



Return to Written Question

Asked by: John Main, MLA (Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Asked of: Hon. George Hickes, Minister of Health

Number: 81-5(2)

Date: November 5, 2020

Subject: Elder Care

1. With Respect to each of Nunavut's existing Continuing Care Centres and Elders Homes, broken down by each Facility:

Question a): What is the current operating cost per bed on an annual basis?

Response:

The estimated annual cost breakdown for each continuing care facility and Elders' home can be found below:

Facility	Annual Operating Budget	Annual Operating Cost per Bed
Arviat Elders' Home	\$1.5 million*	\$187,500
Iqaluit Elders' Home	\$1.5 million*	\$187,500
Cambridge Bay Continuing Care Centre	\$2.6 million	\$325,625
Gjoa Haven Continuing Care Centre	\$3.2 million	\$317,500
Igloolik Continuing Care Centre	\$2.4 million	\$241,900
Embassy West Senior Living	\$6.5 million	\$196,363

Note:

*This is the service contract amount.

Question b): What are the average capital costs on an average annual basis?

Response:

For the Department of Health there were no capital costs over \$5,000 for 2020/21 related to Continuing Care Centres or Elders' Homes. Nunavut Housing Corporation has budgeted approximately \$458,000 for the renovations to the Arviat Elders' Home.

Question c): How is the role of Essential Family Caregivers incorporated into services provided at existing Continuing Care Centres and Elders Homes?

Response:

Nunavut's Elders' homes and continuing care centres provide care based on a client- and family-centred care approach. This approach fosters respectful, compassionate, culturally appropriate, and quality care while simultaneously is responsive to the needs, values, beliefs, and preferences of clients and their family members.

The role of essential family caregivers exists in some jurisdictions in Canada and offers one of many approaches that may be used to involve families and caregivers. To date, this specific role has not been formally established in Nunavut; however, the Department of Health makes every effort to involve families and caregivers where appropriate. Families and caregivers are encouraged and supported in taking an active role, while adhering to safety protocols, in providing care to clients. This is done through the Interdisciplinary Care Conference approach.

The Interdisciplinary Care Conference approach is used in Nunavut's continuing care centres and elders' homes. It offers a framework that is based on a collaborative, client-driven process in the provision of quality health and support services through effective and efficient use of resources. Interdisciplinary Care Conference supports clients in achieving safe, realistic, and reasonable goals within a complex health, social, and fiscal environment.

Question d): To what extent are Essential Family Caregivers allowed and/or encouraged to volunteer to provide help and support to existing Continuing Care Centres and Elders Homes?

Response:

Elders' homes and continuing care centres are home to Nunavummiut where they can live with dignity and in security, and have their assessed needs met. Residents' family and friends are encouraged to visit as often as possible and to take part in resident care to the extent that they feel comfortable and are able, and to the extent that the resident wishes for them to participate. In light of COVID-19, visiting times may be amended or restricted to ensure infection control protocols are followed. This measure depends on the current level of risk and situation in the community.

Question 2: What are the projected operating costs per bed on an annual basis for the Rankin Inlet Long-Term Care facility?

Response:

Based on current estimates, the annual operating cost is projected to be approximately \$225,000 per bed on an annual basis at the Rankin Inlet Long-Term Care facility.

Question 3: What financial considerations were incorporated into the Government of Nunavut's business case decisions respecting options for Long-Term Care Facilities?

Response:

The Government of Nunavut determined that a facility of 24 beds, in two households of 12 beds, is the minimum size that would be built and operated, in order to be cost effective and to ensure staffing efficiencies and economies of scale. Locating the new facilities in regional centres facilitates greater travel accessibility to the facilities, more consistent access to physician and specialist care, and more efficient access to out-of-territory specialist services as they are required.

Question 4: What cost pressures, expenditure controls and other constraints have been identified by the Department of Health in respect to the provision of long-term care for seniors and Elders?

Response:

Per capita health expenditures in Nunavut are double compared to the national average¹. This is in large part due to Nunavut's geography, limited infrastructure, high operating costs, and the need to provide culturally appropriate health care services. The GN recognizes that while health care costs in-territory are significantly higher compared to other jurisdictions, providing care closer to home is important and necessary for the overall health and wellbeing of Nunavummiut.

For the regional long-term care facilities specifically, there are several factors that impact the costs:

- Securing insurance for the facilities is challenging, especially in the context of COVID-19 as there are inherent risks of operating in Nunavut and the rest of Canada, due to the pandemic.
- There are significant risks in operating long-term care facilities, which makes it less lucrative for new entrants from the private sector to enter the market.
- Standards and operating guidelines require strict adherence to the building code to ensure the safety of the facility's residents, but to also to ensure the facilities can be accredited in the future.

