

MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR ALBERTA SENIORS

(As of March 29, 2017)

Building Affordable Housing

We are continuing our \$1.2 billion investment in affordable housing projects over five years which includes many seniors independent and lodge units across Alberta. This is four times what the previous government did. Further, we are taking action to address affordable housing issues by developing a Provincial Affordable Housing Strategy that will guide affordable housing development across the province both now and for the future.

Throughout the province, there are over 40 major capital development projects currently underway totaling \$530 million, 33 of which are geared to seniors' housing. These projects will renew and replace approximately 2000 units and add over 1000 units of new space.

Alberta Seniors and Housing is leading a process to help define how the government will invest \$120 million to support Indigenous off-reserve affordable housing. The program is intended to increase the supply of off-reserve, non-market, affordable housing units for Indigenous people in need.

Alberta Seniors and Housing is improving the condition of affordable housing facilities, including lodges and seniors self-contained units. Funding is being provided to ensure lodges are equipped with fire sprinklers to ensure the safety of residents.

Investing in Community Health Care

Budget 2017 is boosting funding for home and community care by \$200 million, supporting more Albertans to receive care in their homes and remain independent. Total funding is now over \$2 billion for the year. This funding will provide seniors with important services that support them to live and participate in their communities. Home-care clients pay no fees for publicly provided personal care or professional health-care services. Last year more than 116,000 Albertans (of all ages) received home-care services.

Banning Door-to-Door Energy Sales

By banning door-to-door sales of energy products, seniors are being protected from misleading, high-pressure sales practices.

Repairing Homes to Help Seniors Age in Place - SHARP

In July 2016, the government introduced the Seniors Home Adaptation and Repair Program, or SHARP, to support independent living for Alberta's seniors. The program helps seniors use the equity in their homes to make the necessary repairs and adaptations that will allow them to stay in their own homes and communities as they age.

SHARP offers low-interest home equity loans up to \$40,000 per household to seniors with household income of \$75,000 or less who have at least 25% home equity. These loans can cover a wide range of renovations, such as roof and window replacements, electrical repairs, making hallways and doorways more accessible, and installing walk-in tubs.

SHARP also offers grants to senior homeowners with low incomes who do not qualify for the loans but who require financial supports for critical home repairs. As of March 2017, the ministry has received more than 970 applications and has paid out about \$6 million in loans and about \$290,000 in grants.

Creating Long-term Care Beds

Budget 2017 takes the next step in fulfilling this government's commitment to creating 2,000 new long-term care beds. It commits funds to build a new facility in Calgary's Bridgeland community and to upgrade and expand the Norwood Capital Care facility in Edmonton. Together these projects will create hundreds of new long-term care spaces. Both are fully publicly owned.

Building Accessible Parks

Alberta Parks is removing barriers, to ensure parks are more accessible for seniors. Alberta Parks is working to identify all the facilities that are barrier-free and is making that information public. All parks facilities are now built for accessibility.

Rebates and Energy Efficiency Programs for Seniors

One in two seniors in Alberta is eligible to receive a rebate for the carbon levy under the Climate Leadership Plan.

New affordable housing is being designed and built according to higher green energy standards, while capital maintenance and retrofits are focusing on upgrades to improve energy efficiency and water conservation. The government is also conducting energy efficiency audits of existing facilities to assess their condition and identify opportunities to further reduce emissions.

Improving Transportation for Seniors

Alberta Seniors and Housing supported the development of the Alternate Transportation for Seniors Toolkit and currently supports a number of pilot projects, funded through a grant to the Medically At-Risk Drivers (MARD) Center. The projects assist communities throughout the province, including rural/remote communities, to develop transportation options for seniors.

- A *Provincial Transportation Needs Assessment on Seniors and Persons with Disabilities* is ongoing and is being conducted by Banister Research. Information from this needs assessment will help communities in Alberta in the development of more responsive transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities.
- The *Implementation and Assessment of Ride-Scheduling Software for Alternate Transportation for Seniors (ATS) Services* pilot project was awarded to the Wetaskiwin Community Transportation Society in October 2016.
- The *Implementing and Assessing Transportation for Seniors (ATS) - Validation of the Alternate Transportation Toolkit* pilot project was awarded to the town of Pincher Creek in December 2016. The toolkit is intended to provide communities with the means to assess the transportation needs of seniors and provide options to address them.
- There is currently a [request for proposals](#) posted on the [MARD website](#) inviting proposals from interested rural coalitions (e.g., Alberta community organizations, rural municipalities, counties, or municipal districts) to work with MARD on developing a regional alternate transportation for seniors (ATS) service in a rural area in Alberta. The deadline for proposals is April 7, 2017.

Advocate for Seniors

A new Seniors Advocate, Dr. Sheree Kwong See, was appointed in September for a term that will last until the end of 2019. Dr. Kwong See is a strong and effective voice for seniors and their families. In her role as seniors advocate she:

- Provides resolution support to senior Albertans and their families;
- Identifies trends and systemic issues affecting seniors; and

- Makes recommendations to the government on how to improve senior services and programs.

Dr. Kwong See recently toured the province, visiting 10 cities and towns, to talk directly with seniors about the roles and responsibilities of her office. Together with the Advocate's office, our government continues to work to make life better for seniors in Alberta.

Building Awareness of Elder Abuse

The three-year \$3-million Taking Action Against Elder Abuse Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) grant program supports the development or enhancement of community responses to elder abuse in all regions of Alberta through improved collaboration among service providers. In the first two years of this program, more than \$2 million has been provided to 26 applicants throughout the province. In 2017/18, Alberta Seniors and Housing will continue to administer projects under this grant program. To date, more than 1,200 service providers have attended awareness and prevention training workshops to help them support individuals impacted by elder abuse at the local level.