

# Being There for Seniors: Our Progress in Long-Term Care



*Part I of implementing  
Be independent. Longer.  
New Brunswick's  
long-term care strategy*

*September 2009*

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## **Table of Contents**

Message from the Minister of State for Seniors .....	1
Keeping seniors well and involved .....	3
Offering seniors' forums.....	4
Releasing new seniors' guide .....	5
Providing community resource centres .....	5
Improving community partnerships.....	6
Providing choices for seniors .....	6
Keeping seniors at home.....	7
Providing day-activity centres .....	7
Offering home support .....	8
Providing affordable housing .....	11
Providing home renovations.....	12
Helping with home heating .....	13
Providing emergency home repairs .....	13
Helping seniors who need more support: special-care homes .....	14
Helping seniors who need more support: nursing homes .....	17
Helping seniors waiting in hospital .....	18
Renewing the nursing home sector .....	20
Adopting new legislation for nursing homes .....	23
Focusing on innovation .....	24
Delivering innovation in service delivery .....	24
Making overall improvements and investments .....	25
Providing pay equity in long-term care .....	25
Providing low-income seniors benefit.....	26
Planning and being accountable .....	26
Setting benchmarks for success .....	27
Looking to the future .....	28



## Message from the Minister of State for Seniors



New Brunswick's seniors have made the province the place where we all can belong and be better. Their contributions have made New Brunswick the place we are proud to call home. They fought world wars, raised families, built communities, and carved out the culture and quality of life we enjoy today. New Brunswick's seniors deserve respect, and they deserve to have access to the right services at the right time, in the right place, when they need them, in the official language of their choice.

Of the 113,600 seniors in New Brunswick, about 85 per cent live independently without long-term services from the provincial government. The vast majority of remain independent, active, and on the move. This is a testament to their way of life, their resourcefulness as individuals, and their desire to be self-sufficient.

Most New Brunswick seniors are involved, energetic, and enthusiastic. They continue to contribute to the vitality of their communities. They have a strong voice through the New Brunswick Senior Citizens Federation and the Association acadienne et francophone des aînées et aînés du Nouveau-Brunswick. Many are involved in seniors clubs, volunteer, and community work. About four per cent are still employed after the age of 65.

The senior population in New Brunswick is expected to double in 20 years. This will put increasing demands on the province's long-term care system. This is why New Brunswick needs a long-term strategy. And this, in turn, is what prompted the provincial government to release in 2008 a strategy entitled, *Be independent. Longer*. This strategy builds on the foundation of health and wellness promotion, support for families, and assistance to help seniors live independently for as long as possible.

The provincial government's strategy and progress in long-term care is evidence of its ongoing commitment to seniors and of its preparation for the demographic challenges that lie ahead. By taking action now, the provincial government will be able to ensure seniors remain independent

longer and that high-quality, long-term care services remain available in New Brunswick.

New Brunswick will be the place to be at any age.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Kenny". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Honourable Brian Kenny

## **Keeping seniors well and involved**

The Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat was established to co-ordinate the implementation of the long-term care strategy. A key element is to encourage seniors to be healthy, active, and independent for as long as possible so that the demand for support services or nursing home beds does not become unmanageable and financially unsustainable. At the same time, seniors who take charge of their health enjoy an improved quality of life. They are happier and healthier and able to contribute to their families, their communities, their independence, and well-being.

Wellness and active living can be accomplished because seniors want to be independent. They want to live at home for as long as possible and to be busy and involved in family life and in their communities. They are ready to collaborate with the provincial government to make healthy aging a priority. Many seniors are already setting an example for what wellness and active living can do for better health and longevity. They are setting examples among their peers and for younger New Brunswickers.

The goals of the provincial government for wellness and active living include:

- encouraging seniors at risk of not being active and not taking care of their health to join the majority who do;
- providing help and information for seniors to know the facts about nutrition, exercise and disease prevention;
- promoting a holistic point of view that wellness incorporates mind, body and spirit;
- encouraging more seniors to get involved in social clubs, schools, and community

organizations where they can volunteer, share their knowledge and wisdom, establish social contacts, make new friends, and find companionship;

- working with communities and municipalities to ensure seniors are able to move and travel safely about their community;
- promoting seniors contributions to society; and
- ensuring seniors are treated with dignity and respect.

