

Planning for Your Care Needs:

Considerations in Selecting a Long-term Care Home



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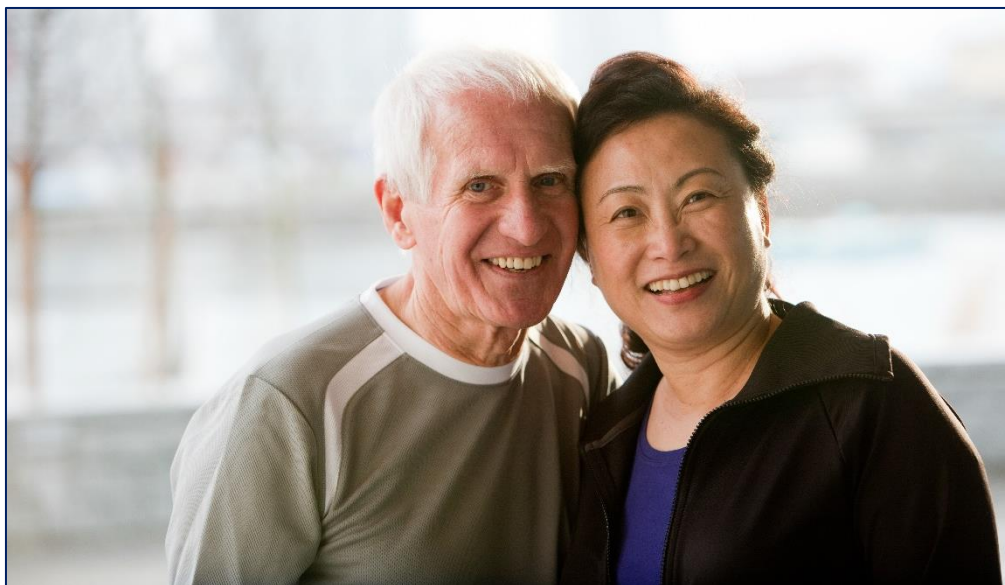
Where to start?

This booklet provides information about long-term care services and includes descriptions of other services available to help you.

If you or a loved one are experiencing difficulties managing in an assisted living residence or at home, with or without home support, there are two ways you can get help:

- Your physician or nurse practitioner will help you understand how your health-care needs may affect your ability to live safely in your home or in an assisted living residence.
- Your local health authority home and community care program will assign a case manager to meet with you and help you determine what services and supports may be available to you, including services to support you in your current home.

Care and support are available from both publicly subsidized services available through your local health authority, and private pay service providers throughout the province. These services help people who are having difficulty managing the activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing because of health-related problems or a life-limiting illness.



Other Resources:

The Home and Community Care website provides information about the types of care homes that are available: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/home-community-care

SeniorsBC.ca provides information about government programs and services for older adults, including links to information about home and community care services. The site gives B.C. citizens one place to find the information they need to plan for and live a healthy, active aging lifestyle.

The [BC Seniors' Guide](#) contains information and resources to plan for and live a healthy lifestyle as we age. It includes information about provincial and federal programs, benefits, health, lifestyle, housing, transportation, finances, safety and other services.

You can call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 to speak to someone who can connect you with a registered nurse at any time. You may also visit www.healthlinkbc.ca for information on how to contact health care resources. Hearing impaired services are available by dialling 7-1-1.

Is this booklet for you?

The decision to enter long-term care can be challenging. Publicly subsidized long-term care homes provide significant personal support and health services through professionals such as registered nurses, physiotherapists or occupational therapists. Your physician, nurse practitioner or other health-care provider can help you determine your care needs.

Deciding whether a long-term care home is right for yourself or someone else can be difficult. This booklet helps answer your questions and provides questions you may wish to consider.

This booklet also contains information about eligibility and cost of services and provides practical examples of things to consider when selecting a long-term care home.

Long-term Care and Assisted Living: What is the difference?

You may be wondering about the difference between long-term care and assisted living. The Residential Care Regulation describes the care and supervision that may be provided in these two settings.

