



Jewish Seniors Alliance OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Ballooning Long-Term Care Waitlists Signal Urgent Need to Remove Home Support Co-Payments, Say Seniors' Organizations

Vancouver, BC — A newly released report from British Columbia's Seniors Advocate confirming a more than 200 per cent increase in long-term care (LTC) waitlists since 2016 underscores a systemic failure to keep pace with the needs of an aging population. While the number of seniors in B.C. has grown by 19 per cent over the past decade, the number of publicly funded LTC beds has increased by only five per cent, leaving many older adults waiting nearly 10 months for care.

The **Jewish Seniors Alliance of British Columbia (JSABC)** has been leading the charge, alongside six provincial seniors and caregiver organizations representing nearly 400,000 older adults, saying the findings reinforce what seniors and families have been experiencing for years — pointing to a clear, immediate solution: remove co-payments for publicly funded home support services to help solve the shortage.

“Long-term care waitlists are not just a capacity problem — they are a policy problem,” said Jeff Moss, Executive Director at JSABC. “Many seniors could safely and successfully age at home if home support services were truly accessible. Co-payments create a financial barrier that pushes people prematurely into crisis and, ultimately, into long-term care. Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba and others offer serious solutions for seniors at home. Why doesn't BC?”

Home support services — including personal care, meal preparation, and assistance with daily tasks — are widely recognized as a cost-effective alternative to residential care. However, current co-payment requirements mean that many seniors either reduce services or decline them altogether, increasing health risks, caregiver burnout, and avoidable hospital and LTC admissions.

The coalition of seniors' organizations argues that eliminating co-payments would:

- Enable more seniors to remain safely at home longer
- Reduce demand for long-term care placements
- Alleviate pressure on hospitals and emergency services

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- Improve quality of life while lowering overall system costs

“With seniors waiting nearly a year for a long-term care bed, it is clear that building our way out of this crisis is not enough,” Moss stated. “We must invest in upstream solutions that work now — and home support is one of them.”

The Seniors Advocate report confirms that population aging is accelerating faster than infrastructure expansion. JSABC and its partners are calling on the provincial government to act decisively by removing financial barriers to home support and embedding aging-at-home strategies as a cornerstone of seniors’ care planning.

“Seniors overwhelmingly want to age at home,” said the coalition. “Removing home support co-payments is a practical, humane, and fiscally responsible step that would immediately relieve pressure on long-term care waitlists and better meet the needs of British Columbia’s older adults.”

About the Jewish Seniors Alliance of British Columbia

JSABC is a provincial organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for all BC seniors through advocacy, education, and community engagement. JSABC advances policies that promote dignity, inclusion, and aging in place for better health outcomes.

JSABC is working collaboratively with the following partners:

Lisa Dawson - Independent Long Term Care Councils of BC (ILTCCABC),
Leslie Gaudette - Council of Senior Citizens’ Organizations of BC (COSCOBC)
Barb MacLean - Family Caregivers of BC (FCBC)
Mary Polak, BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA)
Danny Birch - BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA), CEO - Hero Home Care
Cheryl Cameron - BC Health Coalition (BCHC)

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