
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2020HLTH0220-001270
July 13, 2020

Ministry of Health
Interior Health

Interior getting 495 new long-term care beds

VICTORIA – The Province and Interior Health are helping to meet the needs of the growing seniors' population with the largest one-time increase in long-term care beds in the region in over 15 years.

The addition of 495 long-term care beds will ensure seniors can continue to receive care where they live, as well as providing more opportunities for jobs in health care.

“COVID-19 has shown what we can achieve together,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “The investments we made to raise care standards across B.C. made an important difference when we were met with COVID-19.

“The plan we are setting in motion today for nearly 500 beds is what people in the region need. This historical investment is a commitment to seniors living in Interior communities, an assurance that care close to home will be available, when they need it.”

There are 140 beds being planned for the Central Okanagan in Kelowna, 100 in Kamloops, 90 in Vernon, 90 in Penticton and 75 in Nelson. The exact location of the beds will be determined through the competitive bid process.

Once open, the number of publicly funded long-term care beds available in the Interior Health region will increase by nearly 10%, rising to 6,550.

“This is another step in a series of substantive actions that our government has taken to improve and strengthen seniors care in our province,” said Ronna-Rae Leonard, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors. “Investing in long-term care will help recruit a new generation of health-care professionals to the interior region, ensuring that seniors can get the care they need to age well and with dignity for years to come.”

Michelle Mungall, MLA for Nelson-Creston, said: “The community of Nelson has been a strong voice for services that are truly responsive to the people and families of this area. I am thrilled that we are finally making this long-time vision come true with a strong partnership led by Interior Health and partners in community.”

Interior Health has issued five requests for proposals (RFPs) for 495 new long-term care beds. The RFPs were issued Monday, July 13, 2020. Results will be evaluated in the fall and a decision will be awarded in early 2021.

“Interior Health supports individuals to live independently through home and community care services. When this is not possible, long-term care is often needed,” said Doug Cochrane, board chair, Interior Health. “The government's commitment to long-term care is a welcome

investment recognizing the increasing care needs of our aging population and all that we have learned from the ongoing pandemic. Residents of Interior Health can take heart that high-quality and safe long-term care options will be available now and in the future.”

Government is investing more than \$1 billion over three years to improve care for seniors, including investments in primary care, home health, long-term care, assisted living and respite services.

This includes \$240 million over three years to increase staffing levels in long-term care homes, with the goal of achieving the target 3.36 direct care hours per resident day – on average – across all health authorities by the end of 2020-21. In 2018-19, more than one million direct hours of care for seniors in long-term care homes were added throughout the province.

Supporting the public health-care system is a shared priority between Government and the BC Green Party caucus, and is part of the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

Quick Facts:

- In 2019, 19% of B.C.’s population was 65 years of age or older. In 15 years, this is expected to rise to 25%.
- The projected growth rate of seniors who are 75 years or older in the Interior region is 28% over the next five years.
- The average age of residents in long-term care facilities is 84 years.
- As B.C.’s seniors population grows, it is anticipated the rates of dementia and chronic diseases in the general population will also rise.
- Long-term care homes provide professional care and supervision to adults in a supportive and secure environment for people with complex care needs who cannot live safely and independently at home. This includes frail and elderly individuals with chronic conditions, such as those with dementia, as well as adults with complex health needs.

Learn More:

To learn more about the Province’s long-term care, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/home-community-care/care-options-and-cost/long-term-care-services>

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