## **Offering seniors' forums**

Talking about seniors' issues creates public awareness and brings New Brunswickers together to share information on ways to improve services and programs for them.

In February 2009, the Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat organized a seniors' forum on wellness and active living. Thirteen provincial organizations took part, providing valuable input to help the provincial government move forward with its plan to help seniors remain healthy, active, and socially involved. Information from this forum is being shared with stakeholders so that the wellness and active living message may be shared provincewide. More forums of this kind are planned.

In April 2009, the Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat, in partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada, held a forum on healthy aging and age-friendly communities. It attracted representatives from communities as well as stakeholders and government officials. The goal was to promote better, healthier, and safer places for seniors in which to live. It recognized

Canada's aging population and the importance of creating age-friendly communities that support the interests of seniors. Topics of discussion included accessible public and private transportation, hazard-free streets and buildings, and opportunities for seniors to participate in civic, cultural, educational, and voluntary activities.

### **Releasing new seniors' guide**

The Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat produced a new provincial seniors' guide in May 2009. It was published in both official languages and gives seniors up-to-date information on federal and provincial programs and services available in New Brunswick. It is user-friendly and is available from the Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat office in Fredericton and regional offices of the Department of Social Development. It is also online, [www.gnb.ca/seniors](http://www.gnb.ca/seniors).

### **Providing community resource centres**

Community resource centres are being developed for seniors. They provide access to information on: healthy lifestyles; illness prevention; disease management; and program eligibility. They also provide services such as foot-care clinics, blood-pressure clinics, and care-giving workshops. Discussions are ongoing with non-profit organizations to establish community resource centres. The Department of Social Development provides funding for the establishment of the centres. For example, the Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat invested \$30,000 in 2008-09 to expand services offered by a community resource centre in Moncton.

## **Improving community partnerships**

The provincial government supports building and improving partnerships with community-based organizations that serve seniors. Through strategic investments, more respite, telephone reassurance, and friendly visiting services will be provided to seniors. These services are being developed in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross Society, the New Brunswick Senior Citizens Federation, and L'Association acadienne et francophone des aînées et des aînés du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Go Ahead Seniors/Aînés en Marche will organize 72 healthy lifestyle days this year. Seniors and their caregivers will be able to receive information about living independently longer through active living, wellness, and disease prevention. There will also be opportunities for seniors to have their blood pressure, blood sugar, or cholesterol levels checked by a health-care professional.

L'Association acadienne et francophone des aînées et des aînés du Nouveau-Brunswick will collaborate with the provincial government to improve seniors' services. It will run 20 sessions on healthy lifestyles this year.

## **Providing choices for seniors**

Today's seniors have told the provincial government they want choices if and when they decide they need more support. They want their care to be accessible, affordable, and co-ordinated. Home support, supportive housing, special-care homes, and nursing home services are available. The long-term care industry – including the services delivered – is being transformed because seniors are looking for more choices and because their numbers are growing.

The departments of Social Development and Health work in partnership to deliver long-term-care services. Assessments for long-term care and case management services are offered in partnership with the Extra-Mural Program and Mental Health Services. Private service providers offer home and community support services to eligible long-term care clients. Services are available in the official language of the client's choice.

### **Keeping seniors at home**

Seniors have told the provincial government that they want to be at home for as long as possible. They want to be independent and socially involved. They are healthier and happier when able to continue with their everyday lives and contribute to their families and their communities. The Department of Social Development and the Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat are leading the cause for seniors in this regard by making sure support is available for the those wishing to continue living at home and in their communities.

### **Providing day-activity centres**

Day-activity centres help families keep their seniors at home and in their communities by providing daytime accommodations and activities while family caregivers attend work, personal appointments, or do errands. Sixteen day-activity centres are in operation; they are located in the Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, and Miramichi regions and on the Acadian Peninsula. More are expected to open in Bathurst, Edmundston, and Campbellton. The centres are operated by community organizations; alternatively, they are privately owned. The centres set their rates. The provincial government

subsidizes the service by covering a portion of the cost per seat. Costs for transportation to and from the centres are usually the responsibility of the participant receiving in-home support services or the primary provider for clients in an alternate family living arrangement. The provincial government may provide financial assistance if transportation costs are too much for a given client. The most economical means of transportation is preferred.

