

## **LTCAM Position Paper: Government Procurement Strategy for Nursing Agencies**

### **Introduction**

The Long Term & Continuing Care Association of Manitoba (LTCAM) acknowledges the Government's initiative to reduce reliance on nursing agencies and improve quality standards within the healthcare system. While cost control and standardization of pricing structures are important, it is critical to ensure that these measures do not compromise the quality of care provided to seniors. LTCAM is committed to being an active partner in this evolving process to advocate for seniors and long-term care providers.

### **Key Considerations and Position**

#### **1. Impact on Long-Term Care Facilities**

- The procurement strategy applies to both acute care and long-term care sectors; however, the pressures in long-term care differ significantly from those in acute care.
- While the government-operated Service Delivery Organizations (SDOs) are directly affected, privately owned and non-profit long-term care facilities remain outside the scope of these changes. However, the ripple effects of supplier reduction and pricing standardization may indirectly impact all providers.
- LTCAM urges policymakers to consider the unique staffing challenges faced by long-term care facilities, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

#### **2. Reduction and Optimization of Suppliers**

- The reduction in the number of suppliers may lead to efficiencies, but it is crucial that this does not result in staffing shortages that could affect resident care.
- LTCAM supports the objective of achieving an optimum number of suppliers but calls for transparent criteria in determining what constitutes an "optimum" number.
- Consideration should be given to ensuring a diversity of suppliers to maintain service availability across all regions.

#### **3. Master Service Agreements (MSAs) and Service Purchase Agreements**

- The transition from a single standard agreement to individual service purchase agreements for each agency requires careful implementation to avoid administrative burden.
- LTCAM recommends consultation with stakeholders, including long-term care providers, to ensure that the new agreements facilitate rather than hinder operational efficiency.
- Clarity is needed on how service purchase agreements will be structured and whether they will allow for flexibility in response to staffing shortages.



#### **4. Buying Group Participation for Non-Profits**

- While non-profits have the option to participate in the new procurement strategy, LTCAM stresses the importance of preserving autonomy for these organizations.
- Once an operator opts in, they are committed to the framework, which could create challenges if the system does not meet their needs.
- LTCAM advocates for mechanisms that allow for periodic reassessment of participation to ensure sustainability and adaptability.

#### **5. Transition Period and Implementation**

- The lack of a defined transition timeline creates uncertainty for long-term care providers and agencies alike.
- LTCAM recommends a phased approach with clear milestones and ongoing evaluation to address any unforeseen challenges.
- Effective communication between the government, agencies, and long-term care operators is essential to ensure a seamless transition and continued quality care.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

LTCAM supports efforts to improve quality standards and cost control in the long-term care sector. However, it is imperative that these measures be implemented with careful consideration of the unique needs of long-term care facilities and the seniors they serve.

LTCAM recommends:

1. Ensuring that long-term care sector-specific challenges are considered in procurement decisions.
2. Defining transparent criteria for supplier reduction and optimization.
3. Consulting stakeholders on the implementation of service purchase agreements.
4. Allowing for flexibility in buying group participation for non-profits.
5. Establishing a clear and phased transition timeline with regular stakeholder engagement.

LTCAM remains committed to collaborating with the government to ensure that policy changes enhance, rather than hinder, the ability of long-term care providers to deliver high-quality, person-centred care for seniors in Manitoba.