

Accessing Services - Part 1

This fact sheet is about accessing Health-Care Services and Programs in B.C. Information about financial and legal planning is available from the [Public Guardian and Trustee's office \(www.trustee.bc.ca\)](http://www.trustee.bc.ca), or [Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry \(www.nidus.ca\)](http://www.nidus.ca).

The following chart shows the types of services available to people with dementia and their families, organized according to who provides the services:

| | Family Doctor | Specialist | Home and Community Care* | Private Care* | Alzheimer Society of B.C. |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| Who pays for this? | Medical Services Plan (MSP) | Medical Services Plan (MSP) | Clients pay on a sliding scale by income | Clients pay full price | Most services are free |
| What do they do? | assessment, diagnosis | assessment, diagnosis | assessment for receiving services | private home support services | local resource centres |
| | referrals to specialists | treatment | home support | private care facility beds | Dementia Helpline |
| | medication | medication | adult day programs | other care; e.g. wheelchairs, hearing aids, dentures | early stage support groups |
| | referrals to programs | referrals to programs | respite care | | caregiver support groups |
| | | | long-term care | | education and information |

* For veterans, many services are provided through Veterans Affairs.

Care Assessments

In order to get Home and Community Care (HCC) services, contact the HCC office of your local health authority. Services can be requested by family, doctors, social workers, neighbours or anyone else who has concerns. If your family member meets the criteria for services, staff will schedule a **care assessment**. Services are usually not provided until a person needs help with personal care, such as bathing and dressing.

This is one of 10 **Advocacy Fact Sheets** prepared by the Alzheimer Society of B.C. These fact sheets offer tips on advocating for a family member with dementia. We suggest you read through the series, and then use the resources provided to find more specific information.

Care Assessment Interviews

An advocate or family member should be present at the assessment interview, if possible. The interviewer will be considering these factors:

- The client's eligibility for health-care services.
- Their needs and the severity or urgency of those needs. Note that Home and Community Care is focused on personal care, such as ability to bathe or dress independently.
- Finances (fees are based on client's income).

Here is some information to have ready:

- A summary of your family member's health concerns and needs.
- BC Care Card.
- List of prescription medications.
- Contact information for the family doctor and any other doctors treating your family member.
- Your family member's most recent tax return or Canada Revenue assessment notice.

A case manager is assigned to each client. The case manager should meet with the client and family to draw up a care plan.

Home Support Services

The following services are offered by the province (but are not always available in rural areas):

- home care and home nursing support
- adult day centres
- caregiver respite

Meals on Wheels, an independent program run by volunteers, is also available in many communities.

Publicly-funded home support services are very limited, and do not include "non-medical" home support such as cooking and cleaning. Families who can afford it often hire somebody to help with housekeeping and other daily chores.

Be aware that planning for health care can be challenging. Care plans aren't always made and sometimes they aren't followed. A person's health can change suddenly, throwing plans into disarray. If your family member moves or is admitted to a hospital in a different area, a new case manager may be assigned and continuity may be lost.

It is important that advocates keep the case manager up to date, especially if the person with dementia starts to require more care.

A Word about Dental Care

Dental care is not covered by the Medical Services Plan, but it is very important. Recent research reveals strong links between dental health and serious medical problems such as heart disease and stroke. If your family member has a diagnosis of dementia, take the time to get dental work done if you can. People in the later stages of dementia may resist dental care, and few dentists are experienced in working with patients with dementia.

RESOURCES

[Guide to Home and Community Care Services](#)
Available from www.health.gov.bc.ca.

[Dental Care and Dementia](#) information at the Alzheimer UK website, alzheimers.org.uk.

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