Assisted living residences provide housing, hospitality and personalized assistance for adults who can live independently but require regular assistance with daily activities – usually because of age, illness or disability. Assisted living residences do not provide 24-hr professional care and supervision.

Assisted living services include some or all of the following:

- assistance with activities of daily living such as eating, moving about, dressing, grooming, bathing or personal hygiene;
- assistance with managing medication;
- assistance with the safekeeping of money or other personal property;
- assistance with managing therapeutic diets;
- assistance with physical or occupational therapy;
- assistance with behaviour management; and,
- other types of prescribed assistance or support.

Residents in assisted living must be able to make decisions necessary to live safely, recognize an emergency, behave in a manner that does not jeopardize others, and must not regularly require unscheduled professional health services. If a couple lives together, and one spouse does not require assisted living services, that spouse may make decisions on behalf of their less capable spouse to live safely.

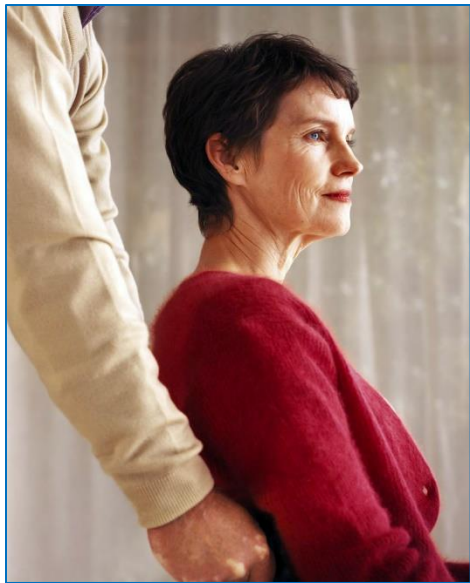
Long-term care homes provide 24-hour care and supervision in a protective and supportive environment for people who have complex care needs and can no longer be safely cared for in their own homes or in an assisted living residence.

Long-term Care in B.C.

People who live in long-term care homes typically have complex health-care needs that require daily care from trained health care and nursing staff. They often need caregivers to help with their activities of daily living such as bathing, moving about, eating, dressing and personal hygiene. Residents of long-term care homes may also have memory challenges associated with dementia and need a secure environment to keep them safe.

In BC, all long-term care homes are licensed under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* or the *Hospital Act*. These homes are sometimes informally referred to as extended care homes or nursing homes.

Long-term care services are provided in a variety of settings. These include larger long-term care homes and smaller specialized group home settings. While most people who receive services in a long-term care setting are seniors, there may also be younger adults with chronic health-care conditions requiring care.



Some long-term care homes are part of a campus of care that provides a range of housing, support and care options, including independent living which are not regulated by government, and assisted living and long-term care, which are registered or licensed under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. These settings may provide an opportunity for spouses to live close to one another even if they have different care needs. Other care homes may be stand-alone care homes that provide only long-term care services. In smaller communities, these care homes may be co-located with community hospitals.

Additionally, some long-term care homes also provide short-stay services including respite, convalescent and hospice care. Respite services provide opportunities for spouses, family members or other caregivers to have a break from caregiving. Convalescent services provide persons recovering from an illness or hospital stay with extra help for a period of time before returning home safely. Hospice care focuses on comfort, dignity and quality of life for individuals who are in the final days and weeks of life.

What services are provided in long-term care homes?

Each person in a long-term care home has unique care needs and preferences for managing them, which may be influenced by cultural, spiritual or family customs.

Long-term care residents have individual care plans developed by their care teams. The care plan identifies the resident's abilities, preferences and needs, and sets out the supports required to maintain and promote the resident's health and well-being. The care plan is used by everyone involved in the resident's care and is reviewed at least annually. The individual's health status is assessed regularly by a health-care professional, such as a doctor or nurse.

The following are provided to all people residing in long-term care homes:

- meals and snacks, including any required special diets (e.g., diabetic, celiac, allergy, texture modified);
- medication storage and administration;
- assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing, eating, moving about, dressing, grooming or personal hygiene;
- access to social and recreational activities; and,
- management of money.



