

Caring News

ACCA
ALBERTA CONTINUING CARE ASSOCIATION
June 2008



News and Views of the Alberta Continuing Care Association

A Message From the ACCA Board

In this issue of *Caring News*, ACCA would like to tell you about the challenges and obstacles continuing care facilities continue to face, and the progress made since the February 2008 Issue.

Long term care operators throughout the province continue to face a critical shortage of health care aides. ACCA and partners are planning Phase Two of the Health Care Aide Recruitment Initiative, for last August, early September 2008.

Last issue, we encouraged you to write a letter to your newly elected MLAs, letting them know how hard care staff work and that they deserve adequate compensation. We would like to take this time to thank you and your families for the support and encourage you to continue to communicate with your government MLA to make them aware of the labour shortage. Those letters are making a big difference. Health care aides are extremely valuable to our industry. Please give them words of encouragement.

Doing Your Part

Research has shown us that one of the most effective ways of recruit-

ing care staff is through word of mouth. Many people you know (friends, family, colleagues, neighbors, acquaintances) may be interested in gaining employment in the health care sector but don't know where to start.

The role of a health care aide is very rewarding and challenging, not to mention a great way to contribute to the community. Health care aides are the link between the resident and the Registered Nurse and improve the quality of life for so many people. In addition to that, the jobs available tend to be flexible (PT, FT, casual) and are often close to home. Employers offer on-the-job training and career advancement.

If you think you may know someone interested in becoming a health care aide, to learn about the occupation, please contact Sherrie at 780.435.0699 or communication@ab-cca.ca.

Board Activities

On April 23rd, 2008, representatives from the ACCA Board met with the Minister of Health and Wellness and the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. They took this opportunity to present and discuss the issues and chal-

lenges faced by continuing care operators, which in turn, can affect resident care:

- Staffing shortages and challenges created trying to maintain the quality of care provided to residents;
- Adequate compensation for care staff, specifically health care aides;
- Recommendation to introduce an education tuition loan forgiveness program for health care aides

On May 15th, 2008, the Minister of Health and Wellness, Ron Liepert, announced the Alberta government's decision to dissolve the nine regional health authorities, and create one provincial health region.

Prior to 1993, there were 180 health boards in Alberta. In 1994 the government reduced this to 17 health regions. Many new initiatives were developed for seniors, including the concept of "designated living" facilities and increased supportive living complexes. The provision of home care services, giving seniors more choice in living accommodations with health services provided, was also improved.

Now with one provincial health board to govern the health system, there will be one provincial system of policies, standards, and one pro-

vincial funding formula for all Albertans, regardless of where they live in the province.

This change is about streamlining governance of the public system in order to improve services and the delivery of quality health care. ACCA is optimistic that the new structure will result in more consistency and improvement in the delivery of care services across the province.

On May 28th, 2008, the Minister of Health and Wellness made another announcement which was well-received by continuing care operators across Alberta. Continuing Care operators are to receive a six per cent increase in funding. This increase is intended to help fund rising costs faced by operators and to ensure that quality health care is delivered to residents. This funding will be used to offset inflation.

On May 29th, 2008, the Minister of Health and Wellness publicized the plan to reshape ambulance services across the province. Instead of being dropped off at a hospital emergency room when sick, you can be taken to a clinic or doctor's office. This aims to reduce emergency room line ups and wait times and free-up ambulances so they are available to help others. This also serves to streamline the system, as the emergency room is often an expensive choice, especially when there could be an alternative.

The new plan is to be implemented next April, and is intended to improve patient care, accountability, and efficiency.

All of the recent government activity is part of a health action plan to improve access to all health services in Alberta and make the province's health care system more

efficient and more effective by:

- Improving health system governance and accountability
- Managing health services to better meet patient needs, and
- Promotion of healthy and safe communities

ACCA continues to be your voice and is committed to improving quality of life for residents.

Who is ACCA?

The Alberta Continuing Care Association (ACCA) represents the owners and operators of long term care facilities in the public, private and voluntary sectors in Alberta. Our members provide accommodations and care to approximately 10,000 of Alberta's more than 14,000 long term care residents. Our members employ more than 15,000 Albertans who deliver hands-on care. ACCA members' care staff deliver more than 17.1 million funded hours of care to residents each year.

We support this through our advocacy efforts on behalf of our members and their residents. The Association continually provides information to government on ways to ensure a sustainable, quality continuing care system, and wherever possible seeks inclusion in the decision-making process.

We are a credible voice for the continuing care sector and provide accurate information to the public and to our stakeholders through ongoing research and monitoring. Through collaboration with stakeholders, including government, regional health authorities, educational institutions, and other organizations, the ACCA strives to make Alberta's continuing care system the best in Canada!



Our Vision

To advocate and champion the best continuing care system in Canada.

Our Mission

Enhancing quality of life for individuals receiving continuing care by assisting members in networking, advocacy, education and pursuit of best practices.

Our Values

ACCA members ascribe to and engage the following organizational values that form the foundation of our vision and mission:

- Support members in the pursuit of quality of care and service for residents
- Promote professionalism, sensitivity and empathy in all interactions
- Integrity in relationships and accountability in the use of public funds

In order to fulfill our mission and vision and to be successful as an industry, the providers of continuing care need to be aware of market trends and customer needs and preferences. The Association assists its members in this work and also strives to promote the continuing care industry to government and the public.

Protect Yourself From Financial Abuse

What is financial abuse?

When someone misuses your money, financial resources or property without your consent or understanding, it is financial abuse. It can happen to anyone for many reasons. Financial abuse often goes hand-in-hand with emotional abuse and can happen over a long period of time.