## **Offering home support**

Home support is an important element in the provincial government's long-term care strategy. Many seniors are staying in their homes longer than before. They prefer to remain in their homes with help from home support workers when they need it. About 4,500 seniors use this program.

In-home support services consist of assistance with personal care needs such as help with dressing, bathing, and grooming; assistance with housekeeping, which may include cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, and respite care. These services are provided largely through third-party contracts with home support agencies.

Investments in home support total more than \$95 million per year. Seniors living alone as well as those living with family caregivers may take advantage of the program. For example, respite services are available for family caregivers who may be absent for a period. Home support workers can provide this service when family caregivers work outside the home or need additional support in the home. These services can include personal care for the senior, housekeeping, and meal preparation. The Department of Social Development carries out needs and income-assessments for home support services.

The client may be required to pay for a part of the service, depending on the income of the household.

To recruit and retain home support workers, the provincial government has increased their wages by 12.5 per cent since 2006. The maximum hours of home support has increased to 336 hours per month.

About 4.3 million hours are requisitioned each year from home support agencies to provide support for seniors in New Brunswick. The provincial government also subsidizes Meals on Wheels to complement home support services. A total of \$1.8 million was provided for these services in 2008-09.

Under the Extra-Mural Program, some persons can receive short-term care of up to 30 days of home support services to prevent unnecessary hospitalization and to allow them to return home while waiting for a long-term care assessment. Without this service, some seniors would remain in hospital because they have not been assessed for services and because they would not have access to support services upon returning home.

Eligible tenants living in supportive housing arrangements for seniors may receive up to 14 hours per week of personal care services under the Department of Social Development's long-term care program. This option offers seniors a combination of personal freedom in private accommodations and assistance with personal care as needed.

The provincial government recognizes home support is a priority for seniors and that this is instrumental for the sustainability of the long-term care system.

Recruitment and retention of home support workers is therefore important. Effective April 1, 2009, the hourly rate paid to home support agencies increased to \$14.26 from \$13.61. All of this increase goes directly to the workers in wages and benefits as part of a \$2.2 million investment in home support in 2009-10. As a result, the wages and benefits portion of the hourly rate should be about \$12 per hour.

The New Brunswick Home Support Association, the Departments of Social Development and Post Secondary Education, Training and Labour have created working groups to develop solutions related to education, training, recruitment, compensation, and benefits for home support workers. Guided by a steering committee and supported by \$100,000 in provincial funding, these groups are developing long-term sustainable solutions for home care. One of the goals is to have the salary paid to home support workers linked to the achievement of minimum training requirements as set out by the Department of Social Development and the New Brunswick Home Support Association.

By linking future wage increases to training, salaries will better reflect experience and skills of workers and more and better trained staff will be available to provide home support services. This training will be tailored to meeting the level of personal care required based on the assessed needs of senior clients.

Seniors and their home support workers spend a great deal of time together. They must be compatible in their working relationship and be able to work together safely. Depending on the mobility of the senior, home support workers may face some physical challenges on the job. To help agencies with finding the proper match between worker and client, the provincial government

*A national survey suggests 70 per cent of older Canadians have some kind of mobility or health issue that affects their quality of life.*

is providing funding for agencies to conduct an initial two-hour assessment of the home environment prior to assigning a worker. Funding for this assessment became effective May 1, 2009, and it will total \$25,500 per year. The establishment of this process will provide for better quality and continuity of care as workers are placed in home situations better suited to their physical capabilities and the clients' needs. It is being well-received by agencies.

Many seniors requiring home support live in isolated parts of the province. This makes it difficult to deliver home support services to them; workers must often travel long distances. The increasing costs of gasoline and automobile insurance have made it increasingly difficult for home support agencies to provide mileage to their employees.

Effective Oct. 1, 2009, the provincial government will increase the transportation allowance to home support workers to four per cent from three per cent (based on hours worked) in urban areas and to five per cent from four per cent (based on hours worked) in rural areas. These increases will represent a \$240,000 investment in home support, and they will be the first travel allowance increases granted since 2005.

