



# Supportive Living Guide

August 2013



*Alberta*  Government



## What is Supportive Living?

Supportive living provides accommodation in a home-like setting, where people can remain as independent as possible while they have access to accommodation and services that meet their changing needs.

Supportive living serves the needs of a wide range of individuals. Residents in a supportive living setting can range from seniors who require support services due to age, chronic conditions and frailty to young adults with mental health or physical disabilities.

Supportive living settings vary by size, appearance and types of services provided. Supportive living includes many different types of settings, such as (but not limited to) seniors lodges, group homes, mental health and designated supportive living accommodations. These settings can be operated by private for-profit, private not-for-profit or public operators.

Under the *Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act*, all supportive living accommodations must be licensed when the operator provides permanent accommodation to four or more adults and the operator provides or arranges for services related to safety and security of the residents, and provides at least one meal a day or housekeeping services. Safety and security services can differ in how they are provided from accommodation to accommodation, but are required to occur at least once a day. Examples of safety and security services can include having 24-hour staffing, operators using phone call reminders at meal times, and sign-in/sign-out books in a lobby.

Currently, there are 27,000 supportive living residents in more than 700 licensed supportive living settings in Alberta. As new spaces or settings open, current information can be found at [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca).

## Roles and Responsibilities

*In the rapidly growing supportive living sector, residents, family, friends, supportive living operators and government each have specific roles and responsibilities.*

### Residents, Family and Friends

Residents and their family or friends are responsible for choosing appropriate settings that meets their current and future needs. When making a decision on a future residence, there are a number of factors that need to be carefully considered. It is important to consider the location of the potential setting and what services and amenities the resident will require, as well as the costs of obtaining those services and amenities.

This information can be obtained in a number of ways such as meeting with the facility operator, touring the setting, talking to residents and comparing facility inspection reports through the Alberta government's public reporting website at [www.asalreporting.gov.ab.ca/astral](http://www.asalreporting.gov.ab.ca/astral).

Residents pay an accommodation fee for living in a supportive living setting. Accommodation fees cover services such as meals, room and housekeeping. The accommodation fee varies by accommodation type and the services or amenities that are available to the resident.

Under the provincial Supportive Living Accommodation Standards, the residential services agreement must include information on the basic accommodation fee and service charges. It is the resident's responsibility to understand what the accommodation fees are, what they include and what (if any) costs there are for additional or optional services.

The provincial and federal governments provide income support programs to assist low-to-moderate income residents. Additional information on these programs is available by calling Alberta Supports toll free at **1-877-644-9992** (in Edmonton dial **780-644-9992**) or by going to [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca).

## Supportive Living Operators

Supportive living operators are responsible for complying with provincial legislation, including the *Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act* and Regulations as well as provincial accommodation standards. These help ensure that all residents have access to quality accommodations and services that enhance their safety, security and quality of life.

An operator or home care agency that provides publicly funded health and personal care services is also responsible for complying with the Continuing Care Health Service Standards. Other applicable legislation, regulations, bylaws and rules established by municipalities and the federal and provincial governments must also be adhered to.

Supportive Living operators are required where requested to provide potential and current residents with information on the accommodation, including the eligibility requirements.

Eligibility requirements can include the physical ability of the individual (e.g., are they able to get to and from the dining room on their own, or do they require assistance?) and their ability to afford the accommodation either with or without government assistance. Operators are also required to identify when the accommodation can no longer meet the needs of the resident. For example, in a supportive living accommodation, the time may come when residents require a higher level of care and the accommodation does not have the appropriate trained staff on site. This can also occur when a resident exhibits behaviours that are unsafe for themselves, other residents or staff.

## Provincial Government

### *Accommodation Standards*

The Alberta government sets provincial accommodation standards for supportive living, and monitors compliance to those standards through annual site inspections. The standards help to ensure that supportive living settings and the services provided in those settings promote residents' safety, security and quality of life.

All licensed supportive living settings, such as seniors lodges, group homes and designated supportive living accommodations are inspected at least once a year to ensure that they are fully compliant with provincial accommodation standards. Provincial accommodation standards apply to accommodations and related services such as meals, housekeeping, facility maintenance and areas that impact a resident's safety and security.

The province has the authority to investigate complaints of non-compliance with the legislation, and has a number of enforcement mechanisms that it can employ in situations where an operator continually fails to meet accommodation standards or if the residents are in danger.

