



News Release

November 4, 2024



Seniors' Advocate, Susan Walsh, Issues Statement Regarding Government's/NL Health Services' Plan to Convert 15 Single Occupancy Rooms to Double Occupancy at Corner Brook Long-Term Care

On October 25, 2024, the Department of Health and Community Services issued a News Release titled Beds to be Added at Health Care Facilities in Western Region. It included an announcement that 15 single occupancy rooms at Corner Brook Long-Term Care would be modified to double occupancy rooms. It was noted that this change was to accommodate alternate level of care (ALC) patients in the region.

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate (OSA) has reviewed this matter including meeting with representatives from Government and NL Health Services. Today, November 4, 2024, the Seniors' Advocate wrote the Minister of Health and Community Services, outlining her position on this issue.

The Seniors' Advocate adamantly opposes the conversion of single occupancy rooms in long-term care homes to double occupancy. Any reduction in the availability of single occupancy rooms in long-term care homes is a regressive policy approach. Modifying these 15 single occupancy rooms to double occupancy negatively impacts the people currently living in these rooms; reduces the availability of single rooms for seniors in the future; creates a risk that other long term care homes could convert single rooms to double; and does not resolve this longstanding issue.

The position of the Seniors' Advocate is supported by countless research findings documenting the positive impacts of living in a single room with a private bathroom including: privacy, dignity, infection control, family/friend visitation, patient safety, quality of care and person-centred focus. While the OSA acknowledges the efforts made to reduce the impact of this decision on the residents currently living in these single occupancy rooms, this decision is not a solution.

Addressing the care needs of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador requires improved community services. I have encouraged the Minister of Health and Community Services to use the **Health Accord NL**, OSA's **What Golden Years?** report, and pending Long Term Care and Personal Care Home Review as the guiding reports and processes to inform decisions to address changes and development in long-term care. Further, we must have provincial Long Term Care Legislation to protect the best interests of seniors living in long-term care.

Susan Walsh, Seniors' Advocate NL

-30-

Media contact

Arlene Mullins

Administrative Officer

709- 729-6603 1-833-729-6603 (toll-free)

seniorsadvocate@seniorsadvocatenl.ca