What does long-term care cost?

The homes described in this booklet may receive funding through health authorities (publicly subsidized), be private pay (receive no funding from the government) or be a combination of both publicly subsidized and private pay.

Anyone who is considering moving into publicly subsidized long-term care may receive an assessment from a health authority case manager to determine whether they are eligible for a government subsidy. If eligible for subsidy residents pay a percentage of their income (80%) up to a maximum monthly amount, as established by regulation under the *Continuing Care Act*. This payment goes toward the cost of the care, accommodation, and other supports and services the resident will receive.

Residents in private pay care homes pay for the full amount of their care, and accommodation and arrangements are made by the person (or their family) to receive those services.

In private pay care homes, the manager or staff conducts an assessment to determine whether the care home can provide the requested services. In these care homes, the services and accommodation received are part of a private business arrangement between the service provider and the person in care and are defined through a contract.

All private pay long-term care homes are required to be licensed and are monitored in the same way as publicly subsidized care homes.

What is not included in the monthly fee in a publicly subsidized care home?

The monthly fees a resident pays in publicly subsidized care homes covers standard supports and services. If you want additional services, the administrator or director of care must provide a full list of any additional, allowable extra charges that you will be expected to pay.

If you are moving into a publicly subsidized care home, you may want to request a list of the personal items that are provided, and those that you would be responsible for. For example, you may have to pay for your magazine or newspaper subscriptions, dry cleaning, personal telephone or cable.

You may also be responsible for buying, leasing or obtaining the use of special equipment such as a cane or walker, and any special medications not covered by PharmaCare.

Where are long-term care homes located in BC?

In 2018, the Ministry of Health launched an online searchable map (moh.apps.gov.bc.ca/alrc/) for locating long-term care homes. This map provides information about licensed care homes and links to health authority websites, which have inspection reports and summaries of any substantiated complaints. If the care home you are looking for is not listed on the map, please confirm they are licensed by contacting the health authority's Community Care Facilities Licensing.

You are encouraged to visit a care home for a tour and to meet with staff to ensure it meets your needs. To see a listing of all licensed long-term care homes in your health authority, visit the links below.

Fraser Health: www.fraserhealth.ca/Service-Directory/Services/Residential-Services/long-term-care

Interior Health: <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourCare/HousingHealth/LTC/Pages/default.aspx>

Island Health: [Home Care, Assisted Living & Long-Term Care | Island Health](#)

Northern Health: www.northernhealth.ca/locations/long-term-care

Vancouver Coastal Health: [Long-term care - Vancouver Coastal Health \(vch.ca\)](http://vch.ca)

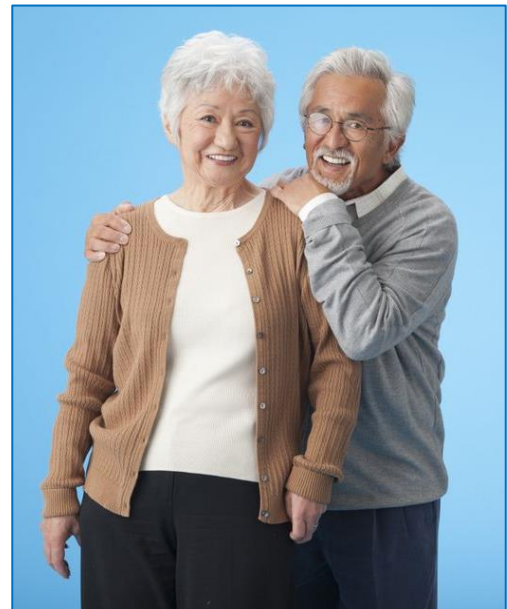
How are long-term care homes monitored?

Health authority licensing officers monitor and inspect all long-term care homes to ensure they are meeting the standards that are set by the government. These standards include cleanliness, food quality, building, equipment and furniture maintenance, and documentation that are support resident health, safety and well-being.

Licensing officers also investigate complaints. If needed, health authorities are legally authorized to take action to ensure standards are met to protect persons in care.

What factors are important to you and your family in choosing a long-term care home?

