

Continuing Care Strategy



Living well in a place you can call home.

Spring 2009

Single Entry Access: New Policies for Patients Entering Nursing Homes Information for Physicians

You are asked to fill out the Medical Status Report

- The one-page Medical Status Report gives the patient's **physician at the nursing home** the most recent clinical information.
- To keep the clinical information timely for the **receiving physician and to facilitate Continuing Care's ability to fill long term care vacancies quickly**, we ask that you fill this out as soon as possible after being asked. Filling out the Medical Status Report is not covered by MSI, but each physician has the discretion to charge patients for filling out forms.

The Department of Health does the assessments for care and for finances

- The Department of Health care coordinators do the assessments to determine the level of care the patient needs, and will collect the information that starts the financial assessment process for help with nursing home costs.

The care coordinators tell your patients in hospital about the first available bed policy and your patients in community about the deferral option.

After you medically discharge your hospital patient, the care coordinators will inform your patients of the first available bed policy.

- **Background on First Available Bed policy:** After the assessments are finished and a hospital patient is eligible to enter a nursing home, and if a suitable bed is not available in a home of their choice, your patient will be asked to move to the first available nursing home bed within 100 km of the community of their choice (100 km is considered driving distance). This could be a community where relatives live. Your patient will stay on the waiting list for their preferred home and be moved there when a bed becomes available.

Care coordinators will advise clients in the community about the deferral option as part of their assessment or reassessment process.

If your patient is entering a nursing home from the community, he or she can choose the deferral option, which allows him or her to defer long-term care placement at the time of the initial placement offer for up to three months.

- **Background on Deferral Option:** Continuing Care clients waiting at home in the community for long-term care placement will have the flexibility to consider delaying placement for up to three months. The deferral option may be appropriate when a patient living at home in the community has caregiver supports in place to remain at home longer or when the patient or family is uncertain that placement is the right choice at the time a placement offer is made. Once the patient's name is reactivated after the deferral period, Continuing Care staff will call them when a bed becomes available. Deferral periods cannot be extended beyond the three-month period. If the patient refuses the second bed offer, the patient's name is withdrawn from all waiting lists and the patient would need to re-apply and start the application process over again.

Questions that patients frequently ask

How do I get home care?

The **1-800-225-7225** number is toll-free and is the number to call for all continuing care services:

- Home care
- Placement into nursing homes, and
- Adult protection services

People may think they're ready for nursing home care, but the assessment could find that home care is right for them. Most people prefer to stay at home if there are the right services in the community to support them.

I may need a nursing home in a couple of years. Should I apply now?

No. Only those people who are ready to move into a home should apply.

I think it is time for my mother to go into a nursing home. Can you arrange that?

- Simply call **1-800-225-7225**.
- But remember, people can no longer move into a licensed nursing home unless they have been assessed as needing that level of care. Home care might meet their needs.
- Your mother's consent, or your mother's power of attorney's consent (if applicable), is required before an application for long-term placement can be arranged.

- For people who have been assessed for nursing home care, there is now a coordinated wait list for licensed nursing homes in the province. People are placed on that list by the date their assessment confirmed they needed that level of care.

Will I lose my place on the waitlist if I choose the deferral option?

- If you are living in the community and you choose the deferral option your place on the wait list is not affected.

My father is already in a nursing home and now my mom needs care. Can you help us get her into the same nursing home?

- Your mother will be given priority to get into the same nursing home as your father as long as the nursing home can meet your mother's care needs. Call **1-800-225-7225** to get the details.

I'm concerned about the per diem fee the hospital is charging. Can you help?

- Please direct your patient to the hospital social worker. The hospital social worker can explain this policy to them in detail.
- **Background on per diem fee:** Because of the critical need for acute care beds, the first available bed policy is strictly enforced. While individuals are waiting in hospital for placement to a long-term care facility through the first available bed policy, the District Health Authority has the right to defer their costs by charging that patient a per diem fee from the time they are medically discharged until the patient leaves for the long-term care facility. For more information on how this policy is administered in your hospital, check with the social worker or discharge planner involved with your patient. If a person in hospital refuses the first available bed, they are considered unavailable and are removed from the long-term care waitlist and may be discharged with an alternative care plan. Until discharge, the Hospitals Act allows the hospital to charge \$205/day for the cost of room and board in these cases.

For any questions you or your patients have, call **1-800-225-7225** toll-free. The number operates daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Refer to Long-term Care Fact Sheets: "Questions and Answers about Entering Long-term Care" and "Paying for Long-term Care" at Web site: www.gov.ns.ca/health/ccs