## **Providing affordable housing**

The provincial government invests in affordable housing opportunities for independent, low-income seniors who do not own their own homes. Support is provided in the form of subsidized rental accommodations in public housing units, non-profit housing units, and privately-owned affordable housing units.

Most low-income tenants living in these facilities have their rents reduced to 30 per cent of adjusted household income. Eligibility for government-assisted housing is based on household income and housing needs.

The Department of Social Development provides housing subsidies for about 6,250 senior households, and this number is increasing. For example, under the province's Affordable Rental Housing Program, about 250 senior units have been built since 2006.

In May 2009, the federal and provincial governments signed a renewed Canada-New Brunswick Affordable Housing Program Agreement and an extension of the Housing Renovation Program Agreement.

Under the agreement, the two governments will make a joint investment of \$99 million to build homes and renovate existing affordable housing. The federal contribution is \$53 million, while the provincial contribution is \$46 million. These investments will help low-income households, seniors and families get access to safe, secure affordable housing in New Brunswick.

## **Providing home renovations**

Supportive housing programs are also available to help low-income seniors renovate their home or rental accommodations to improve accessibility.

Forgivable loans are provided and range from \$3,500 to \$10,000, depending on the program, the type of accommodation, and the modifications required. Programs helping disabled seniors with accessibility include the Rental Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, the Federal Provincial Repair Program, and the Home Adaptations for Seniors Independence Program.

Seniors may also be eligible for the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program for low-income households to help with home upgrades to reduce energy costs. Assistance for homeowners may either be a grant or a repayable loan. Owners of residential rental properties are also eligible for a grant. The amount of grant assistance varies by type of structure. An energy evaluation is required for all applicants. For homeowners, a grant is available up to \$4,500. The maximum grant for rental accommodations is \$1,500 per unit. Landlords are not permitted to increase rents as a result of energy upgrades. Since 2007, the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program has been expanded to include an additional 1,500 households.

### **Helping with home heating**

The Department of Social Development offers a heating allowance for seniors living in subsidized housing and not having their heating costs included in their rent.

Assistance varies depending on needs of the household and the type of unit occupied. The average heating allowance for a senior household, one-bedroom unit is \$83 per month.

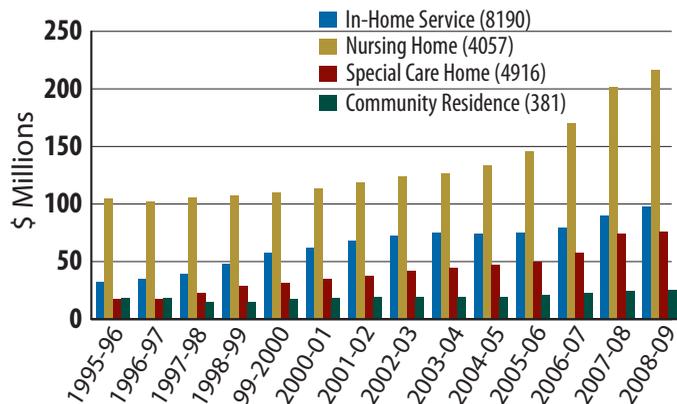
The Department of Social Development also offers an emergency fuel benefit to low-income New Brunswickers. The department provides help on a case-by-case basis to a client or applicant experiencing an emergency as it relates to heating costs. The benefit may be up to \$550 per year.

### **Providing emergency home repairs**

The Department of Social Development provides additional assistance for health and safety upgrades

to a home or rental property. The Federal Provincial Repair Program provides financial help to low-income homeowners occupying substandard housing to repair, rehabilitate, or improve their dwellings to a minimum level of health and safety. Assistance is a loan, a portion of which may be forgiven. The Emergency Repair Program offers a grant to homeowners for health and safety upgrades. Repairs under this program are limited to upgrades required to render housing fit for human habitation.

## Long Term Care Expenditures



### Helping seniors who need more support: special-care homes

Special-care homes play an important role in making sure seniors have options, support, and care when they need it. Each year, about \$76 million is invested in special-care home services. The provincial government's investments in special-care home services have increased by

\$25 million since 2006, due in part to increases in subsidies for residents and to an increase in the total number of residents.

