

BC Care Providers Association: Action Plan Update (August 2009)

HST Update

Since our last update, the Association has completed the first stage of our analysis regarding the direct negative impact the HST will have on the non-profit and private seniors' care sector in BC.

Based on our preliminary analysis, the estimated total annual tax increase for BC funded care providers under the HST will be more than \$10.5 million. Our conclusions are based on input from our members, a review of the Ontario HST experience - recognizing they are a few months ahead of us on HST implementation and an estimate of 17,000 funded care beds across the province (excluding Health Authority owned/operated sites).

Attached is a letter our CEO Ed Helfrich has sent to the BC Finance Minister on Friday with a detailed backgrounder. In addition to looking at the direct bottom line costs of the HST, our submission to the Minister also includes some constructive suggestions regarding proposed mitigation measures for discussion.

This submission represents our early analysis with an emphasis on residential care. In the coming weeks we will be reviewing the impacts on our home support members and following up to the Minister. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Minister Falcon Follow-Up

In our last report, we updated you on our introductory meeting with the new Health Minister Kevin Falcon. Since then we have been working on a set of proposals the Minister can consider regarding increasing the efficiency and sustainability of the seniors' care system.

We will send you a copy of our submission once it is complete – as early as next week.

One of the areas we will be encouraging the Minister to consider regarding efficiency is the Health Authorities' practice of keeping seniors' in very expensive acute care beds while there are more affordable empty beds in the residential care sector. Below is an excerpt from an item that appeared this month in the **Kamloops Daily News** that illustrates this point.

August 14, 2009 - Kamloops Daily News
Beds for seniors are available; it comes down to money
By Michele Young

Interior Health could open up several beds in Royal Inland Hospital for acute-care patients if it paid for more seniors' beds in private facilities. Ridgeview Manor and The Hamlets have more than two dozen empty private-pay beds the health authority could contract out, even on a temporary basis.

Hendrik Van Ryk of H and H Total Care Services said Friday 19 of the 28 private-pay beds his company has at The Hamlets in Westsyde are open. The facility has 84 more beds funded by the IHA.

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Will McKay, managing partner with Ridgeview's parent company Baltic Properties, said the new Brocklehurst facility has 11 or 12 of its 23 private-pay beds available. Ridgeview has 129 residential-care beds in total; with IHA already contracting 106 of them. "They (the IHA beds) were full from the get-go," he said in a telephone interview from Vancouver.

Van Ryk said the situation is similar in other parts of B.C.; private beds are available that the government could contract for seniors who are currently in hospital beds waiting for publicly subsidized beds to open up. He said in some cases, seniors were in private beds paid for by their children until they could get into subsidized beds. But the economy has affected many who were doing that.

Residential care beds can get expensive, but they are still far cheaper than having seniors waiting in hospital beds, he noted. But with all of B.C.'s health authorities having to grapple with deficit budgets that must be balanced, contracting out more publicly-subsidized beds isn't likely to happen.

McKay said people in the IHA beds will pay \$30 to \$70 a day, depending on their income. The health authority pays the difference up to the amount of its contract with Ridgeview. Private-pay residents are subject to whatever the market decides their spaces are worth. He said it can range around \$150 a day or more.

The beds the seniors occupy in the hospital while they await publicly subsidized residential-care spaces cost at least five times that. But the health authority would be out of pocket to fund not only the acute-care beds, but add to its residential-care spending — and that's something that's not possible right now, said Thompson-Cariboo-Shuswap chief operating officer Andrew Neuner.

"We don't have the operating funds to buy more beds at seniors' facilities," he said. "As much as that makes economic sense, it still increases the money we have to put in the system. And the money just doesn't exist."

Strategic Planning – Fall Workshops

Like you, the BCCPA Board has been busy this summer. In light of the growing challenges facing our sector, we have made strategic planning a top priority – particularly in the current climate of health care cuts and the HST.

Now more than ever we understand there is strength in the numbers BCCPA represents. The Board has confirmed a series of four goals that will guide our efforts in the coming year:

- 1. Promote funding solutions & ensure sustainability of members and the Association**
 - Lobby for transparency and public reporting of facility costs (both HA and affiliates)
 - Promote funding models to government to improve efficiency and equity.
 - Continue to negotiate for standardized provincial contract.
 - Advocate for mitigation of the Harmonized Sales Tax
 - Ensure balanced budget for Association.
 - Continue lobby for funding at 3.2 hrs prd.
 - Initiate membership recruitment campaign including regional meetings.

- 2. Advocate and encourage human resource + labour relations solutions**
 - Extension of BC Cares initiative.
 - Voluntary membership in HEABC.

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- Develop long term strategy on labour relations role.
 - Advocate for full funding of collective agreements.
- 3. Strengthen relationships with government, health authorities and stakeholders**
- Regularly meet with Ministry and senior staff in HA's to strengthen on-going relationships.
 - Foster on-going partnerships with related Associations.
 - Presentation to MLAs and MPs.
- 4. Foster and promote standards and quality of care**
- Advocate for sustainability funding of MDS and any new E-Health initiatives.
 - Continue to promote health and safety guidelines and workload measurement tools.
 - Support recommendations of upcoming BC Ombudsman's report
 - Continue involvement and monitor development of performance indicators.
 - Participate and provide input to licensing and regulatory changes.

Your ongoing input is critical to our success and we would appreciate your feedback on these goals. We will also be hosting work shops in the various health regions early this fall. A series of dates and locations will be proposed in the coming weeks. We look forward to seeing you!

Pandemic Preparedness

With the ongoing concerns associated with H1N1 and an increased public health focus on pandemic planning, the Occupational Health and Safety Agency in BC is hosting two forums to discuss pandemic planning for the residential and community care sector. The dates are:

- August 31 – Victoria
9:30am – 2:30pm
Harbour Towers Hotel (345 Quebec Street)
- September 2 – Richmond
9:30am – 2:30pm
WorkSafe BC Auditorium (6951 Westminster Highway)

For more information or to register, contact www.heabc.bc.ca.