If you are considering long-term care and want to know more about a specific care home, you may wish to arrange an in-person or virtual tour. Long-term care homes typically have internal policies and procedures for care home tours and pre-admission visits, please call to make an appointment. This ensures staff will be available to show you around, while protecting the privacy and dignity of people living in the care home. You may want to take a family member or trusted friend with you when you visit.



When considering a care home, you may want to consider the:

- location;
- recreational activities available;
- design of the care home, including whether there are private or shared rooms; and,
- languages spoken.

If possible, it is best to visit each care home you are considering. Many care homes have brochures available that provide an overview of their services and their approach to care. Information packages will answer many of the questions listed in this booklet.



If you have access to a computer, you may also check the website of the care homes you are interested in.

In addition, each health authority has community care licensing information online that lists all licensed long-term care homes, including recent inspections and any substantiated complaints. If there are any issues of non-compliance with the legislative and regulatory requirements set by the government, they will be outlined on their website.

When you visit a prospective care home, ask for a copy of the admissions contract or agreement that describes the care and accommodation available. Care services such as bathing, dressing and medication management are provided based on individual care plans. Hospitality services such as meals, housekeeping, and recreational activities are provided to all residents and are included in the monthly fee. The agreement should describe the extra charges that may apply for special additional services such as hairdressing, dental checkup, or podiatry. All clients are entitled to know, in advance, what they will be charged per month and may refuse additional services if they do not wish to receive them. Any additional costs must be agreed to by the person in care or their representative before the good or service is delivered. At the end of this booklet there is a list of questions to consider when you visit a long-term care home.

Next Steps

Making the Decision

Once your eligibility for publicly funded long-term care has been determined, and you have decided to move into a long-term care home, you have 72 hours to pick up to three care homes you think are best suited to your needs. This is based on information given to you by your care manager, and any research you have done on your own.



You may change your preferred care homes at any time up until you receive an offer for admission at one of your preferred care homes, without losing your place on the waitlist.

What happens next?

If you have a case worker in the health authority or other agency, they will discuss your options for long-term care with you and your family.

If your case worker determines your health and safety concerns to be urgent, they will contact you when an appropriate bed becomes available, whether it be in your preferred care home or an interim placement. If your circumstances are less urgent, an offer will be made to you when care and accommodation becomes available in one of your preferred care homes.

If you cannot wait safely at home, and there are no vacancies in your preferred care homes, you may be offered care and accommodation in an interim care home. If you accept, you move in and remain on the original waitlist for one of your preferred care homes.

If you are moving into a care home where you will be paying the full costs of your care and accommodation, you and your family should discuss the services you will receive with the director of care or manager of the care home you have selected.

Consenting to be Admitted

On Nov. 4, 2019, amendments to the *Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act* came into force, establishing requirements for managers or licensees of licensed care homes to obtain consent from adults to be admitted to a care home or to continue residing there.

The act presumes that adults are capable. Adults may provide or refuse consent to be admitted to a care home, based on that capability. For the purposes of being admitted to a care home, “incapable” means incapable of providing or refusing consent. If a person may not be capable to provide consent, an incapability assessment is required.

Additionally, if an adult who resides in a care home expresses the desire to leave, and the manager or licensee has reason to believe that there may have been a change in the person’s capability, the adult will be assessed for capability to make the decision to leave.

If an assessment concludes the adult is incapable and the adult disagrees, a second assessment is required to confirm incapability. If an adult is determined to be incapable to provide consent, a substitute will be appointed to provide the consent.



Advance Care Planning

Advance care planning gives your family and health-care providers the information and tools they need if you become incapable of making your own health-care decisions. By planning ahead, you can make your wishes clear to your family and loved ones.

Care planning begins by thinking about your beliefs, values and wishes regarding future health-care treatment. This process should include having conversations with your close family, friends and health-care provider(s) so they know the treatment you would and wouldn't consent to if you become incapable of expressing your own decisions.

When you write down your beliefs, values and wishes for future health care, you are creating an advance care plan. Your advance care plan may include legal tools, such as a [representation agreement](#) or an advance directive. It is important that family, friends and care providers know you have completed an advance care plan, and that it is easily accessible if needed.

