargaining through HEABC. In June, more than two dozen employers applied to the Labour Board asking out of HEABC in advance of the upcoming collective bargaining process.

BCCPA has advocated for voluntary membership in HEABC and raised the issue with Minister Falcon during our introductory meeting in July. We are pleased to report that we have received confirmation that the government has now approved voluntary membership in HEABC. All affiliate HEABC members should have received a copy of the letter from HEABC's Lee Doney outlining the process for withdrawal.

While there are still specific details to be worked out, this decision represents an example of the government listening to the concerns of care providers. We will be circulating further information and advice regarding process and drafting a template submission to the LRB for employers wishing to withdraw.

### **Member Services – Workshop Schedule**

As indicated in previous notes, BCCPA will be hosting a fall workshop series next month. We will be hosting three meetings on the following dates so please highlight your calendar accordingly:

- Thursday, October 15 – Lower mainland (Fraser & Vancouver Coastal Regions)
- Wednesday, October 21 – Victoria (Vancouver Island Region)
- Monday, October 26 – Kelowna (Interior & Northern Regions)

Location details will be confirmed in the coming days. Among other things, the workshops will focus on:

- impact of HST
- efficiency and sustainability proposals to Health Minister
- human resources & labour relations
- application of VIHA funding model in other regions

We look forward to seeing you soon.

**Vancouver Coastal Health Authority – Call for Expressions of Interest**

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCH) is calling for expressions of interest for the purchase of property at 990 22nd Street in West Vancouver. The proposal calls for:

- the outright purchase of the property at market price, OR
- a development agreement with VCH for the development of a complex care facility and seniors housing

The closing date for submissions is Oct. 28, 2009. More information is available at the BC Bid web site at <http://www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca/open.dll/welcome>.

It appears there is a preference to deal with an outright purchase agreement but if this fails they would deal with the proposals for complex care development.