

Office of the
Assisted Living Registrar

Information About ASSISTED LIVING FOR SENIORS



Purpose

The purpose of this brochure is to provide information for assisted living residents and their families, friends and advocates about what assisted living is and the philosophy behind it. It talks about the services provided in assisted living residences, how the residences are staffed and entry and exit requirements. It also outlines residents' rights and what they can expect, as well as explaining the role of the Assisted Living Registrar.



What is assisted living?

Assisted living residences offer housing, hospitality services and personal assistance services to adults who can live independently but may require regular help with daily activities. Assisted living is designed to meet the needs of a range of people.

Assisted living is available through both publicly funded and non-publicly funded providers. In non-publicly funded

settings, the resident is responsible for all costs. Some non-publicly funded assisted living residences may have some publicly funded units.

Eligibility for publicly funded assisted living is determined through a health authority case manager. Eligible seniors and people with disabilities pay a monthly fee of 70 per cent of their after-tax income for rent, hospitality services and personal assistance services. Some providers may charge additional fees for certain hospitality services, such as extra meals.

What is the philosophy of assisted living?

The core principles of assisted living are choice, privacy, independence, individuality, dignity and respect. These principles guide providers of assisted living residences. Providers must offer residents choices, respect their privacy and personal decisions and accommodate their rights to take risks as long as those risks do not place other people who live there, or staff, in jeopardy. Even when they need support and assistance in daily life, adults retain the ability and right to manage their own lives in assisted living.

What services are provided in assisted living?

Many types of residences can be “assisted living.” The accommodation can range from private rooms with lockable doors in a home, to an apartment-style building with private, self-contained suites, usually with their own bathrooms and cooking facilities. The residence provides a place where people can eat together and socialize.

People who are considering a move to an assisted living residence will need to know:

- what services are offered?
- how often will they be provided?
- who will be providing the service?
- what will it cost?
- are there any extra charges?

By law, providers of assisted living residences must offer five “hospitality services:”

- meal(s);
- housekeeping;
- laundry;
- social and recreational opportunities; and
- a 24-hour emergency response system.

By law, providers must also offer one or two of the following personal assistance services:

- helping residents with activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, grooming, mobility and eating;
- providing reminders or assistance with taking medications;
- monitoring food intake or providing therapeutic diets;
- assisting with purchases, paying bills or managing funds;
- providing individualized psychosocial or intensive physical or occupational therapy; or
- offering a structured, individualized program to improve life skills.

The assisted living provider decides which one or two personal assistance services it will offer in its residence.



How are assisted living residences staffed?

Staffing will vary depending on the type of services being provided and the residents' needs. Providers must ensure staffing levels are sufficient to deliver the personal assistance services offered in the residence and supply the hospitality services. As well, providers must ensure that staff has the knowledge, skill and ability to perform their assigned tasks.

Some residences will schedule personal assistance services and provide only limited staffing coverage. Others provide 24-hour staffing coverage and accommodate both scheduled and as-needed personal assistance needs.

Usually, home support workers provide the personal assistance services offered in assisted living. A professional, such as a nurse, may delegate or assign some tasks to these staff. Providers must employ or contract with appropriate health care professionals to delegate these tasks.

Assisted living residents have access to professional care (such as physician services, nursing care, physiotherapy or dietitian services) in the same way they would have if they were living independently in their own home in the community.

Are there requirements for moving into or out of assisted living?

Move in

Assisted living is intended for people who are able to choose and direct the personal assistance services they need. Providers must ensure that new residents are fully informed about the services available in their residence. It is up to the person and the assisted living provider to determine whether the provider can meet the person's service needs and the person can live there safely. For publicly funded assisted living, eligibility is determined through a health authority case manager and the assisted living provider.





All new assisted living residents must be able to make an informed decision to move into the residence and direct their daily living routines while in the residence. Providers must not house people who are unable to make decisions about their daily living routines or who wander. An exception to this rule is where a spouse lives with the resident.

People who are in assisted living must be able to use a 24-hour emergency response system. If the residence is being evacuated, a resident must be able to leave the residence or move to a safe zone in a timely way, either on their own or with staff assistance.

Move out

By law, a resident must move from an assisted living residence when:

- the resident's service needs exceed the level that is offered in the residence and they are unable to arrange the additional services that they need;

- the resident can no longer recognize an emergency and summon help or follow directions; or
- they are no longer able to make decisions on their own behalf, unless they are living with a spouse who can make those decisions for them.

To help with the move to more suitable accommodation, a provider must develop a plan to move the resident out as quickly as possible. This plan should be developed in consultation with the resident and, if appropriate, their family, physician, support network and health authority.

While waiting to move to another residence, an assisted living resident may need more services. These may be purchased from the provider or a private home support agency. If the resident meets eligibility requirements, the local health authority may be able to provide the additional services.