The government investigates all complaints regarding the accommodation standards and posts the verified complaints on the public reporting website [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca). If you have a concern with an accommodation, accommodation services or a concern about abuse or the safety of a resident in a licensed supportive living accommodation, call **1-888-357-9339**.

More information on the Supportive Living Accommodation Standards is available at [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca).

### *Continuing Care Health Services Standards*

The Alberta government also sets standards for publicly funded continuing care health services, and monitors providers to ensure they provide quality continuing care health services that take into consideration the individual needs, preferences and abilities of each resident.

For more information on the Continuing Care Health Service Standards please visit [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca).

### *Protection for Persons in Care Act*

The Alberta government takes the safety and security of vulnerable adults very seriously. The *Protection for Persons in Care Act* is a key piece of legislation that promotes the safety and well-being of adult Albertans who receive care or support services from publicly funded service providers.

Under this legislation, the province investigates suspected abuse of adults receiving government funded care services, and all suspected incidents of abuse must be reported and investigated.

If you have a concern about abuse or the safety of adults in publicly funded care facilities, call the Protection for Persons in Care reporting line at **1-877-357-9339**.

### *Increasing Access and Supply*

In support of the province's *Continuing Care Strategy* (<http://www.health.alberta.ca/initiatives/continuing-care-strategy.html>) the Province provides capital grant funding to assist operators to develop new affordable supportive living spaces and operating grants to seniors lodges to keep the rental rate affordable for eligible lower-income residents.

Government also provides income and health-related supports to eligible low-income Albertans through a variety of programs. For information on these programs contact Alberta Supports at **1-877-644-9992 (in Edmonton dial 780-644-9992)** or visit [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca).

## **Alberta Health Services**

Alberta Health Services (AHS) is responsible for the delivery of publicly funded continuing care health services to Albertans. AHS provides publicly funded continuing care health and support services to residents in supportive living settings through the AHS Home Care program, or in designated supportive living settings.

## Access to Supportive Living

Each supportive living setting is different and not all settings can meet the accommodation and service needs of a resident. The operator determines the eligibility criteria for residents and it is up to each individual to find out if a specific setting will meet their needs. It is important to identify what type of accommodations and services are provided and the costs for the delivery of those services.

As a resident ages or their needs change, additional accommodation, health and personal care services may be needed to allow them to remain as independent as possible. Publicly funded health and personal care can be provided to individuals in supportive living settings through the AHS Home Care program or in supportive living settings that have a contract with AHS to provide these additional services.

To receive services through the AHS Home Care program or to gain admission into supportive living settings that have a contract with AHS for additional health and personal care services (designated supportive living), individuals must be assessed by an AHS home care case manager to determine their unmet health needs. In addition to publicly funded health and personal care services through the AHS Home Care program, Albertans can access privately purchased services in their home or supportive living setting.

For more information on publicly funded health and personal care services available in supportive living settings, please visit [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca) or call HEALTHLink Alberta at **1-866-408-5465**.



## Supportive Living Costs

In a supportive living setting, residents are responsible for paying for their accommodation costs such as room, meals, housekeeping and any optional services that may be offered by the supportive living operator. Additional accommodation services that may be included in the basic package or are available for an extra fee to the resident can include personal choice services such as hairdressing, personal laundry and nail services.

Supportive living operators determine the service packages that are available and costs for those packages or additional services that can be purchased. Residents are encouraged to meet with the supportive living operator and have a clear understanding of accommodation fees, services, and costs before they sign a residency agreement and move into an accommodation.

It is advisable to consult with a financial planner or other qualified advisor to help you determine what accommodation you can afford.

Individuals do not pay for publicly funded health and personal care services provided through the AHS Home Care program or in a designated supportive living space, based on their assessed unmet need. They are, however, responsible for arranging and paying for any additional services that they choose.

Seniors lodges are governed under provincial legislation that protects low-to-moderate income seniors by ensuring that operators can only charge an accommodation rate that leaves senior residents with at least \$265 a month for their personal expenses. Affordable supportive living spaces that were funded in part with capital grant dollars from the province cannot charge residents more than the equivalent of what the maximum accommodation fees are for a private room in a long-term care facility. Maximum long-term care accommodation fee information can be found at [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca)

## Finding a Supportive Living Accommodation

There are many different types of supportive living settings that support various types of residents and their needs. It is important to visit a number of settings to find a setting that best meets the needs of the future resident. Individuals can contact facility operators and request information about the services provided, fees and to request a tour of the setting.

