

Province of BC Announces Easing of Visitor Restrictions and Funding for BC's Long-Term Care and Assisted Living Operators

A Positive Step But More Work Remains to Be Done

For Immediate Release

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Vancouver, BC – BC Seniors Living Association (BCSLA), representing private operators of Independent Living (IL) Assisted Living (AL) and Long Term Care (LTC) residences, applauds the government's recent [announcement](#) to ease restrictions on the visitation of loved ones living in AL and LTC communities. Equally positive was the Province's [confirmation](#) that funds will be made available to help BC LTC and AL operators off-set some of the costs associated with necessary infection prevention and control measures and to help operators hire the appropriate complement of staff required to ensure that all visitation protocols and measures are complied with to help ensure the safety of our residents, visitors and staff.

BCSLA has been working with the Province through various government sponsored working groups and by providing information to officials to help in their decision making process. Specific to the issues of cost-recovery, on May 5th, BCSLA provided Minister Dix and government officials with an assessment of the costs directly associated to Provincial Health Order compliance to help establish a baseline of associated costs. On amending visitor restriction guidelines, BCSLA was invited to provide input into what processes could be put in place to facilitate the easing of visitor restrictions that would not compromise safety. The ability to have this open dialogue and communication with government is valuable and essential during times like this.

"I am pleased to see that the government is responding to the needs of the operators of AL and LTC communities, and more importantly, the safety and needs of our residents which is paramount," said BCSLA CEO, Lee Coonfer. "I see the collaboration between the government and the private sector as a positive first step in a process and dialogue that will be ongoing," he noted. "I recognize and acknowledge the hard work of Minister Dix and Dr. Bonnie Henry but there is more that needs to be done insofar as the needs of the private operators of IL, AL and LTC communities are concerned," he said.

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BCSLA's position has always been that all operators providing housing, support services and care for seniors should be treated equally and the reality is this is not the case. BCSLA's priority is to continue to implement its Advocacy and Government Outreach Plan, which began last fall, and continue to delivering the message to government that private operators are their partners and work to ensure the highest quality of seniors living. Other than the fact that BCSLA members are private operators, their sites face the same costs as publicly funded operators and their staff are just as dedicated and valuable. Private pay IL, AL, and LTC provide options to seniors and lessen demand on publicly funded residences. There needs to be a recognition of these facts and Provincial Guidelines need to be mindful of all operators whether public or privately funded and accommodate all seniors' communities including IL, AL and LTC.

"More work needs to be done to educate the Provincial Government on the private operator sector of seniors living, particularly the needs of the IL communities that continue to be overlooked when guidelines are being developed." Coonfer said. "As the inspirational tag line these days says, "We are all in this together" and for the good people in the health care and seniors living sector, this statement is absolute. It is indefensible for the government to treat operators and employees in these sectors differently. It is my hope and the hope of our members and their staff that the government will reconsider the eligibility requirements for Pandemic Pay, that is not available to staff who work for a private operator and cost recovery, which IL communities are not eligible for," Coonfer concluded.

BCSLA is an association representing the private operators of Independent Living (IL), Assisted Living (AL) and Long Term Care (LTC) communities in BC. Our Mission is to Promote, Support and Advocate for private pay seniors living providers in British Columbia.

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