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[May 9, 2005]

## **Report of the Auditor General on Seniors Care and Programs**

In his report on *Seniors Care and Programs*, tabled in the Assembly today, Fred J. Dunn, FCA, Auditor General of Alberta, recommends how the government can improve its systems to deliver care and programs to Alberta's seniors.

### **The Audit**

Our audit examination, which was sufficient to be representative of care across the province, included systems used by:

- the Departments of Health and Wellness, and Seniors and Community Supports
- the 9 Health Authorities
- 25 long-term care facilities (out of 179)
- 20 lodge operators (out of 64)

The programs examined now cost approximately \$1 billion.

### **Long-term care facilities**

Findings—the Basic Service Standards are out of date, and the monitoring of compliance with standards is inadequate. Across the province, facilities met 69% of care standards and 89% of housing standards. In particular, facilities are not meeting standards for:

- providing medication to residents
- maintaining medical records, including the use of physical and chemical restraints
- using resident care plans

Although standards alone don't guarantee good care, without them caregivers are at risk of not providing appropriate care. Without monitoring of compliance with standards, residents are at risk of receiving inappropriate care.

Recommendations—update the standards, keep them current, monitor compliance, and measure the effectiveness of long-term care.

### **Lodges**

Findings—the standards for operating lodges are out of date and the monitoring of compliance with standards is inadequate.

Recommendations—update, maintain and monitor compliance with lodge standards, improve the measurement of the effectiveness of the lodge program, and assess the appropriateness of the minimum income used in deciding lodge rent charges.

### **Supportive living settings**

Finding—there are no standards for the care and housing services provided in assisted living and other supportive living facilities.

Recommendation—establish standards to manage the risk that residents receive inappropriate care or services.

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## Alberta Seniors Benefit Program

Finding—the Department has insufficient information to assess whether benefits are adequate, and if the objectives of the Program are met.

Recommendation—obtain more information to set the Program’s income threshold and benefits based on seniors’ needs.

### The Opportunity

Mr. Dunn states that implementing his recommendations is an opportunity for government to:

- improve the quality and monitoring of care and programs for seniors
- understand better if the programs are achieving their objectives
- improve accountability for all involved
- improve Albertans’ knowledge and understanding of the systems that deliver care for seniors

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This Report is available online at [www.oag.ab.ca](http://www.oag.ab.ca) (PDF format). For a paper copy or a CD-ROM, please phone (780) 427-4222. For more information, contact:

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