



**Date:** December 11, 2015

**To:** VCH Contracted Residential Care Providers

**From:** Bob Chapman, Regional Program Director for Residential Care, Assisted Living and Supportive Housing

**CC:** Deborah Lorimer, Natalie McCarthy, JoAnn Tait, Karen Condon, Sharon Galloway, Sarah Jordan, Ron Van Halen, Glen Copping

**Re:** **Preparation for Ministry of Health policy changes with respect to basic wheelchair fees**

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Effective January 1, 2016, the Ministry of Health will be updating the Home and Community Care policy (6.F) related to chargeable extras. The new policy language will require that residents in publicly funded facilities who are assessed as medically requiring a basic wheelchair have one provided as a benefit (i.e., at no additional cost or charge to the resident). The policy pertains to basic wheelchairs only (this will be further defined in the forthcoming policy). Any costs associated with changes or modifications to a basic wheelchair are the responsibility of the resident. We do not anticipate that the policy will be available for distribution prior to January 1.

VCH is committed to working with contracted providers to implement this policy change. A small working group of VCH staff and contracted providers have been meeting. The following is the proposed short term (interim) plan as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, as well as a longer term strategy (6 months plus). For the purpose of this memo, the focus is on contracted providers (VCH owned and operated facilities and PHC facilities are excluded, as implementation is already underway in this sector).

#### **Additional Rehabilitation Therapists:**

VCH is in the process of hiring an additional 2.5 FTEs Occupational Therapists (OTs). These regional positions will be centrally based, but will provide support to Vancouver, North Shore and Richmond contracted facilities, primarily for wheelchair assessments. The local Communities of Care (CoCs) will determine how to operationalize these positions, together with any existing rehab resources that are already working with contracted providers. A separate strategy will be developed by Coastal for Christenson Village.

#### **Short Term Strategy: 0-6 months**

#### **Wheelchair Inventory/Maintenance:**

In preparation for January 1, 2016, the goal is to ensure there is a small supply of recently maintained (and cleaned) basic wheelchairs available on-site. This will ensure that as new residents are admitted, there will be a basic wheelchair available on an interim (or possibly longer term) basis. VCH will provide a wheelchair technician to go to the contracted facilities to review the stock of basic wheelchairs that are currently in storage. Times will be pre-booked in December. The focus is as follows:

INCLUSIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any basic wheelchairs that are owned by the facility, that are <u>currently in storage</u>.</li> </ul>
EXCLUSIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any basic wheelchairs that are owned by the facility that are currently in use by a resident;</li> <li>Any basic wheelchairs that are owned by the Red Cross</li> <li>Any basic wheelchairs that are being rented by the resident from a private vendor.</li> </ul>

The wheelchair technician will:

- Record the number of working basic wheelchairs
- Where appropriate, identify and arrange for minor repairs (such as brakes, tires, bearings. If the cost of repair is greater than the actual replacement value, then the wheelchair will not be maintained or included in the inventory).
- Record the serial number, and affix a label that identifies the wheelchair as having been inventoried. These wheelchairs must then be secured by the facility, and they are not for use prior to January 1, 2016.

VCH will work with contracted providers to secure short term rentals for the first 6 months of 2016, as required. At this stage, there is no need for VCH contracted providers to purchase basic wheelchairs.

### **Tracking:**

In order to fully assess the impact of the policy change, VCH will be using a revised screening tool for all referrals for OT wheelchair assessments. Additional training and supports will be provided to the contracted sites. Referral forms must be completed in full, prior to processing.

### **Long Term Strategy: 6 months +**

VCH intends to work with HSSBC to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the provision of wheelchair equipment in contracted residential care facilities. It is anticipated that this is a longer term strategy that will likely take 6-9 months.

### **Key Messages:**

- Ministry of Health policy is expected to come into effect January 1, 2016 in contracted residential care facilities.
- VCH will work with contracted providers to secure short term rentals for the first six months of the policy coming into effect. At this stage, there is no need for VCH contracted providers to purchase basic wheelchairs.
- VCH will provide a wheelchair technician to conduct maintenance on basic wheelchairs in storage at contracted sites. This will be done in December, 2015 and early January 2016. Based on the information gathered, the VCH wheelchair working group will look at gaps and make recommendations.
- Additional messaging for providers, residents and family members will be forthcoming.