

Continuing Care Standards

Fact Sheet – General Audience

Overview

On April 01, 2024, a new legislative framework came into effect for the continuing care sector in Alberta. This legislative framework includes the [Continuing Care Act](#) (the Act), new regulations and updated continuing care standards. As part of the new legislative framework, both the accommodation standards and the [Continuing Care Health Service Standards](#) have been updated.

Importance of Continuing Care Standards

Standards are an important part of Alberta's approach to quality assurance in continuing care. Requiring operators and providers to meet the expectations found within the standards (as applicable to the setting or service) helps to ensure that Albertans receive high quality continuing care health care services and accommodations and enables Albertans to have confidence and trust not only in their operator or provider but in the system as a whole. Standards are an integral part of ensuring quality of life and care for continuing care residents and clients.

Continuing Care Standards

The Government of Alberta sets provincial expectations for quality in continuing care through both accommodation and health service standards.

- The accommodation standards establish the minimum standards of accommodation services, such as meals, building maintenance, security, and housekeeping, social or leisure activities, and resident and family involvement to promote safety, security, and quality of life for clients and residents.
- The [Continuing Care Health Service Standards](#) (CCHSS) establish the minimum standards in the provision of high quality, individualized health care services, which are based on the assessed needs of each client and resident.

Changes to Standards

The updates that have been made to the standards for April 01, 2024 are mostly minor, with a small number of updates that may have moderate implications for some operators and providers.

The standards have been updated to:

- align with the new [Continuing Care Act](#) (the Act), the [Continuing Care Regulation](#) and the [Continuing Care \(Ministerial\) Regulation](#),
- improve the quality of life of residents and clients, including strengthening their opportunity for involvement in decisions that affect their lives,
- increase protection for residents and clients, including incorporating key learnings and recommendations from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A new naming convention was also established for accommodation standards to incorporate new continuing care setting terminology outlined in the legislative framework.

- [Accommodation Standards - Continuing Care Home](#) (AS-CCH), an update from the *Long-Term Care Accommodation Standards* (LTCAS)
- [Accommodation Standards – Supportive Living Accommodation](#) (AS-SLA), an update from the *Supportive Living Accommodation Standards* (SLAS).

The AS-CCH has two chapters. Chapter 1 is for type A continuing care homes (formerly nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals) and is an update from the LTCAS. Chapter 2 is for type B continuing care homes (formerly designated supportive living) and is an update from the SLAS.

Key Updates

The most significant of the updates is to the standards related to contingency planning in both the accommodation and health service standards. These updates include the requirement that contingency plans are routinely practiced and simulated, that operators collaborate with relevant other parties (relevant agencies, health service providers) during contingency planning, and ensure communication of contingency plans and updates during events to relevant stakeholders (such as residents, their representatives, and employees, etc.).

Also, as the *Resident Family and Councils (RFC) Act* is now repealed, content related to RFCs is now incorporated into the accommodation standards (and within the [Continuing Care Regulation](#) and the Act). The standard on resident and family involvement includes ongoing requirements that operators support RFCs and expands on requirements for the establishment of an alternative mechanism to support resident and family involvement for continuing care homes (types A and B) and supportive living accommodations where there are no active RFCs.

Application in Different Settings

Different standards may apply to different parts of a site, as multiple programs may all be located within the same building or campus. To understand which standards or other quality assurance mechanisms are applicable within a particular site, residents and families are encouraged to speak with the site operator. Additionally, operators are required to post the licence issued for the type of continuing care home or supportive living accommodation in a prominent place within the continuing care home or supportive living accommodation.

For continuing care homes:

- Type A continuing care homes (formerly nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals) must adhere to the CCHSS and AS-CCH (Chapter 1).
- Type B continuing care homes (formerly designated supportive living) must adhere to the CCHSS and AS-CCH (Chapter 2).
- Type C continuing care homes (publicly funded hospices) operators are not expected to adhere

to continuing care standards in the regulation. However, type C continuing care home operators will be expected to adhere to certain standards as part of their contractual agreements with the regional health authority as is current practice.

For home and community care:

- When the regional health authority provides home and community care (type 1), the regional health authority must adhere to the CCHSS.
- When there is an independent home and community care provider that has a contract with the regional health authority (type 2) for the provision of home and community care services (type 2), the provider must adhere to the CCHSS.
- For client directed care models (type 3), providers are not specifically required to adhere to the CCHSS. In this model of care, clients enter into an agreement directly with their chosen providers and, therefore, are responsible for holding providers accountable to agreed-upon provision of services.

For supportive living accommodations:

- All licensed supportive living accommodations are required to follow the AS-SLA.

The chart below shows the application of the CCHSS and accommodation standards to the different types of continuing care homes:

Compliance with Standards

The standards that must be followed by an operator or provider differ depending on the type of continuing care setting or the service provided. There are a small number of continuing care settings and services that are not required to adhere to standards due to variety of reasons, for example the nature of the services provided. However, other quality assurance mechanisms are in place for these settings, such as accreditation, contractual requirements, as well as regulatory expectations around duty to notify, complaints related to health, wellbeing, and safety, etc.

Alberta Health ensures that operators and providers of continuing care facilities and services are monitored for compliance to their required standards, as well as requirements in the [Continuing Care Act](#) and associated regulations. Inspectors from Alberta Health will monitor licensed supportive living accommodations, continuing care homes, and home and community care providers to verify their compliance to any applicable standards, as well as follow up on complaints relating to the standards.

Inspection Process

Once an operator has obtained a licence, they may be subject to inspections, investigations, and enforcement actions.

Alberta Health monitors and enforces compliance to the [Continuing Care Act](#), regulations, and standards. Inspectors undertake enforcement activities and work with the operator towards preventing contraventions. Inspectors consist of health compliance officers and licensing inspectors. Health compliance officers audit to the [Continuing Care Health Service Standards](#) and licensing inspectors inspect to the accommodation standards.

Inspection Results

In accordance with the [Continuing Care Regulation](#), all operators and providers of continuing care services must post the results of an inspection in a prominent place within the facility or in their offices. Operators and providers must also provide inspection results to residents or clients, or their legal representatives if requested. These results could also be shared through any Resident and Family Council (RFC) or the operator-coordinated mechanism (when an RFC does not exist), for awareness and discussion.

Information about the licensing and compliance status of continuing care homes and supportive living accommodations is posted publicly at: <https://standardsandlicensing.alberta.ca/>.

The public reporting site allows Albertans to search for an accommodation by the accommodation name, operator name, city, or postal code to find information about the facility's compliance history.

Concerns about a continuing care facility

If you have concerns about a continuing care facility or service provider not meeting a requirement in the standards, we encourage you to first speak with the operator or provider to discuss your concerns with them. If you find that your concerns are not appropriately addressed, then you are encouraged to report your concerns to the Continuing Care Licensing Office at CCLO@gov.ab.ca or 780-644-8428 (toll free at 310-0000).

For more information

Please contact the Continuing Care Licensing Office at:

Email: CCLO@gov.ab.ca

Call: 780-644-8428 (toll free at 310-0000).