Completing and keeping your advance care plan updated is important to ensure your family, friends and health-care providers understand the decisions you would such as made.

The B.C. government's advance care planning guide is called "My Voice: Expressing My Wishes for Future Health Care Treatment." Use it to make your own plan that will serve as your voice in the future. More information is available at www.gov.bc.ca/advancecare.

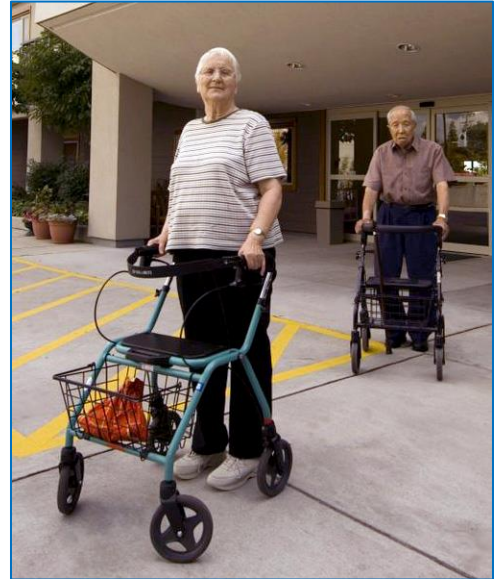
Moving In

Many people find moving into a long-term care home allows them to make new friends and take part in more activities than before.

The goal is for you continue to stay connected with your family and friends, get involved with your new community, and take part in your care to the extent you are able and wish to.

Here are a few ideas to help you as you transition:

- Talk with staff members about your preferences so they get to know you;
- Keep in touch with friends, family and spiritual advisors;
- If allowed, bring some of your cherished possessions, including pictures, to make your new space feel such as home;
- Meet new people and try new things;
- Ask for help when you need it;
- Ask questions if routines aren't clear to you; and,
- Be patient with yourself; settling in takes time.



Questions, Complaints and Concerns

If you have a concern about the quality of care that you or a loved one is receiving, it is best to raise this concern as it occurs with the care home manager, the director of care or the care home administrator.

If this does not address your concern or you would such as to make a formal complaint, you are encouraged to contact the health authority and ask to speak to the Community Care Facilities Licensing Office (for health and safety issues) or the Patient Care Quality Office (for care quality issues).

[Patient Care Quality Offices \(toll-free\):](#)

Fraser Health: 1 877 880-8823

Interior Health: 1 877 442-2001

Island Health: 1 877 977-5797

Northern Health: 1 877 677-7715

Vancouver Coastal Health: 1 877 993-9199

If your concern is a serious issue regarding the health, safety or well-being of a person in care, you should immediately contact the local health authority and ask to speak to a licensing officer. If your concern is not under their jurisdiction, the licensing officer can direct you to the most appropriate agency to address it.

While confidentiality of a complainant will be protected, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. If an investigation becomes a criminal matter or results in action taken against the operator, or if the issue is taken to the Community Care and Assisted Living Appeal Board, information or documents a complainant provides may become public information.

What is the range of housing and care options that are available in BC?

Publicly subsidized services include assisted living, home support, adult day services, long-term care, palliative care and hospice. These services are designed to complement and supplement, but not replace, your efforts to care for yourself with the assistance of your family, friends and community.

Home and community care services are based on need, and depending on the service, may be subsidized according to income or provided at no cost.

Home and community care services:

- support you to remain independent and in your own home for as long as possible;
- provide services at home when you would otherwise require admission to assisted living, long-term care, hospital or a longer hospital stay; and,
- provide services that support you and your family if you are nearing the end of your life – at home, in an assisted living residence or in a long-term care home (including hospice).

For detailed information on the full range of publicly subsidized home and community care services including eligibility criteria, how to arrange for care, costs for services, how to manage your care, accountability, concerns and complaints, visit the home and community care website at:

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/home-community-care

Regulations, Licensing and Complaints

Any person providing long-term care services to three or more adults who are not related to them by blood or marriage must be licensed under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* or under the *Hospital Act*. Private hospitals and extended care homes are regulated by the *Hospital Act*.

