



March 19, 2009

Hon Rich Coleman
BC Minister of Housing
PO Box 9058 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Hon Kevin Falcon
BC Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
PO Box 9055 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Ministers,

On behalf of the BC Care Providers Association, I am writing in regards to the Government of Canada's decision to invest \$400 million for seniors housing in the 2009 federal budget which was approved by the House of Commons last week.

In addition to creating jobs and economic growth during difficult economic times, this investment has the potential to help meet the growing demand for senior's residential care across Canada – and in British Columbia.

In addition to investing in seniors housing, the federal budget is designed to accelerate projects already being planned and leverage private sector investment in the economy as much as possible. Our Association is well-positioned to help achieve these goals – with your support.

It is estimated that BC's per capita share of the \$400 million allocated for seniors housing in Canada would be just over \$50 million. In this light, our Association is proposing to work with the federal government on a partnership that could see some of this allocation leverage and accelerate private investment in the construction and renovation of much needed residential care facilities for seniors in BC.

Immediately after the federal budget was introduced in late-January, we put a couple questions to our membership:

- Are you planning any significant upgrades or improvements to your facility in the next 12-24 months?
- If federal/provincial government were willing to provide 50% of the funds, would you accelerate those improvements to the next 4-12 months?

The response was very positive and demonstrated that many partnership opportunities exist across the province that could help stimulate local economies and improve access to residential

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seniors care. Our initial canvass suggested that a total federal investment of \$10 million out of BC's per capita share of the senior's housing fund could create at least \$20 million of construction activity within the next year.

What makes this opportunity particularly attractive is that once the renovations and expansions are complete, they will house more residents – and consequently more jobs will be created to care for them.

If the federal government expresses an interest in exploring this opportunity, our Association will be pleased to prepare a more comprehensive proposal in partnership with your government. We expect this plan would include some basic criteria to ensure shared objectives are achieved. These could include:

- eligibility of non-profit and privately run facilities for expansions, renovations & technology upgrades
- defined timelines to accelerate construction this year
- all permits secured
- minimum standards for private investment
- maximum standards for federal funding
- comprehensive accountability provisions
- green building design

We hope you will support this idea to create employment opportunities and expand access to quality residential senior's care in British Columbia. If you are interested, we are asking you to identify a lead contact in your Ministry to work with and to communicate this support to your federal colleagues. For immediate reference, I have attached a letter we have distributed to federal officials.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and for your commitment to seniors housing in British Columbia.

Sincerely,



Ed Helfrich, CEO
BC Care Providers Association

cc BC Premier Gordon Campbell
Hon George Abbott, BC Minister of Health
Hon Colin Hansen, BC Minister of Finance
Hon James Moore, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage