



Long Term Care Policy Changes Information for Primary Care Physicians

New Ministry of Health policy regarding access to long term care homes that has been under development over the past months is now confirmed to come into effect across Island Health on March 1, 2019.

Key Points:

- Patients can select up to three preferred long term care homes and will wait for a bed to become available at one of those locations.
- Admission to hospital to await placement no longer reduces wait time.
- Beds will be allocated to patients in order of waitlist date and preference.
- Patients in hospital as well as those at very high risk in the community may be offered an Interim bed while they wait for their preferred facility.
- Case managers will continue to collaborate with primary care physicians regarding care planning for their patients.
- Physicians are encouraged to refer their patients to Community Health Services as soon as a need is identified for caregiver support and home care by calling Community Access or through your EMR referral form. Early referral will be very helpful in reducing prolonged hospital admission while awaiting a residential care bed if the person deteriorates and is hospitalized.

Full details of the changes and implementation plan are outlined on the second page of this document.

For further information regarding these changes or for discussion/questions, please contact Caitlin Davies, Project Manager – Residential Access Implementation, Island Health at caitlin.davies@viha.ca or (250) 480-9506.

Details of Key Changes

- **Elimination of the First Appropriate Bed policy:** Patients can select up to three preferred long term care homes and will wait for a bed in one of those locations. They will no longer be required to accept the first appropriate bed available in their health service area.
- **Introduction of the term “interim bed”:** Beds in other long term care homes will be offered as an interim admission solution until admission at the patient’s preferred long term care home is possible. Patients in hospital who are unable to return to the community to wait, as well as those at very high-risk in the community, may be offered an interim bed if their preferred long term care home is not available. Patients who accept an interim bed will remain on the waitlist for their preferred long term care home(s) and will not experience any reduction of priority as a result of accepting an interim bed.
- **Bed allocation based on length of time waiting:** Beds will be allocated to patients in order of waitlist date and preference.
- **Discharge home from hospital to await a long term care home:** Hospital and Community Health Services teams are working together to ensure all patients who can be safely discharged return to the community for assessment and wait listing. Due to the new requirements for bed allocation based on waitlist date only, individuals waiting for a long term care home bed from the community can expect wait times equivalent to those waiting in hospital. Admission to hospital to await placement no longer reduces wait time.
- **Improved information regarding specific long term care homes:** Patients and families will be able to make informed decisions regarding which long term care home(s) to choose. Patients and families will not be required to accept a non-preferred facility, and can always choose alternate care options to manage their needs while they continue to wait for their preferred long term care home.
- **Changes to determination of capability to provide informed consent are not changing at this time.** Implementation of the consent requirements as a result of Section 3 of HCCCFAA are anticipated later in 2019 and will be implemented at that time. Physicians will receive additional information regarding determination of capability requirements once the legislation is enacted.

Implementation

- Island Health case managers who assess and waitlist patients for a long term care home will receive in-depth training on the relevant changes prior to March 1.
- Case managers will continue to collaborate with primary care physicians regarding patient care planning.
- Primary care physicians will continue to receive requests for medical histories, TB screening documentation and/or chest x-rays for admission to a long term care home. These requirements are set by Community Care Facilities Licencing and do not change as a result of the new policy.
- Brochures and online information for patients and families will be refreshed to reflect the new policy and process.
- Clients already waitlisted for a long term care home prior to March 1, 2019 will have a case manager review to advise them of the new policy and adjust their choices accordingly. Physicians will not be required to complete any additional assessment or documentation for these patients.