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Ministry of Health Services

NEW REGISTRAR TO PROTECT, ENHANCE SENIORS' CARE

VICTORIA – A new assisted living registrar will help protect the health and safety of seniors and people with disabilities who make assisted living residences their home, Katherine Whittred, Minister of State for Intermediate, Long Term and Home Care, announced today.

Susan Adams' appointment is effective Nov. 10. Adams is currently registrar and chief executive of the College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia.

“This is the first time ever that British Columbia has had legislation that specifically protects people in assisted living residences,” Whittred said. “B.C. is unique in Canada in having a separate assisted living registrar. We are ensuring our clients receive the quality assistance they deserve and that their health and well-being are protected as we progress in improving housing and care choices for seniors and people with disabilities.”

The new registrar will establish health and safety standards for assisted living in line with the new Community Care and Assisted Living Act, which comes into effect next year and will require all public and private assisted living residences to be registered. The registrar will also resolve concerns related to standards, such as complaints of abuse. In addition, the registrar will have the authority to conduct independent investigations of both public and private sector assisted living residences.

Assisted living is a housing and care option for adults who can make their own care decisions without requiring the rigorous licensing requirements for clients in residential care facilities, which rely more heavily on caregivers for support and direction. Assisted living residences combine hospitality services, such as housekeeping and laundry, with personal assistance, including help with bathing or medications.

The province has been working with clients, housing operators and health care providers to develop a registration framework, health and safety standards and complaint resolution process for assisted living residences. The consultations will result in a set of procedures and standards for providing housing and personal assistance that will be given to assisted living operators when they register their residences. The consultation papers are available for public comment on the Ministry of Health Services Web site at <http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/assisted/index.html>.

Colleen Tracy, chief executive officer of B.C. Retirement Communities Association, and Ed Helfrich, chief executive officer of the B.C. Care Providers Association, welcomed the registrar's appointment and the opportunity to participate in developing the registration framework and health and safety standards.

"We welcome any opportunity to explore methods of improving eldercare in B.C. and value a collaborative approach committed to listening to the elderly," Tracy said. "Assisted living is a new area of involvement for government and we are pleased that government has sought to build on the positive experience of the leaders in this field."

"B.C. Care Providers is committed to working with the new registrar in ensuring the principles of assisted living – choice, independence, autonomy and dignity –are protected and promoted in the new regulatory structure," Helfrich said.

2 backgrounder(s) attached.

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 250 952-1887

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