

May 14, 2004

Ministry of Health Services

ACT PROTECTS PEOPLE IN CARE, ASSISTED LIVING

VICTORIA – The Community Care and Assisted Living Act proclaimed today continues protections for adults and children in licensed care and introduces the first Canadian regulatory system for assisted living residences.

Proclamation of the act follows a community consultation on health and safety standards and the complaint resolution process for assisted living residences. Since that consultation was completed in December 2003, the assisted living registrar has appointed an implementation advisory committee and is working towards setting out the standards in regulations to the act.

B.C. is updating its legislation in recognition seniors are healthier, better educated and living longer than at any time in history. Seniors are the fastest growing group in the province and are expected to increase from 550,000 to nearly 1.35 million by 2031.

The act, passed in November 2002, affects the lives of seniors and people with disabilities who reside in licensed care facilities or registered assisted living residences, as well as children in licensed child day cares. It replaces the Community Care Facility Act, which dates to 1969, and provides for an assisted living registrar to uphold the health and safety of seniors and disabled people residing in assisted living.

Assisted living is a housing and care option for seniors and people with disabilities who can direct their own care and do not require the 24-hour professional nursing care of a residential care facility. Residences combine hospitality services, such as housekeeping and laundry, with personal assistance, such as help with eating, mobility and monitoring medications. Occupants of publicly-funded residences pay 70 per cent of their after-tax income for assisted living.

Most sections of the Act are effective May 14, with some exceptions:

- The registration requirement for assisted living residences will take effect Sept. 30. Registration packages will go out in mid- to late July. Effective today, assisted living registrar Susan Adams will have authority to inspect all publicly and privately funded assisted living residences in response to health and safety concerns.
- One section of the act will not be brought into force at this time. This is the section that applies to a small number of residences licensed under the Hospital Act. Consultations regarding proposed changes in the act are underway. The Province anticipates this section will come into force in 2005/06.

The Act upholds existing safeguards for people in licensed facilities by maintaining the current adult care and childcare regulations, pending a public consultation on proposed changes scheduled for later this year. The renewed regulations will include health and safety requirements, as they currently do. Certification and registration of early childcare educators in group care facilities for children is also maintained in the act.

Information on the consultation on the regulations will be posted to the Ministry of Health Services website, <http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/>, later this summer. Concerns about health and safety issues in licensed care can be directed to the local health authority listed in the blue pages of the telephone directory. The office of the assisted living registrar can be contacted at 604 714-3378 in Vancouver or, elsewhere in the province, toll-free at 1 866 714-3378.

This information bulletin is online at www.gov.bc.ca.

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