

Vancouver Coastal Health

Subsidized Assisted Living Handbook



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document was originally developed by the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) for their Supportive Living tenants. Appreciation and thanks to VIHA for their permission to adapt the information for use within Vancouver Coastal Health.

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Moving is a major life decision that requires full information before undertaking.

Our goal is to answer your questions about Vancouver Coastal Health subsidized Assisted Living.

Who is this handbook for?

This handbook is for people considering a move into subsidized Assisted Living settings within the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Authority and for those already living in them.

We hope this document will provide you with enough information to decide if it is the right choice for you.

What is subsidized Assisted Living?

All Health Authorities throughout British Columbia offer a subsidized (or publicly funded) Assisted Living program. The Assisted Living program is a collaboration among VCH, BC Housing, and private and non-profit housing providers. Access to subsidized Assisted Living is through the Health Authority.

Subsidized Assisted Living includes rental accommodations, “hospitality services” and personal care. Hospitality services include meals, weekly cleaning and linen laundry, social/ recreational activities and 24-hour emergency response. It is primarily intended for seniors with low to moderate incomes that require assistance with personal care. It is a congregate living arrangement with communal meals and social activities.

There are also market (or “Private”) Assisted Living sites, where VCH does not have any involvement in determining eligibility. You can contact these sites directly and may find a place that suits your personal needs and budget by checking the numerous publications that list housing for seniors; or in the telephone book, under Retirement Communities and Homes.

Am I eligible for subsidized Assisted Living?

Eligibility for subsidized Assisted Living is determined by a VCH Case Manager. The VCH Case Manager uses a standardized assessment tool to determine if you are eligible and appropriate.

You may be a candidate for subsidized Assisted Living if you are:

- eligible to receive home support services; and
- able to direct your own care and make decisions about your daily activities and needs; and
- able to live independently but require help with day-to-day activities; and
- are able to communicate and be understood by others; and
- do not behave in ways that put the safety of others at risk; and
- are able to take direction in an emergency and use an emergency response system; and
- not managing well in your home with available services.

If you think that subsidized Assisted Living is an option for you and you already have a Case Manager, contact them for further information. If you do not have a Case Manager, you can get more information about Assisted Living by phoning the health centre/office nearest you.

Vancouver

Tel: 604-263-7377

Richmond

Tel: 604-278-3361

North/West Vancouver

Tel: 604-983-6700

Squamish

Tel: 604-892-2293

Pemberton

Tel: 604-894-6939

Whistler

Tel: 604-932-3202

Sechelt

Tel: 604-741-0726

Powell River

Tel: 604-485-8850

Is Assisted Living right for me?

In deciding whether Assisted Living is right for you, you may want to consider the following:

- *Are you able to live in a congregate setting where you will have meals with other tenants and be expected to participate in social activities?*
- *Will you be able to abide by the "house rules"? This may include things like not smoking in your suite.*

The decision to relocate is often encouraged by people who know and care about you. However, it is ultimately a personal decision and it is important that you feel comfortable with your choice. If you answer 'yes' to most of the following questions, then subsidized Assisted Living may be right for you.

Do you sometimes feel lonely or isolated?

Are you afraid of being alone, falling and not being found?

Are you not eating nutritious meals regularly?

Do you have trouble remembering your medications at the right time?

Do you need help with things like bathing, dressing or other daily activities?

Do you have problems with the design of your current home? For example, with the stairs or bathroom?

Ultimately, subsidized Assisted Living is all about choice and maintaining your independence. In subsidized Assisted Living you continue to be responsible for making decisions and organizing your day-to-day activities such as making and attending doctors visits, making your own breakfast, going to the store and keeping in touch with friends and family.

It should be noted that Assisted Living does not fall under the Residential Tenancy Act.

What assistance is available to me?

In every subsidized Assisted Living site, there are personal care staff available to assist you with day-to-day activities such as bathing, dressing and medication management.

Assisted Living is not however, a 24-hour “care” environment. There are typically no Registered Nurses (RNs) on staff. There will be Assisted Living Workers working during the day, but depending on the site, there may or may not be someone available to help at night.

The amount of help you receive is authorized by your Case Manager. If your needs change, he/she will determine if you need more or less assistance.

Nursing services and other professional health care workers (such as Occupational Therapists/Physical Therapists and Nutritionists) are arranged and provided by the local Health Unit and are not provided directly by on-site staff.