¹ National Health Expenditure Database, Canadian Institute for Health Information.
<https://www.cihi.ca/en/how-do-the-provinces-and-territories-compare>

- Full-time medical staff with expertise in geriatrics are not available in all communities in Nunavut. Level 5 care requires a higher level and more frequent access to medical treatment. It is challenging to recruit and retain qualified medical staff in smaller communities.
- The lack of staff housing availability adds to the challenges of recruitment and retention of staff.

Question 5: What specific audit and evaluation activities have been undertaken within the past three fiscal years with respect to the operations of existing Continuing Care Centres and Elders Homes?

Response:

With respect to operations of existing continuing care centres and Elders' homes the following audit and evaluation activities have occurred within the past three fiscal years:

- Chart reviews;
- Environmental health inspections/reviews;
- Food safety inspections;
- Housing facility reviews; and
- Quarterly reviews.

Question 6: What specific conclusions are recommendations results from the audit and evaluation activities?

Response:

Conclusions and recommendation from the above-mentioned audits and evaluations include:

Chart Audit Recommendations

- When updating care plans ensure that goals are re-evaluated; and
- Recommend admission package include Braden Scale, falls risk assessment scale (FRAT), head-to-toe assessment, smoking assessment, immunization history, do not resuscitate (DNR), Pieces of Personhood, Dementia Observation System (DOAS) every four days.
 - The admission packages have been provided to facilities.

Environmental Health Reports Recommendations

- Ensure proper cleaning throughout facility; proper food handling and storage; education regarding proper handwashing and sanitization; and ensure facility is in good repair.
 - Arviat and Iqaluit Elders' Homes are awaiting renovations from Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC).

Facility Reviews Recommendations

- Ensure light fixtures are in good repair; electrical wires are not exposed; and smoke detectors are in working order and located appropriately as per the Fire Marshall's recommendations.
 - Measures have been taken to address issues identified through ongoing monitoring by facility staff.

Food Inspections Recommendations

- Improve nutritional content of menu and prescribed therapeutic adaptations are provided; provide food safety training; ensure kitchen appliances are operational and in good condition and proper food storage and handling; and follow country food guidelines.
 - Resource book "Nutrition for Elders and Long-term Care: A Guidebook for Facilities in Nunavut" was developed by Health and distributed Fall 2020 to all facilities. This tool includes menu planning, therapeutic nutrition care, recipes and resources to assist with ordering food as well as other information that helps guide staff in proper nutrition care in facilities.

Quarterly Review Recommendations

- Ensure resident quarterly reports are completed and sent on time; ensure resident charts are completed, contain all relevant information, and are kept up to date.
 - Recommendations have been implemented.
- Provide food safety education to staff; and ensure nutritional meal planning that includes all food groups.
 - Implementation is ongoing. Health's 'Nutrition for Elders and Long-term Care; A Guidebook for Facilities in Nunavut' was distributed in Fall 2020.
- Provide CPR/First Aid training to staff and ensure certification is up to date.
 - Implementation has been delayed in accordance with increased public health measures due to COVID-19. Facility administrators and registered nurses provide informal training until formal training is permitted to resume.
- Ensure call bell system is operational and available in every resident room.
 - Maintenance is ongoing.
- Implement Fire Marshall's recommendations.
 - Implementation is ongoing. Recommendations were made for commercial kitchens in Arviat and Iqaluit Elders' Homes. Part of the renovations are to be completed by NHC.
- Ensure accessibility and adequate lighting throughout facilities; facility is maintained and in good repair, and furnishings are in good repair and not soiled.
 - Implementation is ongoing. Arviat and Iqaluit Elders' Homes are awaiting renovations from NHC; renovations are expected to begin in Summer 2021.

- Ensure financials are reconciled and cooperation in good standing.
 - Arviat and Iqaluit Elders' Homes are in good financial standing.
- Ensure recreational programming is in place and forwarded to the Home and Community Care Division.
 - Implementation is ongoing. The Department of Health works closely with facilities to ensure programming is in place and documentation is forwarded.
- Ensure residents are receiving regular audiology, dental, and vision check-ups;
 - Implementation is ongoing. Continue to follow up with Dental to develop plan to include facility visits during community visits.
- Ensure Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) receives required resident information and follow up in a timely manner.
 - Implementation is ongoing. Continue to work with facilities to ensure OPG receives required information in timely manner.