



**Honourable Jeremy Nixon**

Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services  
Office of the Minister  
227 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6  
[css.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:css.minister@gov.ab.ca)

November 7, 2022

Dear Minister Nixon:

**RE: MEETING REQUEST: SENIORS & CONTINUING CARE**

Congratulations on your recent appointment to be the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services. As the new minister responsible for seniors' issues in the province, we are writing to you jointly to request a time to meet and discuss our solutions for how continuing care can be improved in our province.

All Albertans should expect to experience a high quality of life at any age. As our seniors age, their health care needs increase in both severity and diversity. Frankly, these needs are not being met, and Alberta's seniors deserve better than to be treated like commodities.

All seniors must be able to count on fully accessible, high quality health care, including pharmaceutical coverage, without creating financial hardship for themselves or their families.

Over the past 35 years, numerous public reviews and multiple independent research reports have highlighted significant failures and inadequacies within the province's continuing care system. There is a remarkable consistency in the problems identified in these various reports including:

- inadequate staff-to-patient ratios,
- inappropriate alignment of caregiver qualifications with patient needs,
- incidents of neglect and abuse,
- overuse/abuse of pharmaceutical treatments,
- lack of medical and personal supplies,
- inappropriate physical structures, including size and location,
- failure to prepare for disaster circumstances,

- inappropriate safety resources for staff, residents and informal caregivers, and
- failure to respect and embrace informal caregiving.

Despite the abundance of research to support the urgent need for improvements in services, the care available to senior Albertans continues to deteriorate as successive governments have offloaded costs from health care budgets to seniors and their families, and contracted with private, for-profit corporations to operate congregate care facilities and home care services. As a result, oversight of and accountability for the public funds provided to these private corporations and not-for-profit operators is not available for public scrutiny.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the numerous gaps and deficiencies of the current system in Alberta and other parts of Canada. The very problems identified in the numerous public reviews and research reports resulted in a disproportionate number of deaths of seniors in congregate care facilities. In Alberta, the vast majority of the total deaths attributed to COVID-19 were seniors, and often occurred within seniors' care facilities.

Decades of underfunding in seniors' care have spelled disaster for Alberta seniors, especially over the last two and a half years of the pandemic. Seniors in our province need help. They need a government that supports them. Albertans have had enough of this disregard for seniors in our province and country. We have the solutions and hope you will meet with us to discuss them.

Sincerely,



Brad Lafortune,  
Executive Director  
Public Interest Alberta



Chris Gallaway  
Executive Director  
Friends of Medicare

CC: Allan Wong, Chief of Staff, [allen.p.wong@gov.ab.ca](mailto:allen.p.wong@gov.ab.ca)

CC: Lori Sigurdson, Opposition Critic for Seniors, [Edmonton.riverview@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:Edmonton.riverview@assembly.ab.ca)