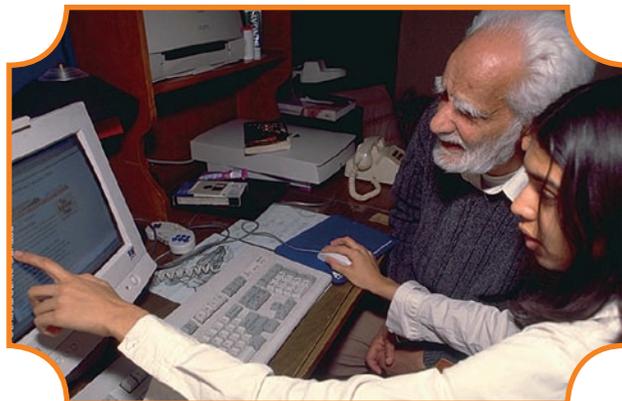
Residents' rights and expectations

Each resident, or responsible party, must sign an occupancy agreement. This agreement, plus the health and safety standards set by the Province, establishes the resident's and provider's rights and obligations. An occupancy agreement is sometimes called a residency agreement.

Each resident needs to know the specific kinds of hospitality and personal assistance services they will be receiving. Staff must develop a plan with the resident when the resident first moves in. This plan will describe the services to be provided, the specific personal assistance services the resident will receive and how any of the services are being adapted for the resident's particular needs. The plan should be updated regularly and as the resident's needs change.

How do assisted living residences deal with short-term illnesses?

Some residents may be recovering from an injury, acute illness or surgery while in assisted living and their physical or mental ability may decrease during this period. The Assisted Living Registrar's policies allow assisted living providers to provide short-term professional care to residents in these circumstances.



This short-term professional care may also be provided to residents who need palliative care or who are awaiting transfers to a licensed care facility.

What is the role of the Assisted Living Registrar?

The Assisted Living Registrar was appointed by the Minister of Health to protect the health and safety of people who live in assisted living residences in B.C. The Registrar responds to complaints about health and safety in assisted living residences.

By law, all assisted living residences in B.C. must be registered with the Assisted Living Registrar. This applies whether the residence is publicly funded or the residents pay for their own accommodation and services. Providers of assisted living must meet provincial health and safety standards.

What are the health and safety standards?

Providers of assisted living must comply with health and safety standards for their assisted living residences:

1. Providers must provide a safe, secure and sanitary environment for residents.
2. Providers must ensure hospitality services do not place the health or safety of residents at risk.
3. Providers must ensure sufficient staff is available to meet the service needs of residents and that staff has the knowledge, skill and ability to perform their assigned tasks.
4. Providers must ensure residents are safely accommodated in their assisted living residence, given its design, available hospitality and prescribed services.
5. Providers must develop and maintain personal services plans that reflect each resident's needs, risks, service requests and service plan.
6. Providers must ensure personal assistance services are provided in a manner that does not place the health or safety of residents at risk.



How are the health and safety standards ensured?

The Assisted Living Registrar maintains a register of both public and private residences.

Anyone who would like more information or wants to report a concern or make a complaint about an assisted living residence can contact the Office of the Assisted Living Registrar. Contact information is provided at the end of this brochure.

What complaints does the Registrar handle?

The Assisted Living Registrar has the authority to deal with concerns about the health and safety of residents in assisted living. **For example:**

Helen is in a wheelchair and lives on the second floor. She is concerned that she may not be able to get out safely if there was a fire. She has spoken to the operator but does not feel her concern has been addressed.

The Registrar can investigate to ensure the requirements of the local fire department are being met.

What concerns does the Assisted Living Registrar **not** handle?

The Assisted Living Registrar deals with questions or concerns about health and safety in the assisted living residence. The Assisted Living Registrar does **not** have authority to deal with concerns about tenancy. **For example:**

Lee is concerned about a rent increase. He also feels he is being charged too much for meals.

Elise has moved out of the residence. She wonders why her damage deposit has not been refunded.

In cases like these, the Assisted Living Registrar will direct you to someone who can help. For example, the Assisted Living Registrar can help you find an appropriate government agency or community advocacy group.

If you have a concern...

Sometimes problems may arise in an assisted living residence. Many problems can be handled by talking things out. First, try discussing your concern with a staff member, family member or friend. They may be able to help or direct you to someone who can. Talking about concerns can help small problems from developing into larger ones.

All assisted living providers are required to give residents information about how complaints are handled and to try to solve residents' problems and concerns. If the provider does not resolve your situation to your satisfaction, you should contact the Assisted Living Registrar.

No one should try to prevent you from reporting your concerns to the Assisted Living Registrar. During an investigation, your services should continue to be provided as outlined in your agreement with the provider. You can also tell the Registrar that you would like your complaint to be anonymous.

How do I learn what assisted living residences are available in my area?

The Office of the Assisted Living Registrar maintains a registry of all registered residences in the province. This information can be obtained from the Assisted Living Registrar's website or office.

Other contacts/resources

For information on how to access assisted living and about other housing options and services for seniors, contact:

Seniors Services Society

**209 – 800 McBride Boulevard
New Westminster, B.C. V3L 2B8**

604 520-6621

www.seniorsservicesociety.com



Contact information

If the assisted living provider does not resolve a situation satisfactorily, you should contact the Assisted Living Registrar:

Lower Mainland: **604 714-3378**

Toll-free in B.C.: **1 866 714-3378**

Facsimile: **604 733-5996**

E-mail: **info@alregistrar.bc.ca**

Office of the Assisted Living Registrar
of British Columbia

300-1275 West 6th Avenue

Vancouver, B.C. V6H 1A6

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/assisted>



April 2009