Many organizations that support seniors and persons with disabilities have lists of different supportive living options or resources that can help individuals find an option that best meets their needs.

For information on supportive living options please contact:

### **Alberta**

The Alberta government's public reporting website ([www.asalreporting.gov.ab.ca/astral](http://www.asalreporting.gov.ab.ca/astral)) provides information on all licensed supportive living settings in the province. This includes the locations, contacts, and Supportive Living Accommodation Standards compliance information, including information on any verified complaints against accommodation standards in that setting.

The Alberta Senior Citizens' Housing Association (ASCHA) at [www.ascha.com](http://www.ascha.com).

### **Edmonton area**

The Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE) at **780-423-5510** or [www.mysage.ca](http://www.mysage.ca).

### **Calgary area**

The Kerby Centre at **403-265-0661** or [www.kerbycentre.com](http://www.kerbycentre.com).

### **Red Deer area**

The Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre at **403-343-6074** or [www.goldencircle.ca](http://www.goldencircle.ca).

When looking for an appropriate accommodation option, one needs to take a number of factors into consideration. Some questions to ask:

- Is it in a neighbourhood that you are familiar with or is it close to transportation and services?
- What is the approach to care that is provided in the setting?
- Does their approach match with what you expect or need from the setting?
- Is the setting able to support your religious or spiritual needs, as well as any food, cultural and language needs?
- Are there any other unique personal preferences that you may have such as a pet, physical activities, internet access or social interaction opportunities?

## Definitions and Acronyms

### Operators

A person or organization that provides supportive living accommodation.

For-profit settings are owned by an individual or corporation and run for profit. Not-for-profit facilities are owned and operated by a religious organization or voluntary, non-governmental and non-religious bodies. Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Government of Alberta can also be operators.

### Designated Supportive Living

Designated Supportive Living (DSL) is where AHS controls access to a specific number of spaces according to an agreement between AHS and the operator.

DSL settings are a community-based living option where 24-hour on-site (scheduled and unscheduled) personal care and support services are provided by Health Care Aides. In some DSL settings, personal care and support services are provided by 24-hour on-site Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care

### Seniors Lodges

Seniors Lodges are supportive living settings operated under the *Alberta Housing Act*, which are designed to provide room and board for seniors who are functionally independent with or without the assistance of community-based services.

## Health and Personal Care Service Terms

### Assessed Unmet Need

Care requirements that remain after the abilities and existing supports of the client, family and of the community have been considered in relation to the identified areas of need on assessment.

The assessment includes the client's ability to learn the skills necessary for self-care and the willingness, ability and availability of the family and community to participate or learn.

<b>Case Management</b>	Process to manage the provision and coordination of care across the continuum and to balance potential client outcomes with effective use of available resources.
<b>Continuing Care Health Service Standards</b>	<p>Provincial standards for the provision of quality continuing care health services that take into consideration the individual needs, preferences and abilities of each client. The standards provide direction to establish policies and processes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordinate and integrate health care services within and across the health care system;</li><li>• Facilitate access to and continuing across the continuum of care;</li><li>• Ensure that clients are assisted to access appropriate services within the community; and</li><li>• Ensure that clients have access to system-wide case management services as appropriate.</li></ul>
<b>Alberta Health Services Home Care Program</b>	Publicly funded health care and support services provided to eligible clients as governed by the Coordinated Home Care Program Regulation of the <i>Public Health Act</i> . These services are provided to individuals with frailty, disability, acute or chronic conditions living at home or in a supportive living setting.
<b>Publicly Funded Health Service</b>	Any health service funded by or through Alberta Health and Wellness.

## Supportive Living Guide

### Continuing Care Branch

Alberta Health  
4th Floor, Standard Life Centre  
10405 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4R7

Phone: 780-638-4495  
To call toll-free, first dial 310-0000

For inquiries regarding Supportive Living contact

### Alberta Supports Contact Centre:

Edmonton Area: 780-644-9992  
Toll-free in Alberta 1-877-644-9222

[www.health.alberta.ca/services/continuing-care.html](http://www.health.alberta.ca/services/continuing-care.html)

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