The Assisted Living provider is responsible for maintaining the building and providing services such as: meals (lunch and supper), cleaning, linen service, activities, and 24-hour emergency response, as well as assistance with activities of daily living, as authorized by your Case Manager.

What does subsidized Assisted Living cost?

Subsidized Assisted Living is an affordable option for everyone. The cost for the full package (rental accommodation, hospitality services and personal care) is equal to 70% of your most recent year's after-tax income and is paid directly to the Assisted Living provider. People who are in receipt of Income Assistance pay a flat rate. Couples who are living together in subsidized Assisted Living are charged 70% of their combined after-tax income. If your spouse moves out or you are not living together, then the rate is based on your after-tax income alone.

Personal Care is included in your rate. Items not included as part of your monthly contribution may include such things as breakfast supplies, medications, incontinence products, tenant insurance, personal toiletries, hydro, telephone and cable service. Other services may also be available for purchase from the Assisted Living provider (i.e. personal laundry, meals for guests, etc). Ask the Assisted Living provider for a full list of items and related costs that are not part of your monthly contribution.

Assisted Living rates are reviewed and adjusted annually based on the latest tax information available. You will be notified in November of changes to your rate. The new rates take effect January 1. If, during the year, your expenses change or there has been an increase or decrease in your income, contact your Case Manager. If you are not left with \$300 disposable income, then the Case Manager can review your rate. Reasons for changes in income will be reviewed by the Case Manager to determine if they are valid (gifting money to a family member may not be considered as a valid reason for income reduction).

How do I apply?

- Contact your local Health Centre or your Community Case Manager.
- Your Community Case Manager will:
 - Discuss subsidized Assisted Living with you;
 - do an assessment and determine if you are eligible. If you are eligible, the Case Manager will provide you with information about the various subsidized sites; and
 - suggest a preliminary tour of a suitable subsidized Assisted Living setting.
- If you are still interested in Assisted Living following your tour, then you and your Case Manager will continue with your application to the VCH Assisted Living program.
- The Priority Access Team will verify your eligibility and place you on the waitlist for your preferred site.
- The Case Manager will notify you about availability and estimated waiting period, based on your needs. If your needs change during this period, you should notify your Case Manager.
- Your VCH Case Manager will contact you when a suitable suite is available and will arrange an interview for you, to ensure that you are still eligible for subsidized Assisted Living and that your needs have not changed significantly.
- Final approval for Assisted Living does not occur until after the interview with the Assisted Living provider and the VCH Case Manager.

When choosing an Assisted Living site you may want to consider:

- *What is truly important to you?*
- *Who or what do you want to be close to?*
- *Do you prefer a small or large setting?*
- *Do you prefer a setting that has a religious affiliation?*

Take a look at existing and projected Assisted Living settings on the VCH website at: www.vch.ca/assisted

Where are subsidized Assisted Living settings located?

VCH has subsidized Assisted Living sites throughout the region in the following areas:

- Powell River
- Gibsons
- Squamish
- West Vancouver
- North Vancouver
- Vancouver
- Richmond
- Kiwanis Garden Manor
- Christenson Village
- Renaissance Retirement (opening in 2009)
- Kiwanis Manor
- Churchill House
- Lynn Valley House
- Cedar Garden
- Cedars at Beulah Gardens
- Clarendon Court
- Harmony House
- Haro Park
- Honoria Conway
- Icelandic Harbour House
- Millennium Towers
- Southview Heights
- Terraces on 7th
- Weinberg Residence
- Courtyard Gardens
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Austin Harris

Each site is unique in terms of physical layout, staffing, and proximity to community services. Your room or suite will be unique as well - decorated with your own furniture and other belongings.

For an up-to-date listing and photos of existing sites, visit the VCH website at www.vch.ca/assisted

What questions should I ask or consider when on a tour?

Costs and monthly charges

- Is there a security deposit? How much is it?
- What other expenses am I responsible for?
- What damages am I responsible for?
- Do I need to supply my own cleaning equipment and supplies?

Living space and accommodations

- Can I easily move around in the suite and the building?
- Is this a non-smoking building?
- What are the rules about decorating my room or suite?
- Do I supply my own window coverings and shower curtains?
- Do I need tenant insurance? If so, what type?
- May I have a pet? Can pets visit?
- May I have overnight guests?
- What kind of storage is available?
- Do I get my own parking spot? Cost?

Dining and food services

- Are menus posted? Are there choices?
- Can I have a diet tailored to meet my health needs?
- What if I am ill and cannot get to the dining room?
- Can guests come to eat with me? Cost?