Special-care homes are privately owned and operated. The Department of Social Development licenses them and inspects them each year. A total of 4,575 persons, most of them seniors, live in 430 special-care homes. They may apply for financial assistance to cover some of the costs for their care. For clients in special care homes, the maximum amount of assistance increased to \$74 per day in 2007 from \$28.87 per day in 1997, an increase of 156.3 per cent. Special-care home operators may apply for a residential supplement of \$16 per day for residents waiting for nursing home placement.

The Department of Social Development has increased the comfort and clothing allowance by five per cent to \$135 per month to help seniors pay for personal items, clothing, and some medications not covered by the New Brunswick Prescription Drug Program.

Special-care homes provide services to seniors who require low to moderate levels of care referred to as Level 1 and Level 2 care.

**Level 1:** clients are generally mobile but require the availability of supervision on a 24-hour basis related to their personal care. They do not need full-time nursing care.

**Level 2:** clients may require some help or supervision with mobility. They need more individualized help or supervision on a 24-hour basis with personal care and their activities of daily living. They do not need full-time nursing care.

Since 2007, 90 new enhanced special-care home beds have been approved, and 64 existing special-care home beds have been converted to admit clients with Alzheimer's and dementia, known as Level 3B residents. The enhanced special-care home beds help reduce waiting lists in nursing homes. Level 3B clients do not require full-time nursing care. They are medically stable, but they require additional supervision and help due to a physical frailty or dementia. It is expected that, as demand increases, more of these enhanced beds will become available as part of newly constructed facilities.

At the same time, another 11 emergency-care beds in special-care homes have been approved for short-term stays for adults whose care providers are not immediately available due to a crisis.

Some special-care home operators offer independent living and room and board services. Under provincial standards, these services must be provided as distinct and separate operations. The provincial government does not fund independent living, and room, and board; they are privately paid. These accommodations offer independent seniors another choice for their living arrangements.

As the population ages, seniors are looking for more options about how they want to live and where they want to live. Some service providers offer a range of care by operating different facilities on the same site, ranging from independent living accommodations to residential facilities providing enhanced care and supervision. This arrangement usually allows seniors to remain in the same place to obtain increasing levels of support as their condition changes.

## **Helping seniors who need more support: nursing homes**

Nursing homes in New Brunswick are independently owned by non-profit organizations. They are operated by volunteer boards of directors and professional administrators. New Brunswick has 62 nursing homes serving about 4,000 residents.

Policies are in place to ensure that eligible seniors may obtain nursing home services in the official language of their choice. This consideration will continue to be one of the key factors in future approvals for more nursing home beds.

The provincial government funds 85 per cent of the operating costs of nursing homes and maintains oversight of the nursing home industry under the *Nursing Homes Act*.

The provincial government either fully or partially subsidizes most nursing home residents. The cost of nursing of care per resident is about \$5,000 per month. The provincial government invests more than \$220 million in nursing home services alone each year.

Nursing homes in New Brunswick provide a high-level of care, including full-time nursing care, to the most fragile seniors.

Since 2006, the hours of care in nursing homes have increased to 3.1 hours from 2.85 hours per day per resident. As a result, 283 new staff have been hired to support resident care in nursing homes at a cost of \$12 million. The provincial government has made a commitment to implement 3.5 hours of care per day per resident within its mandate, and it plans to do this in a fiscally prudent way.

The provincial government has increased the comfort and clothing allowance by five per cent to \$108 per month to help nursing home residents pay for personal items, clothing, and some medications not covered by the New Brunswick Prescription Drug Program.

The high level of care offered in nursing homes is referred to as Level 3 and 4 and includes full-time nursing care.

**Level 3:** clients have a medically stable physical or mental health condition or functional limitation. They need help and supervision on a 24-hour basis. These residents need a great deal of help with personal care and often need medical attention.

**Level 4:** clients have difficulties with cognition and /or behaviour, requiring supervision and care on a 24-hour basis. Clients may display aggressive behaviour toward themselves or others. Most often, they need maximum assistance with their personal care and activities of daily living. Often they also require medical care.

