

## **Backgrounder: Complex Care Eligibility Criteria and Assisted Living**

### Assisted Living (AL)

BC was the first province in Canada to regulate AL as a middle option between independent living in one's own home and complex residential care. AL combines publicly subsidized apartments with support services for frail seniors and people with disabilities who can no longer live at home, yet do not require the 24-hour professional care and supervision provided in residential care homes.

AL residences can range from a unit in an apartment complex to a private home. Units vary from one room to private, self-contained apartments. Residents pay an inclusive fee for which they receive room, board, meals, weekly laundry and housekeeping and one or two prescribed personal care services to assist with daily living. Additional services are paid for out of pocket by the residents or their families. Nursing care is not provided but there is a 24-hour emergency response system in place.

In BC, residents pay 70 percent of their after-tax income for publicly-funded AL services and responsible for cost of other services they would normally pay for if they lived in their own home.

Approximately half of AL residents are 85 or over, three-quarters are female, and about half subsequently move on to residential care. Approximately one-quarter leave AL after less than one year and one-third of people who die do so in AL.

In May 2015, BC's Seniors Advocate recommended registered AL be fundamentally redesigned and regulations changed to allow for a greater range of seniors to be accommodated and age in place as much as possible - including palliative care. BCCPA supports a recommendation to review AL guidelines that would expand the scope of registered and prescribed services to allow greater flexibility for AL operators.

### Complex Care

As defined by the Ministry of Health, complex care refers to support for people who are:

- moderately or severely cognitively impaired;
- physically dependent;
- having multiple disabilities and/or complex medical conditions that require professional nursing care, monitoring and/or specialized skilled care;
- having severe behavioral problems on a continuous basis

The Ministry of Health should also work with BCCPA to redefine the existing eligibility criteria for complex care to help implement the recommendations of this report, deliver on the goals of the BC policy papers and allow seniors to reside comfortably in the most appropriate care setting.