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PROVINCE RENEWS LONG-TERM CARE PLAN TO MEET GROWING DEMAND FOR SERVICES

\$216-million Investment Provides More Choice, More Independence, Better Quality of Life for Growing Number of Seniors: Selinger

Manitoba families will benefit from enhanced access to home-care services, more affordable supportive-housing options and an expansion of personal-care home (PCH) beds under a renewed long-term care plan announced today by Premier Greg Selinger.

"Seniors and their families now have access to a wide range of care options as a result of our investments over the past 10 years," said Selinger. "Many people aren't aware the first universal home-care program in North America started right here in Manitoba. Today we are building on this legacy by announcing new supports and innovations to enable older Manitobans to live at home longer."

The provincial plan includes a two-year, \$16-million investment that will provide:

- * more home-care supports for those older adults that need support to help them live at home longer;
- * an innovative new rehabilitation program to help seniors regain and maintain their independence following surgery or injury, and also delay or prevent untimely or inappropriate placement in a personal-care home; and
- * a new income-protection benefit of up to \$295 per month to make supportive housing an affordable alternative to PCH placement for low-income seniors.

In addition, the province will invest \$200 million to add hundreds of new personal-care home beds over the next several years, beginning with an expansion of Holy Family PCH in Winnipeg and a new PCH in Lac du Bonnet. This is in addition to a new 80-bed PCH currently under construction in south Winnipeg and 100 new beds currently being developed in Morden.

"While our first goal is to offer the supports seniors want to live safely in their own homes, some ultimately require other living options such as personal-care homes and supportive housing," said Health Minister Theresa Oswald. "With an aging population that is living longer, our renewed long-term care plan will add hundreds of additional personal-care home spaces across the province, while strengthening other living options such as home care and supportive housing."

Today's announcement coincides with the release of Population Aging and the Continuum of Older Adult Care in Manitoba, by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP). The report, requested by Manitoba Health, looks at today's supportive housing and personal-care home users to learn more about the challenges each group faces. It also looks at population projections to describe the anticipated growth in Manitoba's elderly population.

"The MCHP report is a vital planning tool and will help us to provide the best possible care, based on each individual's needs," said Selinger.

"The province's new investments in expanded home care and intensive rehabilitation will help seniors to live safely in their own homes for a longer period," said Real Cloutier, chief operating officer, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. "Also, more affordable supportive housing and additional PCH beds will help meet the needs of a growing number of seniors, for whom living at home is no longer a viable option."

Today's announcement builds on Manitoba's investments in long-term care since 1999 that have resulted in:

- * more than 400 additional personal-care home beds;
- * over 500 new supportive housing units;
- * expanded home-care services for thousands more seniors;
- * a caregiver tax credit of \$1,020 for caregivers of home-care clients;
- * new supports for approximately 3,500 seniors in group living including assistance with transportation and daily activities;
- * improved quality of care in PCHs with more than 500 new staff hired since 2007;
- * quality standards legislated in 2005; and
- * the creation of the Protection of Persons in Care Office in 2001.

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