The *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* sets out specific regulations – the Residential Care Regulation – which set minimum legal standards for: health and safety; building requirements; food service; administering medications; and, care.

Whether a care home is licensed under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* or the *Hospital Act*, they must have their licences posted for your information. This licence will tell you how many persons the care home can provide care for.

The *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, the Residential Care Regulation and the *Hospital Act* are available through:

Crown Publications
PO Box 9452 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9V7
Phone: 1 800 663-6105 (toll-free in B.C.)
Fax: 250 387-1120

They are also available online:

Community Care and Assisted Living Act
www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/02075_01

Residential Care Regulation
www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/96_2009

Hospital Act
www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96200_01

In addition to the Acts and Regulation, the BC government passed a Residents' Bill of Rights in 2009 to promote the rights of adults who live in long-term care homes. It is a comprehensive set of rights grouped into four main themes: commitment to care; rights to health, safety and dignity; rights to participation and freedom of expression; and rights to transparency and accountability.

Once a complaint has been received, investigated and substantiated by the health authority, a summary of the complaint is posted on the health authority's community care facility licensing website for five years. No personal identifying information is posted on the website. The care home operator name and business contact information will be posted to allow people to contact the care home if they have any additional questions or concerns.

In BC, there is legislation to protect people who enter into contracts, including those for services that will be delivered in the future, such as long-term care services. These contracts, known as future performance contracts, are regulated under BC's [Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act](#) and the [Consumer Contracts Regulation](#).



Questions to Consider as you tour a long-term care home

On the following pages are some questions you may want to ask as you tour long-term care homes. Before you go, think about what is important to you in selecting your new home. While you might not be able to explore all of these, the following questions are intended to help you think about what is important to you in the decision-making process.

Housing

Costs and Monthly Charges

- What extra charges can be expected in addition to the daily accommodation rate/user fee (e.g., hairdressing, alert pendants, labelling clothing)? You may wish to request a price list.
- What is the refund policy if you move out before the end of a month?
- How much notice is required if you wish to move out?
- Do you continue to pay if you are away from the care home on vacation or in hospital?
- What damages, if any, could a person living in the care home be responsible for?
- If the care home is private pay, is there a security deposit? How much is it? [Note: Publicly subsidized long-term care homes do not require security deposits.]
- If the care home is private pay, what is the daily rate or monthly rate? How often is the rate reviewed?

Living Space and Accommodations

- How many private rooms are available? Is there an extra charge for a private room in a private pay care home?
- If the care home has shared rooms, how is privacy assured?

- If you accept a shared room because a private room isn't currently available, how long is the waitlist for private rooms? How is the waitlist managed?
- Are the bedroom and bathroom areas appealing? Do they look comfortable? Are they large enough for you to move around in? Does the bathroom have a walk-in shower?
- How much storage and closet space is there? Is there a cupboard or drawer that locks for storage of personal items?
- What personal possessions, such as pictures, furnishings or television, are allowed?
- Can you arrange for a private phone in the bedroom? If not, is there a phone that is private and accessible?
- Can you have a small appliance such as a fan or air conditioner in your room?
- Is there room for a wheelchair, scooter or walker in the bedroom and washroom area?
- Is food storage allowed in bedrooms?
- Is alcohol allowed in bedrooms?



Security

- Do bedroom doors lock?
- How will private information be protected?
- Who is responsible if personal property disappears or is broken?

Emergencies

- What policies and plans are in place to ensure the safety of people in care in the event of an emergency, such as an earthquake, fire or snowstorm?
- What is the policy on contacting families in the event of an emergency or illness?