Steps to protect yourself:

- Keep your money in a bank or financial institution, not at home. Have regular cheques and payments deposited directly into a bank account.
- Arrange to have bills direct debited out of your bank account
- Keep a list of all property, bank accounts and belongings
- Write a plan for the repayment of money before you lend it to a relative or friend
- Stay in touch with your friends
- Plan ahead. Prepare a will with a lawyer's help and review it periodically to keep it up-to-date. Change it only after careful consideration. Ask a lawyer how a power of attorney can ensure your wishes are followed.
- Ask a trusted friend or family member to review all documents before signing.

If you are being financially abused, help is available.

You can:

Start by calling the police. The police can help you determine if the situation is criminal in nature or not.

They can also refer you to Victim Services and provide information on other community resources.

Confide in someone you trust. Talk to someone you trust about what

is happening, like a friend, family member, public health nurse, social worker, home care worker, faith leader or doctor.

Keep a record. Write down what is happening to you. This will serve as a record and may help others assist you.

DON'T BLAME YOURSELF. It's not your fault. Ask for help because abuse of any kind is wrong. Many agencies and organizations in your community want to help protect your rights, safety and dignity.

For more information about elder abuse

Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Network www.albertaelderabuse.ca

Family Violence Information Line toll free at 310-1818.

Who Pays for What

Each month residents receive an invoice for their room and board, or what we call an accommodation fee. In Alberta, the accommodation fee is set by the provincial government. **The residents' accommodation fee covers approximately one third of the total cost of care and support per month in a long term care centre.** This means the total cost of living in a continuing care facility is on average \$175 per day per resident, which is made up of \$50 in accommodation fees and \$125 of care.

Your accommodation fee includes the following items related to room and board.

Accommodation Fees Pay For

Room

A room in a long term care facility

Building Maintenance

Upkeep and repairs

Landscaping and snow removal

Maintenance staff

Security services and equipment

Security staff

Food

Food services (three meals per day, plus snacks, other nourishment)

Kitchen equipment, plates, cutlery, furniture, etc.

Staff and food services

Housekeeping Services

Housekeeping staff

External cleaning services

Facility laundry (towels, bedding, etc.)

Building Operations

Utilities (gas, electricity)

Water and sewer

General facility costs

Furniture

Common area lounges

Television

Chapel, meeting rooms

Dining room

Administration

Facility management

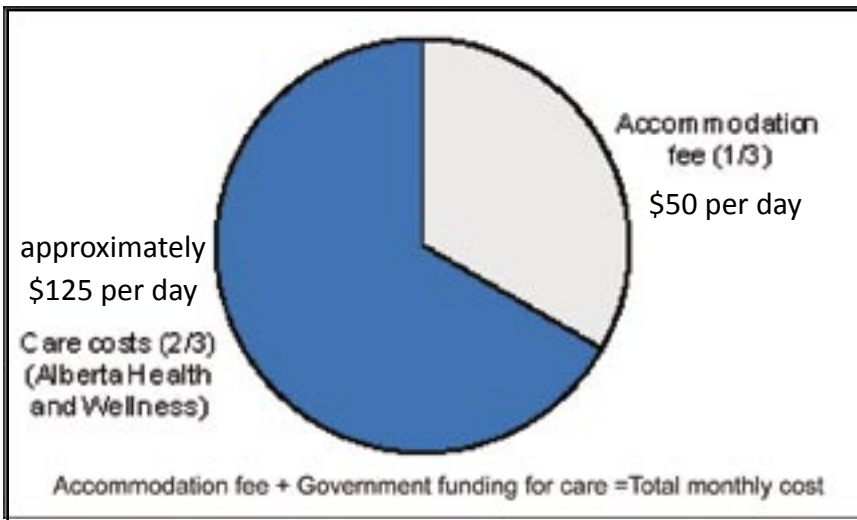
Office equipment (computers, desks, etc.)

General office services

Accounting, billing, purchasing

Benefits, labour, administration

Trust account maintenance



Insurance

WCB insurance

The Alberta government pays the **care** portion of long term care through the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs). The RHAs receive funding from the provincial government, which they allocate to long term care facilities.

Care Funding Provides

Professional staff

Registered nurses
Licensed practical nurses
Dietitians
Therapists
Social workers
Medical advisors

Other staff

Nursing aides/Nurse attendants/
Personal care aides
Unit clerks
Therapy aides

Supplies and Medications

Medical supplies, dressings
Medications, prescribed drugs
Incontinence products
Oxygen and equipment
Diabetic supplies and testing equipment

Catheters

Feeding equipment

Exercise equipment

Specialized health equipment

Specialized bathing tubs and lifts

Personal Care Services

Bathing

Dressing

Grooming

Toileting

Meal assistance

Recreation programs

Transportation

Ambulance service

Special Needs

Special programs may provide for:

Wheelchairs

Special beds

Other medically needed equipment

Wandergaurd bracelets

Optional Services You May Pay For

Some residents may make the choice to pay for extra services not included in the funding provided for the RHAs, or included in the accommodation fee. These services may include, but are not limited to:

Optional care services

Private duty nursing

Companion care

Personal medical supplies

Hearing aids, eyeglasses, dentures

Personal laundry

Hair dressing

Special outings

Additional Funding for Accommodation Fees

The Alberta Seniors Benefit Program provides support in addition to federal benefits received under Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Federal Allowance and the GST credit. It is based on income and provides monthly cash benefits to eligible seniors. To find out if you or your family member is eligible, visit www.seniors.gov.ab.ca or call 1-800-642-3853.



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