

ASSISTED LIVING BACKGROUND

The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 2)

Issues Investigated

- Staffing of the Office of the Assisted Living Registrar
- Powers of the assisted living registrar
- Costs of Receiving Services
- Availability of Information
- Eligibility and Assessment
- Placement Process
- Quality of Care
- Complaints
- Complaints about Tenancy Issues
- Monitoring and Enforcement

Key Recommendations

- Ministry of Health stop contracting with the Health Employers Association of BC to staff the Office of the Assisted Living Registrar (R51)
- Assisted living registrar delegate investigative powers to staff who require those powers (R52)
- Ministry of Health immediately require compliance with its policy on benefits and allowable charges (R53)
- If Ministry of Health believes that its practice of allowing operators to provide additional services is useful, it should ensure a statutory basis for doing so (R54)
- Ministry of Health create a legally binding process for assessing the decision making capacity of assisted living applicants and residents (R59)
- Ministry of Health establish a timeframe within which eligible seniors receive subsidized assisted living (R63)
- Ministry of Health, after consulting with stakeholders, establish legally binding minimum requirements for assisted living residences in key areas including staffing, residents' rights, food safety and nutrition, emergencies, record management and assistance with daily activities (R69)
- Ministry of Health establish a legal requirement for assisted living operators to have a complaints process (R72)
- Ministry of Health revise the complaints process used by the Office of the Assisted Living Registrar to include time limits, process for investigating complaints, and a requirement that complainants be informed in writing of the outcome of their complaint and any further action they can take (R75)
- Ministry of Health take the steps necessary to expand the powers of the Office of the Assisted Living registrar so that it has the authority to respond to complaints from residents about all aspects of care in assisted living (R78)
- Ministry of Health consider whether to expand the jurisdiction of the Office of the Assisted Living Registrar to deal with tenancy disputes in assisted living (R83)
- Ministry of Health require assisted living operators to report serious incidents (R85)
- Ministry of Health develop an active inspection and monitoring program for assisted living (R88)
- Ministry of Health expand the authority of the assisted living registrar to obtain information about incidents under investigation (R90)
- Ministry of Health review of the Office of the Assisted Living Registrar's enforcement program to ensure that it has adequate resources and more power to ensure compliance with standards (R93)

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Description of Services

- Assisted living is a form of housing that combines private units in apartment-style residences with the provision of hospitality and prescribed care services. These services include meals, housekeeping, personal care and help with medications.
- Assisted living is meant for seniors and others who are able to direct their own care, but can no longer live safely on their own. It is often seen as falling between home support and residential care on the spectrum of seniors' care services.

Number of People Served

- As of March 2011, there were 194 registered assisted living residences in British Columbia, containing a total of 6,832 units, the majority of them single occupancy. Of this total, 4,380 units were subsidized and 2,452 were not.

Cost of Providing Services

- In 2010/11, the total funding the five regional health authorities provided for assisted living was \$74.7 million. This includes the cost of both the housing and the services.
- In 2007/08, the average per unit subsidy paid by health authorities was \$55 a day, or \$1,650 per month.

Cost of Receiving Services

- Subsidized residents pay a maximum of 70 per cent of their after-tax income. As of March 2010, this amount ranged from \$801 to \$3,860 per month, and averaged \$1,224 per month. People who experience serious financial hardship as a result of paying the monthly rate can apply to their health authority for a hardship waiver.
- Non-subsidized residents typically pay between \$1,500 and \$5,000 per month.

Service Delivery

- Assisted living residences can be owned and operated by health authorities, non-profit groups or private companies.
- Individual facilities may contain only subsidized units, only non-subsidized units or both.
- Health authorities administer subsidized assisted living services, overseen by the Ministry of Health.
- Private companies and some non-profit groups provide non-subsidized assisted living services.

Legislation

- Assisted living is regulated by the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, which requires assisted living operators to register their residences with the assisted living registrar and to ensure that they are operated in a manner that does not jeopardize residents' health or safety.
- The *Assisted Living Regulation* establishes the standards that operators must meet for storing and administering medication.