

## Navigating Home & Community Care Programs

One of the most challenging things for caregivers is navigating the Ministry of Health's Community Care programs meaning that many of you are not receiving the assistance for which you are entitled. To assist We Rage We Weep Alzheimer Foundation provides a description of services available, how they work and how to access them.

**For questions regarding these programs contact your local Health Unit and ask for a Home & Community Care representative ([www.viha.ca/hcc](http://www.viha.ca/hcc)) or contact your family physician for a referral.**

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Community Care programs offer a variety of services for eligible clients. The Ministry of Health of the province of BC sets the eligibility requirements for Home and Community Care (H&CC). In order to be eligible for these services a client must be:

- 19 years of age
- a resident of BC for 3 months
- a Canadian citizen or have permanent residency status
- unable to function independently because of chronic, health related problems or have been diagnosed with an end-stage illness.

### Home Care Nursing

Registered Nurses, and in some cases Licensed Practical Nurses, provide service in our clinics or in the home for procedures such as administering medications, changing dressings or coordinating end of life care. They will also provide education to clients and families around managing **self-care**.

### Home Support Services

Home Support Workers are people who provide assistance with managing personal care needs such as bathing, using the toilet, getting up and dressed and minor assistance with meals. Home Support services are designed to **supplement, rather than replace** the skills and resources of the clients, their loved ones, friends and community. The cost of home support is based on a client's after-tax net income (there may or may not be a daily charge). Perhaps the most frequently asked question is whether clients can receive assistance with housekeeping, grocery shopping and yard work. Unfortunately, these are not services that H&CC can provide. There are a number of private companies that do provide these particular services for an hourly fee.

### Adult Day Program

Adult Day Programs provide a number of supportive services and activities in a comfortable group setting, usually located in one of the residential care facilities. The program offers services such as bathing, rehabilitation assessment and treatment options, lunch, therapeutic recreation programs, caregiver respite/social activities, education and support. A program bus may be available that will pick up the client from their home (if client lives within city limits), bring them to the facility and return them to

their home. There are usually separate programs for people with dementia and those that are higher functioning.

### **Case Management**

The Clinician is a Registered Nurse who, in consultation with the client and family will assess, identify and coordinate access to publicly funded H&CC services such as Meals on Wheels, respite, Home Support, Assisted Living, residential care, etc.

### **Respite Programs**

Respite programs give the caregiver temporary relief from the emotional and physical demands of caring for a loved one, providing them with the opportunity to recharge their batteries so they may continue to provide quality care. These programs come in various forms, including:

- Adult Day Program
- In-home care provided by a respite worker (usually in 2-4 hour blocks a few times per week). Cost is based on the client's after-tax net income.
- Facility-based care provided on a short-term basis (anywhere from a few days to a month) at a residential care facility. The cost for this is a standard rate of \$29.40/day. This rate change from year to year and is set by the Ministry of Health.

### **Assisted Living**

Assisted Living is an option that helps seniors remain independent longer. It helps bridge the gap between care at home and care in a residential facility. In order to be considered for Assisted Living a client must be assessed by a Case Manager, demonstrate that he/she has tried H&CC services and that the client has an unscheduled care need (frequent falls, frequent incontinence, need for assistance at night, etc). Cost for this program is again based on the client's net income – the client pays 70% of their net income and is given a studio apartment (about 500sq foot) in a supportive housing setting along with 24 hour response service, 2 meals per day social and recreational activities and some light housekeeping.

### **Residential Care**

Residential care provides services for people with complex health needs that require 24 hour professional care. These are people who need continuous care due to physical, mental and behavioural conditions who are unable to continue to live safely at home. Access to residential care is based on need and urgency. Those with the greatest need have priority over others.

A subsidized residential facility provides:

- 24 hour nursing and personal care
- All meals, laundry, activities
- Recreation, social, convalescent or palliative care

Furniture is provided. Residents are encouraged to bring a few personal items to help them feel more at home.

Cost: A daily rate is based on the client's after-tax net income.