



Long Term & Continuing Care
Association of Manitoba

September 20, 2011

Open Letter to Manitoba Political Party leaders:

Premier Greg Selinger
Honourable Jon Gerrard
Honourable Hugh McFadyen
James R. Beddome

From: The Long Term & Continuing Care Association of Manitoba

Regarding actions you would take on the following issues if elected on October 4, 2011

1. Affordability for those accessing care and/or services
2. Access to Services
3. Communication and Education

1. Affordability: A range of affordable housing and support options for low income older adults and other identified populations is needed. This could include individuals who are not eligible for CPP, GIS, OAS, as well as Aboriginal and newcomer populations. Affordability, especially for couples, remains a key issue and other strategies are required to meet the demand.

How would you respond to this issue if elected?

2. Access to Services: Access to the right service (or housing option) at the right time for the right person is critical to the health of older adults. A coordinated approach to accessing services and “navigating the system” requires planning and organization on the part of service providers and systems. There is no one single coordinating body that does this at the present time. Unique and innovative approaches are needed to address this issue.

How would you respond to this issue if elected?

Alternative housing and care options are needed to support individuals who are currently occupying acute care beds because no other options exist. Some Regions indicated that up to 1/3 of their acute care beds are occupied by people who do not need Personal Care Home placement but are not well enough to be discharged home. Creative models and innovative approaches used in other jurisdictions should be explored.

How would you respond to this issue if elected?

Social isolation should be recognized as a significant risk factor for physiological and psychological deficits that may result in unnecessary and inappropriate visits to emergency rooms. The benefits of socialization with regard to improved quality of life for individuals and reduced costs to the health care system should be incorporated in the planning and implementation of housing and service alternatives. There is a need to improve the ability to respond and respond quickly to this risk factor.

How would you respond to this issue if elected?

- 3. Communication and Education:** Communication and education strategies that address the range of housing and support options available to individuals aging in place in the community need to be implemented. The LTCAM website has worked hard to meet the need for education and communication. The need for this education is illustrated by the significant activity the website experiences, at over 7000 page views per month. Strategies should target the general public, service providers and other relevant stakeholders.

How would you respond to this issue if elected?

Communication and education strategies should support a positive connotation of the aging process and address factors contributing to “ageism”. Organizations and strategies that advocate for better treatment and greater acceptance of older adults should be supported.

Inherent in the provision of education and communication, as well as service provision, is the need to address the issue of “ageism”. Aging is not a disease. Ageism is a social attitude. It is way of looking at older people that stereotypes them, just as people of particular races are stereotyped as being "smart", "industrious", "thrifty", "lazy", or "easy going", or when men and women are stereotyped as being "strong", "nurturing" or "sensitive" because of their gender. Wherever possible, aging should be portrayed in a positive manner. Significant changes can be made through a targeted and focused communication strategy. It is interesting to note that, although Canada has a national website specifically designated to ageism, no such website exists in Manitoba. A more targeted approach to addressing ageism would be beneficial.

How would you respond to this issue if elected?

Background -Long Term & Continuing Care Association of Manitoba

The Long Term & Continuing Care Association of Manitoba (LTCAM) is a not for profit corporation with 75 members, representing over 4,300 beds and suites and 4,600 staff across the continuum of care. In 1959, our founding members consisted of a few 'nursing home' owners. Today, we represent non-profit (41%) and private (59%) independent living, supportive housing and personal care home residences, spanning seven of the eleven regional health authorities across Manitoba. Our membership has tripled in the last few years and has become much more diverse. Our primary objective is to advocate on behalf of seniors in Manitoba and the staff at the residences who serve them, throughout the long term care continuum.

Purpose of the Long Term and Continuing Care Association of Manitoba LTCAM

The purpose of the Association is to advance and elevate the status of long term and continuing care. The Association plays a vital and critical role, advocating, communicating and partnering with government, regional health authorities and the community. The Association acts for and with the members as requested, for the purposes of negotiating, amending, monitoring and ensuring the integrity of legal and/or binding agreements. The LTCAM liaises with other members within the continuum, including community programs and services to ensure equitable treatment and best practices are continually pursued and maintained. The LTCAM also provides educational opportunities within the continuum of care in Manitoba. The LTCAM provides a highly effective network of communication and support for its members, identifies and responds to changes and growth in the continuum of care, and accommodates new and innovative approaches to addressing the needs of the target populations.