

SENIORS HOME CARE FUNDING

Giving our seniors the right care at home helps them live as independently as possible, for as long as possible.



**THIS HELPS
REDUCE THE
DEMANDS ON
HOSPITALS
AND CONTINUING
CARE FACILITIES.**

We seek to engage Minister Copping in a dialogue about increased funding for assisted living, supported living, and housing options for our aging community members.

The population of seniors in Alberta continues to rise faster than other age groups. Figures in the latest budget suggest nearly one in five Albertans will be 65 or older by 2030. Accordingly, the Government of Alberta is planning for a wave of aging seniors that will rely on its continuing care system in the next decade.

Not surprisingly, the Province's *Facility-based Continuing Care Report* released in 2021 called for a broader shift to home-based care. Alberta Health is already taking action to implement several of the recommendations, including expanding community care and services options to enable more people to stay at home.

In its budget 2023 highlights, the Province has conveyed its assurance that seniors and vulnerable Albertans will receive the support they need. The MD has gleaned few specifics regarding

HOME CARE FUNDING FOR SENIORS

what will change related to its regional needs, but budget documents indicate additional home care funding will increase the number of individual seniors served, helping them stay in their homes longer.

We seek to know the specifics of how the Province's recently-announced health care funding increase will reflect on key issues in our communities.

Home Care Funding: Expanding services to include 24/7 home care in home living settings is a practical move that would avoid costly patient transfers and visits to higher levels of care. Such an investment would result in a savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. It would also help ease the current strain on EMS services.

An average of \$60,000 is spent each year for each person in designated supportive living. Conversely, home care costs \$11,000 per person per year (one sixth of the cost).

Housing Management Operational Funding: Will the Province support an increase in operational funding for housing management providers? Using the sole metric of inflation, housing management bodies are operating with 12% fewer resources than they had in 2018; with record-high inflation figures forecasted for the year ahead. It is reasonable to expect a resultant increase in the Lodge Assistance Program (LAP) grant to offset this year-over-year inflation, which currently sits at 4-5% for food and 7-10% for non-food costs. At minimum, a 12% increase to operational funding is needed immediately.

The ten-year *Stronger Foundations Affordable Housing Strategy* underscores the Province's focus on improving affordable housing while building a sustainable system that provides flexible, fair and inclusive housing options well into the future. Delivering on these promises will be critical to the future of affordable, accessible housing in Alberta. Regardless, as the groundwork is laid for this long-term strategy we must also address the immediate challenges housing providers are facing.

Maintenance of Housing Stock: One of the actions cited in the *Stronger Foundations Affordable Housing*

“It is vital that our seniors have the resources and social supports they need to live safely and independently within the community for as long as they are able.”



MURRAY KERIK
Reeve
Municipal District of Lesser Slave River

Strategy was development of a five-year maintenance and redevelopment plan for all government-owned assets, and improvements to capital maintenance and renewal.

Affordable housing encompasses a spectrum of aging-in-place scenarios, from lodge/supportive and designated supportive living to independent living. Maintaining and refurbishing existing housing properties is fiscally prudent, because the cost of doing so is nominal when compared with replacement. Aging in place and living independently strategies provide our seniors with the ways and means to age with dignity. Funding for home care, assisted living, and accessible transportation are all key components to making these strategies work in our rural communities.

Main concerns raised by Council

- We urge Minister Copping to expanding funding for home care services to include 24/7 home care in home living settings
- We request an increase in operational funding for housing management providers in alignment with year-over-year inflation
- We seek reassurance that the Province will inject significant new investment into capital maintenance funding as part of its Stronger Foundations strategy

REEVE MURRAY KERIK
780.349.0518 murray.kerik@mdlsr.ca

DEPUTY REEVE LANA SPENCER
780.849.1580 lane.spencer@mdlsr.ca