Due to rising costs, the provincial government announced an increase in the maximum daily rate for room and board for nursing home residents to a maximum of \$83 per day, effective May 1, 2009, from \$70 per day. The vast majority of nursing home residents will not be affected by this decision. The rate change will only affect a small percentage of residents who have enough income to pay more for their nursing home care. Financial assistance will be available to those who need it, as has always been the case.

## **Helping seniors waiting in hospital**

Many seniors still continue to wait in hospital for nursing home beds. Most of them need Level 3 or 4 care. Based

*The Canadian Institute for Health Information reports this situation accounts for 1.7 million hospital days per year in Canada.*

on the provincial government's current resources and the nursing home bed vacancies available, greater efforts are being made to help with their transition to a long-term care facility.

The Departments of Social Development and Health are accelerating the pace of completing long-term care assessments. They are working to refine the process to make it less complex for seniors to deal with and more in tune with their needs, whether they are waiting to enter a long-term care facility or applying for services at home. Improvements to the long-term care assessment process will be in place later in 2009. The improvements will allow for more collaboration and will provide for a streamlined process among the two departments to ensure seniors receive the services best suited to their individual needs.

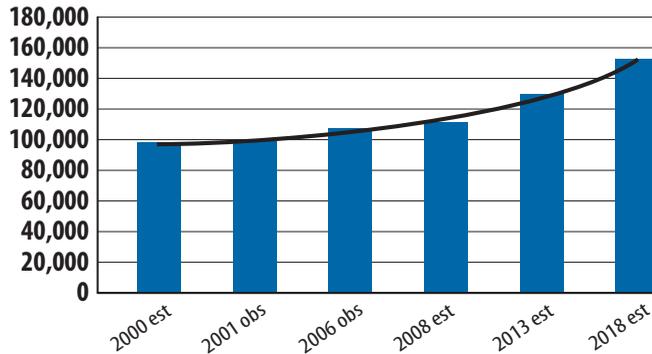
The Department of Health is working to reduce unnecessary hospital admissions. Families and doctors are being asked to work with government departments to see if some seniors can move to a special care home or get more support in their own home.

Seniors waiting in hospital is a challenging situation for New Brunswick and other provinces. In 2008-09, 500 to 600 New Brunswick seniors waited for a nursing home bed, and 80 per cent of them waited in a hospital. Lengthy hospital stays of this nature are occurring in every province.

New Brunswick is no exception to the phenomena of an aging population, so it remains committed to making sure seniors get the care they need. The Department of Social Development wants to make innovative partnerships to provide services, reduce waiting lists, and meet the demands on the long-term care system. At the same time, the department is using its long-term care strategies and policies to contain costs as much as possible.

## Our aging population

New Brunswick Population 65+ Years 2000 to 2018



Population figures are observed (obs.) or estimated (est.).

### Renewing the nursing home sector

With the demand for nursing home beds on the increase, the provincial government undertook an in-depth analysis of the province's nursing home infrastructure to develop a multi-year capital renewal renovation and replacement plan.

As the population ages, capital work is needed to improve nursing home infrastructure and create new beds.

As construction projects are undertaken, new beds have opened and continue to open in several new and existing nursing homes:

- 75 beds have been created at the Kingsway Care Centre in Saint John, a \$15.7 investment;
- 28 beds have added at Drew Nursing Home in Sackville, a \$1 million investment;
- Villa Beauséjour in Caraquet opened six beds in 2008 and will open 18 more in 2010, a \$21 million investment;

- York Manor in Fredericton opened six beds in October 2007 and will open 10 more in 2010 under Phase II, a \$23.3 million investment; and
- 20 beds will open in 2010 at the new Villa Sormany in Robertville, a \$17.4 million investment.

Nursing home replacements and /or renovations have taken place at the following facilities:

- Résidences Mgr-Chiasson in Shippagan, a \$15.6 million investment;
- Wauklehegan Manor in McAdam, a \$6.9 million investment;
- York Manor in Fredericton as part of Phase I, a \$12.6 million investment;
- a new nursing home is under construction in Grand Falls with an expected opening in 2010, a \$20 million investment; and
- a new Rexton Lions Nursing Home is under construction, a \$9.2 million investment.

