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

Issues Investigated

- Changes in Home Support Policy
- Number of Seniors Supported
- Funding Levels
- Public Information
- Eligibility, Assessment and Access
- Waiting for Service
- Cost of Receiving Services
- Continuity of Care
- Quality of Care
- Complaints
- Monitoring and Enforcement

Key Recommendations

- Ministry of Health analyze whether the home support program is meeting its goal of assisting seniors to live in their own homes as long as it is practical and make any necessary changes (R34)
- Ministry of Health evaluate home support eligibility criteria to ensure they are consistent with program goals and make any necessary changes (R34)
- Ministry of Health analyze the costs and benefits of expanding the home support program up to the cost of providing subsidized residential care (R34)
- Ministry of Health work with the health authorities to develop a consistent process for determining time allotments for home support activities (R35)
- Ministry of Health set a timeframe within which eligible seniors are to receive subsidized home support (R36)
- Health authorities track the time it takes for seniors to begin receiving home support services (R37)
- Ministry of Health extend the \$300 cap on home support services to seniors who do not have earned income (R39)
- Ministry of Health establish clear, specific and enforceable quality of care standards for home support services (R42)
- Health authorities require contracted home support providers to inform residents and families about how to complain (R45)
- Ministry of Health ensure all seniors who receive home support have access to the same complaints process (R47)
- Ministry of Health and health authorities establish clear and consistent processes for monitoring home support services (R49)

Home Support Services

- Home support services are provided to seniors in their homes and also while living in various supportive housing, including assisted living residences.

- Services are intended to help seniors (and others) who are still able to live independently in their homes and communities for as long as they can safely do so. They are meant to supplement the care that families and others provide.
- Home support workers, also referred to as community health workers, help seniors with daily activities such as getting up and around, getting dressed, using the bathroom, preparing meals and taking medications.

Number of Seniors Served

- In 2009/10, there were at least 24,500 seniors receiving subsidized long-term home support services in British Columbia.

Cost of Providing Services

- In 2009/10, the regional health authorities spent a total of approximately \$339 million providing subsidized home support services throughout British Columbia.
- It typically costs the health authorities \$30 to \$40 to provide each hour of subsidized home support.

Cost of Receiving Services

- Health authorities use a formula set by regulation to calculate the amount subsidized home support clients will be charged. The formula is based on income tax information from the previous year. As a result of applying this formula:
 - approximately 71 per cent of home support clients pay nothing to receive these services
 - 3 per cent pay up to \$10 per day
 - 6 per cent pay between \$10 and \$20 per day
 - 20 per cent pay more than \$20 per day
 - seniors with earned income pay a maximum of \$300 per month for home support

Service Delivery

- Subsidized services may be provided by employees of health authorities or by other organizations, either non-profit or for-profit, with which a health authority has made a contract.
- Seniors and their families can obtain funding from the government to hire and manage their own home support services through the Choice in Supports for Independent Living Program.
- Seniors who do not qualify for subsidized home support services may opt to privately purchase various services that are similar in nature to subsidized home support services.

Legislation

- Subsidized home support services are administered under the *Continuing Care Act*.
- The Act does not include specific standards for home support but does authorize the Minister of Health to issue “standards, guidelines or directives” that are binding on service providers.