



January 2021

FACILITIES-BASED CONTINUING CARE REVIEW

BACKGROUND— How we got here

Almost a year ago, in early February 2020, the Kenney Government asked MLA Richard Godfried to lead a stakeholder engagement committee in a review of continuing care legislation. The various pieces of legislation include, among others, regulations and standards that stipulate average personal care hours per day for individuals in nursing homes as well as accommodation standards and charges for services offered in both long term care (nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals) and supportive living settings.

In May, Health Minister Shandro announced in the Legislature that the scope of the review was being expanded to include a review of the entire system including how the continuing care system performed through the pandemic.

Haven't there been other reviews of continuing care in the province? – A LOOK BACK.

By no means is this the first review of continuing care in Alberta. For more than twenty years Alberta has been conducting reviews of the continuing care system. Unfortunately, these reviews have also been associated with policies that support rapid growth in supportive living, a sector dominated by private, and to a lesser extent, non-profit organizations.

As a result, while the number of long-term care spaces in nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals has increased by less than 10% over the past decade, the number of designated supportive living spaces has increased by 130%. By unbundling care and accommodation services, often under the catch phrase of increased “choice,” supportive living settings increasingly download costs to individual residents.

Despite the reviews and the subsequent Auditor General Reports following up on the recommendations made in the course of the reviews, there has never been a study examining whether the health outcomes for residents has in anyway been improved by these policy changes. Furthermore, one of the frustrations expressed by the various Auditor General Reports has been the inability to properly monitor conditions in long term care due to inadequate or inconsistent access to data.

BACK TO THE PRESENT

Little had been heard of this most recent review until early in January of this year when, in an email received from John Cabral, Assistant Deputy Minister of Health, UNA was informed that Alberta Health had engaged a third-party contractor, the accounting and management firm of MNP, to undertake this review.

The letter stated that MNP has been leading “engagement activities with a wide range of stakeholders” and that UNA had been selected to participate in a 1.5 hour focus group with nine other unions in Alberta some time in January 2021. To date, there has been no further contact from either MNP or Alberta Health in regards to scheduling such a meeting.

In addition to focus groups with “selected” stakeholders, a prominent component of the MNP review is a web-based survey specifically addressing continuing care in “facilities”—nursing homes, auxiliary hospitals, and designated supportive living. The public, along with organizations and individuals involved with continuing care, can complete the survey.

Included in the survey are questions about increasing resident costs to cover expenses associated with renovations and upgrades, and about willingness to pay for enhanced or additional services such as larger rooms and extra baths. Other questions concern the use of public funds to subsidize care at private pay facilities and to what extent these sites should or should not be subject to government oversight.

HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

You and your friends and family members can add your voice to this review by completing the [MNP survey](#) **by next Friday, the 29th of January**. While the survey apparently opened on January 4th, it will close at the end of next week on January 29, 2021.

Multiple versions of the survey are posted on the MNP site, each designed with different audiences in mind. There are surveys for *Public*, for *Staff*, for *Residents or Family Caregivers*, for *Facility Administrators and Managers*, and for *Organizations Involved in Advocacy around Continuing Care*. The table below provides you with the links to the various survey versions and a more detailed description of the intended audience for each version.

While many of the core questions remain the same across the different survey versions, some versions omit a number of questions. For instance, the survey designed for *Facility Administrators and Managers* includes the greatest number of questions and is the only survey to ask whether the current systems for monitoring quality of health care services and accommodations services are effective or can be improved.

We urge you and those around you to consider completing as many of the surveys as are applicable to your situation. For example, you may be a nurse working in continuing care and qualify to respond to the *Nursing Staff Survey*, but you may also be a family member or close friend of a current resident in long-term care or designated supportive living and qualify to respond to the *Resident/Caregiver Survey*.

Please consider completing the appropriate survey or surveys. There are plenty of questions which allow for open-ended responses and there is a final question where you can provide input on any topic of interest or concern to you.

There is little time participate in this process as the survey is only open until next Friday January 29th.

SURVEY NAME & LINK

INTENDED AUDIENCE

[Public Survey](#)

Those who have **not** had involvement in the past six months with long-term care) or designated supportive living (whether as a resident, caregiver, staff or administrator, or as part of an association affiliated with facility-based care

[Resident / Caregiver Survey](#)

Current residents in long-term care or designated supportive living

A family member or close friend of a current resident in long-term care or designated supportive living,

A family member or close friend of someone who resided in long-term care or designated supportive living within the last six months.

STAFF MEMBER SURVEYS

Healthcare workers currently working in long-term care or in a designated supportive living setting.

[Nursing staff \(RN & LPN\)](#)

These surveys group staff in to four broad categories: *HCA*s; *Nurses* (RNs and LPNs); *Allied Health Professionals*; and *General Staff*. *HCA*s and *Nursing Staff Surveys* include are more specific questions about residents' daily quality of life.

Links to other staff surveys:

[HCA](#)s

[Allied Health Staff](#)

[General Staff](#)

Note to RPNs:

Unfortunately, the *Nursing Staff Survey* does not explicitly list RPNs as an option. If you click on "other" and write in your occupation you are redirected to select another survey. Therefore for the purposes of this survey if your assignment consists of regular placement on a unit and you are familiar with the day-to-day life of residents on the unit/ in the facility, it might be most appropriate for RPNs to fill in the *Nursing Staff Survey*. If as an RPN you are not that familiar with the day-to-day life of residents it may be more appropriate to take the *Allied Health Staff Survey* and report your occupation as 'other.'

[Facility Administrator / Management](#)

CEOs, Directors and all levels of Managers (including Directors of Care) working in long-term care or a designated supportive living setting

[Organizations Affiliated with Facility-Based Care](#)

Continuing Care advocates, and advocacy organizations including associations, societies, unions, professional colleges, accreditation bodies etc. affiliated with long-term care or a designated supportive living setting

SOURCES

Alberta Hansard, 30th Legislature Second Session Wednesday morning, May 27, 2020, p. 809.f

November 1999, Healthy Aging: New Directions for Care. Part One Overview

November 1999, Long Term Care Policy Advisory Committee Final Report- Listing of Recommendations

2005, Achieving Excellence in Continuing Care; Final Report of the MLA Task Force on Continuing Care Health Service and Accommodation Standards.

Alberta Health Services Annual Report, 2017-18 (p. 141)

Alberta Health Services Annual Report 2019-20 (p.120)

USEFUL LINKS

Armstrong, W. & Deber, R (2006). Missing Pieces of the Shift to Home and Community Care: A Case Study of the Conversion of an Alberta Nursing Home to a Designated Assisted Living Program.

Campanella, David, (2016). Losing Ground Alberta's Residential Elder Care Crisis. Parkland Institute

Public Interest Alberta, (2020). Priorities for Alberta Seniors

Wodak, Carol (2019). When I'm 65.