Planning and development are underway for two other new nursing homes:

- Forest Dale in Riverside Albert, with 10 new beds in 2010, an \$11.5 million investment when complete; and
- Villa Saint-Joseph in Tracadie-Sheila, with 10 new beds in 2010, a \$17 million investment when complete.

When complete, investments in nursing homes will have totalled \$167 million since 2007.

As previously noted, a new capital renewal renovation and replacement plan is being developed for 53 of the province's 62 non-profit nursing homes. This plan includes the establishment of a design and construction management model that will realize substantial savings in design and building costs while also setting the standard for all new nursing home projects managed by the Department of Social Development. The Department of Supply and Services will provide advice and support. The result will be new and modern nursing home infrastructure that is affordable and of good quality.

The capital renewal renovation and replacement plan is critical to the future of long-term care in New Brunswick because of the province's aging population and the age of existing nursing home infrastructure.

New Brunswickers are living longer. Those entering nursing homes have greater needs than in the past. Increasingly, long-term care facilities must accommodate residents with severe cognitive and physical frailties who require a special focus on the physical environment for quality of life.

Modern standards for long-term care call for more spacious facilities, improved quality of space, and more privacy and personal space for residents. The capital renewal and replacement plan must, therefore, reflect the province's demographic trends, the need for more long-term care resources of increased quality, as well as modern design, space, and safety standards for nursing homes.

## **Adopting new legislation for nursing homes**

In March 2009, the provincial government introduced *the Essential Services in Nursing Homes Act*. The legislation designates nursing home workers as providers of essential services. It was passed in the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick shortly after being introduced.

The legislation means seniors in nursing homes will be safe, protected, and cared for consistently, despite any job action that may occur by unionized workers. The legislation is a relief to seniors and their families and for those who manage and operate the province's nursing homes. If a strike occurs in the nursing home sector, a reasonable number of workers will be required to remain on the job to deliver an acceptable level of support and services.

The act applies to operators of nursing homes as the employers and to unionized nursing home employees, with the exception of registered nurses. The act provides a process for employers and employees, with the assistance of the Labour and Employment Board, to determine which nursing home positions are to be designated as essential. The act also assigns responsibility to inform all unionized employees who are in designated positions. In the event of a strike, those employees notified of being in designated positions must continue to provide essential services in the interest of the health, safety, and security of nursing home residents.

Individual fines or revocation of union certification may be applied for failing to comply with the act. The act includes amendments prohibiting picketing at nursing homes by union members and recruiting replacement workers by the employer.

A copy of the *Essential Services in Nursing Homes Act* is online, [www.gnb.ca/legis/bill/pdf/56/3/Bill-41.pdf](http://www.gnb.ca/legis/bill/pdf/56/3/Bill-41.pdf)

## **Focusing on innovation**

The provincial government has made a commitment to create an estimated 700 nursing home beds during the next 10 years. The provincial government is moving to create 318 new beds in the next three years, including the opening of 216 new beds in 2010 through a public-private partnership.

This partnership will allow the province to open quickly 216 nursing home beds. Three nursing homes, as part of campus-style housing complexes, are under construction in Fredericton, Quispamsis, and Riverview.

Each complex will feature independent and supportive housing accommodations as well as 72 nursing home beds. The facilities will be subject to the same standards of care, inspections, and licensing requirements of other nursing homes, and they will give seniors more choices.

## **Delivering innovation in service delivery**

Seniors want choices and flexibility in determining their care plans. This is why the Department of Social Development is developing a pilot for a self-directed model for long-term care. This project involves exploring direct payment options for clients eligible to receive support services from the provincial government. Seniors would manage the costs of their support services themselves. They would also determine within general criteria, how, when, and where their care would be provided. The department is looking at similar programs in other provinces to see what could be applied in New Brunswick.

## **Making overall improvements and investments**

The provincial government, under the current mandate, has undertaken several initiatives to improve services. Seniors' assets have been protected. Financial help for special-care home residents has increased. Health-care costs are covered in nursing homes. The hours of nursing home care as well as the maximum hours of home support services have increased. Improvements have been made to the wages and travel allowance of home support workers.

