

Backgrounder: BCCPA Proposals to Improve Quality and Efficiency of BC Seniors Care

The BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA) has presented a series of proposals to provincial and regional health authorities to improve the quality, transparency and efficiency of the BC seniors' care system. The submission updates the 2009 BCCPA Action Plan and follows recent media reports and Legislature debates regarding challenges facing care providers, seniors and their families.

BCCPA members are very committed to ensuring BC seniors in residential care and home support receive the best quality of care possible. In addition to building on positive patient satisfaction survey results, these proposals reflect ideas from front-line care providers and advance specific strategies to further improve the quality of care seniors in BC deserve.

Wait Times

The Canadian Medical Association estimates a frail, elderly person can suffer a 5% functional decline for every day they spend in a hospital. Each day in BC, hundreds of acute care beds are filled with seniors who should be in residential care or home support. Meanwhile, residential care beds at licensed BC facilities are empty in communities across BC.

Proposal:

- establish a maximum time for seniors to wait in hospitals for community residential care or home support services
- create a patient-focused task force to monitor the supply and fill empty residential care beds on a regular basis
- extend the *Residents Bill of Rights* for seniors in acute care hospital beds

Prevent Elder Abuse

Since the BC Care Aide Registry was established to combat elder abuse in 2010, care aides seeking employment at a publically funded care provider must have a Registry ID number. To register, they must graduate from a recognized BC training program. Health care assistants that abuse seniors are removed from the Registry and may be prohibited from working in the public system again.

Proposal:

- respond to proposal from care providers across the province regarding the effectiveness of the Registry and recommendations to close safety gaps
- extend the Registry's application to under-served seniors – particularly new Canadians in unregulated home care settings

Standardize Reporting

Listening to families and measuring their satisfaction with the quality of residential care their loved one is receiving are critical elements to ensuring our system is improved regularly. Unfortunately, the use and reliability of patient satisfaction surveys is uneven across the province.

Proposal:

- establish a single format for patient satisfaction surveys across the province based on the Fraser Health Authority's current model
- fully publish the results every two years

Disclosure

The BC Ombudsperson's report confirmed BCCPA's long-standing concern about the wide discrepancy in funding rates for seniors care across BC – particularly as it relates to facilities operated by Health Authorities vs. contracted non-profit, denominational and privately-owned care providers.

Proposal:

- publish an independent review and comparative analysis of complete funding rates in response to recommendations of the BC Ombudsperson

User Fees

In 2009, BC increased user fees for seniors in residential care. The new fees were phased in and expected to net close to \$55 million in new revenue. Care providers have expressed concern that some health authorities may have held back traditional funding lifts in favour of this new revenue. Others have reported minimal increases – if any.

Proposal:

- provide a full accounting of the total amount of new user fee revenue and how it has been reallocated on a site by site basis
- reaffirm commitment to reinvest 100% of new user fee revenue in residential care and improved staffing levels across the province

Red Tape

One common element that has emerged through recent reports and the Ombudsperson's investigation is the complex reporting processes associated with the sector are often confusing and difficult to manage for families. Care providers face the same multiple levels of administration and system demands that often leave care aides hugging computers instead of seniors.

Proposal:

- include BC seniors' care sector in the province's ongoing red-tape reviews to simplify and improve multi-levels of reporting, licensing, accreditation, quality assurance and inter-RAI MDS processes

Value for Taxpayers

For many years the province has developed public-private partnerships with non-profit, denominational and privately-owned and operated seniors care providers to enhance patient care, deliver sound value for money and serve the public interest in a manner consistent with the *Canada Health Act* and BC legislation. However, concerns have been raised about fairness and delays around a recent tender process in the Capital Region.

Proposal:

- reaffirm the effectiveness and improve the fairness of public tendering system for construction of new residential care beds
- offer future tenders through Partnership BC or establish an independent fairness monitor to ensure best value and quality for taxpayers money spent

Human Resources

BCCPA has worked closely with the provincial government and stakeholders since 2010 to develop a comprehensive human resources strategy for the BC seniors care sector. This project continues to receive their support and is ongoing. More recently, the provincial government introduced new measures to facilitate an increased role for nurse practitioners in the delivery of public health care services.

Proposal:

- establish a pilot project with the Ministry to expand the use of nurse practitioners in complex seniors care settings to reduce hospital referrals, improve quality of care and provide enhanced clinical expertise

Family Councils

Family Councils play a positive role at improving quality of life and service at care facilities across the province each day. One of the BC Ombudsperson's recommendations in her 2009 report on seniors care focused on enhancing the role of resident and family councils at complex care facilities across the province.

Proposal:

- create a collaboration with health authorities to enhance the role of existing local councils and promote the use of a new BCCPA Family Council Guide