Location

- Do I like the neighbourhood?
- Is it near family and friends?
- Is it near services (e.g. medical, dental, pharmacy, shops, recreation and worship)?
- Is it close to transportation?

Electric mobility

- May I take my scooter or electric wheelchair inside the building, to the dining room or to my room?
- Where are scooters parked in relationship to my room?
- Can I easily get to my room from the scooter parking area?

Activities/recreation

- Are there on-site events and religious services?
- Is an activity calendar distributed to tenants?
- How often are community activities scheduled?
- Is wheelchair-accessible transportation provided?
- Is there a volunteer program to support tenants?
- Are there tenant volunteer program opportunities?
- What services are available (e.g. hair, nails, foot care)?

Tenant rights and responsibilities

- Is there a Tenant Council with regular meetings?
- What are the suggestion, complaint or grievance procedures?
- How are family concerns addressed?

Safety and Emergency Services

- Are emergency fire plans displayed?
- Are there smoke/fire alarms and sprinkler systems?
- What is the emergency response system? How is it answered?
- Are exterior building doors locked? When? How do guests get into the building?

What are my rights?

To have choices and act on them.

To be informed and listened to.

To feel safe, secure and supported.

To feel respected and treated with dignity.

Assisted Living checklist – preparing to move in

Before the move

- Determine your ability to manage the move process.
- Give notice to your current landlord if applicable.
- Reserve elevator and final inspection if applicable.
- Cancel hydro, gas, cable.
- Check with your Case Manager to see if you need to cancel SAFER (if you are receiving).
- Re-establish delivery services, such as oxygen.
- Complete application forms (e.g. Occupancy Agreement).
- Confirm day and time of move in with Assisted Living provider and Community Health Team.

Packing Up, Moving and Unpacking

- Get a floor plan and measurements of your new residence and decide on furniture needs.
- Determine the personal items you will need that will make it feel like home.
- Establish a timeline for getting ready to move.
- Arrange for friends, family, volunteers, an agency or a moving company to help with packing and unpacking.
- Arrange telephone installation.
- Arrange household insurance.

Change of address:

- doctor/dentist
- Post Office
- bank and credit card
- Canada Pension 1-800-277-9914
- magazines and newspapers, clubs and organizations
- car insurance and driver's license
- BC Medical insurance

Expected moving expenses:

- movers
- security deposit
- installation of phone
- Cable (dependent on site)

Ongoing expenses:

- household and personal supplies e.g. laundry soap, toilet paper, personal hygiene products
- telephone
- Hydro
- Cable (dependent on site)

Occasionally the health of an Assisted Living tenant improves so much, they consider moving to a more independent setting.

By the same token, sometimes their health needs change and they need 24-hour professional care that is provided at complex care sites.

Moving out

If you have tried subsidized Assisted Living and decide that it is not for you, you will still be able to receive Home and Community Care services.

Before you move out:

- Contact your Case Manager.
- Provide notice - confirm with your Assisted Living provider what the notice period is?
- Determine who will help with packing and unpacking.
- Cancel your telephone service and cable if applicable.
- Provide your change of address to the Post Office.

Individuals in subsidized Assisted Living settings may be asked to move out if they:

- can no longer direct their own care;
- exhibit behaviours that jeopardize their safety and well-being or that of others;
- have care needs that can no longer be supported in that setting.

The Case Manager will work together with you to find an appropriate alternate setting.

How can I make subsidized Assisted Living work for me?

Most Assisted Living tenants find that when the work of cooking and cleaning is done for them, they have more time and energy to create connections for new friendships and activities.

Three of your most important responsibilities when you move into Assisted Living are to:

- do as much for yourself for as long as you are able;
- stay involved with your family and friends;
- get involved with your new community.

Remember that it takes time to settle into a new home - so expect some ups and downs after you move in.

Here are a few ideas to maintain or even improve the quality of your life:

- Be honest with the staff about your personal preferences.
- Bring the belongings that you most cherish to help make your room or suite feel like home.
- Bring your hobby items so that you can continue enjoying your hobby, e.g. baking or painting.
- Stay in touch or reconnect with family and friends. Invite them to visit for tea or a meal, or visit them.
- Maintain or re-establish your contacts with your religious or spiritual institution.
- Volunteer for, teach or help with activities in your new home, such as exercise classes or your favourite hobby.
- Participate in the recreational and social activities offered and discover new talents.
- You will meet a variety of new acquaintances and friends. Try to be tolerant and enjoy the new experiences.

