

Update to Members – March 2009

Dear members,

Further to previous notes, here is an update on a number of the initiatives we have been working on related to achieving our Action Plan goals to:

- set a 3.2 hour minimum staffing ratio at BC care facilities
- establish a standardized province-wide contract and funding model
- funding to match the costs associated with delivering complex care

In this notice you will find:

- update on health & safety guidelines
- recap of 2009 BC Budget
- care aide resumes available at www.bccare.ca

Health & Safety Guidelines

As indicated in previous updates, the Association is preparing health and safety guidelines to better protect residents, manage workload and help you make difficult decisions regarding new admissions. The first draft was circulated at the end of February and since then, we have received a lot of positive feedback.

During the first week of March, close to 120 people attended a series of work shops the Association hosted in Richmond, Kamloops and Victoria.

Most attendees confirmed the current crisis in care and recognized that some members are in better circumstances than others. But as care providers, we all agreed we have no choice but to put the health and safety of our staff and current residents first – before considering new admissions.

Members currently using the safety grid and workload management tool talked about how easy they are to use and how effective they can be in managing staff and making admission decisions. There was a strong openness by most attendees to consider using the guidelines and many expressed an interest signing on as quickly as possible.

As stated during the sessions, the Association is committed to listening and to helping members implement this tool. Based on the feedback we received at the workshops and in advance of an upcoming public release, we will:

- make some improvements to the draft guidelines
- finalize an easy-to-use excel work sheet for the management tool
- distribute updated materials to you next week

In the meantime, we have asked you to identify a site lead that we can work with to help you implement the tool. If you have not already done so, please forward a contact name to our Director of Public Relations and Member Services, David Hurford at dhurford@bccare.ca.

2009 BC Budget

Since February's provincial budget, members have contacted us with questions and to express disappointment that no immediate support was forthcoming to address the critical challenges facing residential senior's care in BC.

While there are some positive opportunities for us to explore on employment training and construction of senior's housing, the budget does not respond to our most urgent need – funding to increase staffing levels.

More and more, our members are feeling the pinch. Every day, BC care providers are being forced to choose between providing barely enough care and refusing new admissions to protect staff and current residents.

As you know, our Association has been calling on the provincial government to address this crisis in care. The Auditor General has agreed with us. Numerous other health care stakeholders have agreed with us. And now we are waiting for the BC Ombudsman to tell us the same thing in her review.

We reserved any official reaction to the Budget until we heard from our members, the Board of Directors and the Minister of Health. On your behalf, members of our Board have met with Minister Abbott since the Budget. While he assured us of his personal commitment, he could not provide any assurances that direct funding will be allocated to address low staffing levels.

In addition to expressing your disappointment, we informed the Minister that a growing number of our members are facing the reality of having to refuse complex clients that exceed their facility's capacity.

Care Aide Resumes Available

In light of ongoing labour shortages in the care sector and an increased volume of interest, we have re-designed www.bccare.ca to accept resumes from prospective care aides and LPNs looking for jobs in BC.

Once a resume is received, we are posting them in the "Members Only" section of the web-site. If you have staffing needs, I would suggest you take a look there. Each resume is identified by the date we received it and the location of the applicant – recognizing that some are willing to relocate for work.

If you have other suggestions on how we can improve the web-site to suit your needs, please let us know. Thank you again for your ongoing support and all that you are doing to provide quality care for seniors.

Yours truly,



Ed Helfrich, CEO
BC Care Providers Association