Hospitality Services

Dining and Food Services

- Are menus posted? Are there choices? Do residents have input into the menu? How often is the menu rotated?
- Are the meals provided compatible with special diets and cultural or religious backgrounds?
- Is the dining room within easy walking distance of bedrooms?
- If you become ill, can meals be served in your room? For how long?
- What time are meals served? Are the mealtimes flexible? Are there regular snack times?
- Are dietary supplements provided if your doctor or other health-care provider orders them?
- If you have trouble eating, will staff be available to help?
- Can guests be invited to a meal? If so, how much will this cost and how is this arranged? How much advance notice is required?
- Is there an area to make a cup of coffee or tea, or to get a snack?

Laundry

- What laundry supplies are provided?
- Can families do personal laundry?
- What items may be sent to the laundry?
- Who is responsible for mending personal clothing?
- Does all clothing need to be labelled? If so, will the care home label items? What is the cost for this service?

Care

Personal Care

- How frequently are residents bathed? Is special equipment available, such as lift equipment?
- What toiletries does the care home provide? Can you provide preferred soap and shampoo?
- How is privacy ensured during bathing?
- Who will help you if you need assistance going to the toilet, or bathing or showering?
- What incontinence supplies are provided without additional charge? What is the policy in the care home if you prefer to use a type of incontinence supplies that differs from the type provided?

Staffing

- Does the care home have a health-care team with members from different health care professions such as registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, health-care assistants, physiotherapists, dietitians, activity workers or others?
- Are all the health-care assistants registered with the BC Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry?
- What is the nighttime staffing coverage? Are staffing levels the same on weekends and holidays?

Medical and Other Professionals

- Can your own doctor or other health-care provider continue to care for you in the care home?
- Does the care home have its own physician or nurse practitioner?
- Will you be able to stay at the care home if your care needs change or increase?

- Are rehabilitation services, such as physiotherapy, available? Is there a charge for this service?
- Will care home staff help with tooth brushing or denture care if needed?
- Does a dental hygienist, denturist or dentist visit the care home? If so, who arranges and pays for these services?
- Are hairdressing and barber service available?
- Does a podiatrist or foot care nurse regularly visit the care home? How is this arranged?
- If you need extra health-care services, how can you access them?

Medication Services

- Who is responsible for administering medication?
- Is there a charge for over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol or Aspirin? Who orders these medications? How is payment for over-the-counter medications managed?
- What is the policy relating to medication when someone is temporarily away from the care home?

Supports

Visitors and Time Away

- Are visitors welcome at reasonable times? Are there set visiting hours?
- Can visitors bring pets?
- Are overnight visitors permitted? Where would they be accommodated? Would there be a charge?
- Can you go away for weekends or holidays?

Social and Spiritual Activities

- Are there secure indoor and outdoor walking areas?
- What is the policy on paid companions?
- Are there special rooms or areas where you can visit privately with family and friends?
- Is there an outside garden or patio?
- Can you go outside when you wish?
- In what is the policy on smoking? [Please note that staff and visitors are not allowed to smoke on any health authority-owned or -operated property.]
- Is there a dedicated area for crafts and other activities?
- What kinds of activities, musical programs, entertainment, outings and crafts are available? How will you know when they are scheduled? What activities are scheduled during evenings and on weekends? Is there an activity aide on weekends?
- How are residents and families involved in planning activities?
- Does the care home have a pet visiting program?
- Are religious services or pastoral care available?
- How are birthdays celebrated?
- If necessary, is there wheelchair-accessible transportation for outings?
- What is the primary language spoken? Can staff speak any other languages?



Persons with Dementia

- Does the care home provide care to persons with dementia? If so, is there a separate wing or accommodation specifically for persons with dementia?
- What social and recreational activities are there for persons with dementia?

Long-term Care Home Policies

- What is the policy if a resident or family members have a concern or complaint?
- Is the Resident's Bill of Rights posted in public view? Can you have a copy?
- Can you and/or your family have access to the policy and procedures manual for the care home?

Financial

- What are the policies regarding the storage of money and valuables?
- Can you do your own banking? If not, where will your spending money be kept and how are receipts issued?

Family Councils

- Does the care home have a resident or family council? If so, where are the notes or minutes from the meeting posted for everyone to read? How do you or your family or representative get involved?
- How are you or your family or representative involved in planning and regular reviews of your care?
- If there is currently no family council, how can I start one?