

# Continuing Care in Alberta: Regional Health Authority and Operator Discussion Session

## Aspen Health Region

**Date:** July 29, 2005

**Location:** Hinton

**Attendees:** Aspen Regional Health Authority, Evergreens Foundation, The Good Samaritan Society, Greater North Foundation, Extendicare, Barrhead and District Social Housing Authority.

### Key Themes:

- The system for setting and enforcing standards is complex and confusing. It should be simplified so the public can understand it.
- This is a good process, but we need to make sure that it results in actual changes to the system. The standards need to be reviewed and updated routinely.
- It is important that we have standards, but we also need the resources to implement them.
- The staff does a wonderful job with the resources they have. However, there is not enough staff to provide needed care.
- It is hard to recruit and retain personal care aides when the wages are low and there are no permanent or full time positions.
- All members of the care team should have education and training specific to continuing care. Training should be on-going to keep up with research and new models of care.
- We need to encourage and support physicians to work in continuing care. Physicians should be educated about how to work in the continuing care system.
- The cost of living in facilities is too much for some people, like in rural areas where out of pocket expenditures like transportation are more costly. Seniors benefits should be reviewed.
- Care planning should be more proactive. Preventing deterioration and maintaining/improving the current health status should be the focus of care planning. We shouldn't be waiting for deterioration.
- The system should be rewarding facilities when there is an improvement in a resident, not punishing them by decreasing funding for that resident.
- Therapies are just as important as nursing care. The standards focus on providing choice, but you can't do this if the residents don't have the therapies to help them be more functional/mobile, thereby providing them with more options and choices.
- Do not want the standards to be so rigid that we cannot provide person centered care.

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- More clarity on the services that are provided in each care setting.
- Quality care, benefits and access to services should be provided consistently regardless of location or care setting.
- When lodges were originally established they were to accommodate reasonably healthy and independent seniors. This has changed and the level of care has increased. Supportive living either needs to have adequate resources to provide this level of care, or more long-term care beds need to be built.

*The MLA Task Force also visited with residents and families at the Mountain View Care Centre.*