

Supporting Older Adults with Practical Affordable Services

...so that they have a real option for continuing to live in their own homes

For years we have heard older adults say conclusively that they want to live in their own homes for as long as possible.

For years we have heard governments tell us that they want older adults to live in their own homes.

The reality gap between these statements is the recognition that as people age they may be hampered by physical problems (e.g, arthritis or injury contributing to joint and strength reduction, heart or lung problems, diseases such as MS and Parkinson's) and perhaps other emotional or mental deterioration. What can improve the possibility of continuing to live at home? Practical support that is affordable and accessible.

Possibilities:

Expand Current Homecare

In Saskatchewan, we have experience of Homecare providing assistance beyond medical and personal care for a short time or a longer interval.

Homecare staff could help with light housekeeping, some meal preparation or other small tasks.

Expanding homecare to offer these services, even temporarily, would require an investment into increasing home care staffing and organizational tools to schedule help temporarily or for a longer time if needed. It would be ideal if the homecare staff person would consistently work with the same person who needed the service.

Costs: The homecare service would be provided through the regional/local health system. A scale of needs and costs could be determined and the recipient would pay part or all of the costs, depending on income.

Home Support Program

This consumer-based program would be developed collaboratively with municipalities and provincial government. The program would serve older adults (age requirement such as 65+) who applied for inclusion.

Municipalities know local needs and people who could be involved in the program as recipients and as workers. The program could help maintain the population of a village, town or city, providing income for local businesses and a tax base to support community services.

Services: Non-medical support services such as yard maintenance, minor renovations and home repair, home maintenance and major cleaning. The older adult might assist/work with contract person when feasible.

Trusted, capable workers available locally: Each municipality that becomes part of the program would gather the workers interviewing and assessing them, so that they can be "bonded" as reliable and trustworthy. The village, town or city would determine how it would keep records related to the use of the program.

Costs: The program might allow contractors to set their own fees or they might establish a scale of fees for different types of work in their locale. A sliding scale based on income would need to be developed for the subsidization of costs. The costs for individuals would be much more economical than current assisted living facilities.

If the aging population can be supported so that people age healthily and happily, the investment will reduce other expenditures such as those related to long term care facilities. This can be a win-win-win program for individuals, municipalities and provincial government.