Frequently asked questions

How long will I wait for a suite?

Your Case Manager will provide you with information about the sites that are available, including an approximate estimate of wait times. You will then choose one site that you are interested in. This is a decision that you will make based on such things as location, waittime, proximity to family, friends or services.

Once you are on the waitlist for an Assisted Living site, the time it takes to move into your new home will vary based on the availability of a suite. The Case Manager will contact you when a suite becomes available and will give you some time to give notice and prepare for the move. Final approval does not occur until after your interview with the Assisted Living provider and the VCH Case Manager.

What happens if I turn down a suite that is offered to me because I'm not ready for Assisted Living yet?

By putting your name on a waitlist, you are indicating that you would like to move to an Assisted Living site. If a suite becomes available in the site you have chosen and you choose not to accept it, then your name will be removed from the waitlist. You may re-apply at a later date, but your waitlist date is not retroactive.

What happens if I need more help than can be given in my subsidized Assisted Living setting?

Your Case Manager will reassess your needs and it may be necessary for you to move to a Residential Care Facility. Waiting times vary depending on your needs and the number of people needing Residential Care. Your Case Manager will inform you and your family of the approximate waiting time.

What happens if I go to hospital?

You must continue to pay your usual monthly charge while in hospital. You will be required to give notice if you cannot return to your Assisted Living home.

When do I use my emergency response system?

Your system should be used when you have an emergency, e.g. if you fall, cannot get out of bed or are unwell.

What happens if my spouse was the person eligible for subsidized Assisted Living, and he or she is no longer able to live in the setting?

You will not have to move out of your subsidized Assisted Living home. The Assisted Living Case Manager will re-calculate your new monthly charge based on your after tax-income alone.

What happens if my needs change?

If your needs change, your Case Manager will meet with you and determine if changes in support and adaptations are necessary and available within the limits of Home and Community Care. They may also refer you to another professional for assistance. If it is determined that you need a Residential Care facility, your Case Manager will assist you through the process.

Can I still attend my VCH day program?

Assisted Living sites have recreational and social activities so these would typically replace your participation in a VCH day program.

What if I have a complaint or I have a problem with the Assisted Living provider?

If you have a concern about a subsidized Assisted Living residence, you are encouraged to meet directly with the Assisted Living provider. If resolution to the complaint is not reached or the tenant feels uncomfortable approaching the Assisted Living provider directly, you can contact their Case Manager or the VCH Regional Patient Care Quality Office (Toll Free: 1-877-993-9199). If the issue is related to health and safety, you may also contact the Office of the Assisted Living Registrar of British Columbia (tel 604-714-3378 or 1-866-714-3378).

Other Relevant Information and Resources

General health questions

BC Health and Seniors Information Line
Toll Free 1-800-465-4911

Nurses address specific concerns

BC NurseLine
Vancouver: 604-215-4700 / Toll Free 1-866-215-4700
www.bchealthguide.org

Health information to seniors, caregivers & others

Canadian Health Network - Seniors Health Centre
www.canadian-health-network.ca

Information on diet and nutrition

Dial - A - Dietitian
Greater Vancouver: 604-732-9191 / Toll free 1-800-667-3438

Information on prescription coverage

Pharmacare (including Fair Pharmacare Plan)
Vancouver: 604-683-7151 / Toll free 1-800-663-7100

Information about finances

Pension, Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement
Toll Free 1-800-277-9914 / www.hrhc-drhc.gc.ca

Assisted Living standards/regulation

Office of the Assisted Living Registrar
Vancouver: 604-676-1417 / Toll Free 1-866-714-3378
www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/assisted/index.html

Other housing options for seniors

Seniors Housing
604-520-6621 / www.seniorshousing.bc.ca

Information on veteran benefits

Veterans Affairs Canada
Toll free 1-866-522-2122 (English)/1-866-522-2022 (French)

My Assisted Living information

Name: _____ Ph: _____

Address: _____

*building, food,
activities*

Assisted Living site Manager: _____ Ph: _____

*change in care
hours, needs*

VCH Case Manager: _____ Ph: _____

*medications,
incontinence, etc*

VCH Home Care Nurse: _____ Ph: _____

Doctor: _____ Ph: _____

Pharmacy: _____ Ph: _____

OT/PT: _____ Ph: _____

Dietitian: _____ Ph: _____

Handi Dart: _____ Ph: _____

Other Community Contacts: _____ Ph: _____

Other Important numbers: _____