In 2009-10, the total budget for home support, special-care home services and nursing home services will reach \$436.2 million. These services provide care and support to 17,500 New Brunswickers, most of whom are seniors.

Since 2006, the budget for nursing home services has increased by more than 27 per cent. This is representative of the province's aging population and the provincial government's commitment to provide continuity of care to seniors.

## **Providing pay equity in long-term care**

Under the provincial government's wage gap reduction initiative, New Brunswick has undertaken a pay equity exercise for home support workers. Pay equity means equal pay for work of equal value.

This initiative will benefit an estimated 3,000 women employed by home support agencies. The exercise evaluates the jobs of home support workers, which are predominately female, as compared to a male-dominated occupation performing similarly valued work. It will ensure that all home support workers are paid fairly and equally for the work they do.

A job evaluation committee, made up of home support workers, agency operators and government officials, will conduct the job evaluation, following the completion of a job analysis questionnaire by home support workers.

Recommendations on pay equity are expected to be submitted to the provincial government during the current fiscal year.

A similar pay equity exercise is being undertaken for the province's 3,100 nursing home workers, most of whom are women.

The provincial government will support both of these private sector groups with pay equity adjustments beginning in 2010-11, pending the results of the job evaluation processes.

### **Providing low-income seniors' benefit**

The Department of Finance provides the Low-Income Seniors Benefit. Since 2006, this benefit has more than doubled. It rose to \$300 in 2009 and will increase to \$400 in 2010. It will provide additional tax relief for low-income seniors of \$3.5 million in 2009-10, rising to \$7.4 million in 2010-11 and to \$8.2 million in 2011-12. Seniors who receive one of the following federal benefits may be eligible for the benefit: the Guaranteed Income Supplement; the Canada Pension Plan survivor allowance; or the federal allowance. About 30,000 low-income seniors apply each year.

### **Planning and being accountable**

As New Brunswick's population continues to age, further planning and preparation will be needed for sustainability of the long-term care system.

The Departments of Social Development and Health are collaborating in the development of statistical models to help guide future policy development as it relates to long-term care, funding allocations and identifying human resources needed to support system demands. These models will link current long-term care data in New Brunswick with current and future demographic data to help predict the future needs of seniors receiving long-term care services. It will allow the two departments to test policy and program scenarios to ensure the services being built will support the services that seniors will need. It will be one of the first models of its kind in Canada.

### **Setting benchmarks for success**

In today's fiscal reality, all investments must demonstrate value-for-money to New Brunswick taxpayers – quality services for investments made. With the cost of long-term care on the rise, benchmarks and accountability are needed in all aspects of the system. Part of that accountability involves developing performance measures for services and programs. Meanwhile, benchmarks must be set to help compare today's efforts against future demands.

The Department of Social Development is examining what other jurisdictions are doing in this regard. Before the end of 2009, the department will have in place performance measures and benchmarks based on best practices. It will be developing strategies for the ongoing sharing of this information.

*The Public Health Agency of Canada reports that within a decade, adults aged 65 and over will outnumber children under the age of 15. By 2021, one in five Canadians will be over the age of 65.*

## **Looking to the future**

The province's progress in long-term care is focused on these major themes: wellness and disease prevention, quality services, innovation, and sustainability. The provincial government is taking concrete steps to invest in keeping seniors healthy, active, and out of the long-term-care system.

Investments in the home support program are helping them remain at home for as long as possible. Seniors' resource centres and day activities support seniors and their family caregivers in the community.

Special-care homes are available to provide additional care and assistance when it is needed. Nursing home beds are being created for those needing a higher level of care and to prepare New Brunswick for the demographic challenges that lie ahead.

With the baby boomers about to retire, New Brunswick faces a daunting challenge in long-term care. The provincial government is committed to meeting that challenge through the strategies described in this report. Evidence shows New Brunswick has made excellent progress.

The provincial government will continue to invest significantly in programs and services for seniors to make sure they get the care they need at the right time, in the right place. The provincial government will be there for seniors, now and in the future. Its long-term vision for senior care, *Be independent. Longer*, will continue to serve as a guide. This report encompasses part one of the provincial government's implementation of its long-term strategy. It also reflects the provincial government's commitment to report regularly to seniors and their families on its progress.