



Sept 15, 2020 The Manitoba government is revealing what it's all-season shelters for personal care homes will look like Tuesday afternoon. (Source: Michelle Gerwing/ CTV News Winnipeg)

WINNIPEG -- The Manitoba government is revealing what it's all-season shelters for personal care homes will look like Tuesday afternoon.

The shelters will be built close to personal care homes in the province to allow residents to safely visit with their loved ones during the pandemic, even in bad weather.

A request for proposals for the shelters was put out for designs back in June.

The province requested the shelters be accessible, protected from the elements, easily cleaned and provide a space for quality connections.

The announcement is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Tuesday. CTV News Winnipeg will live-stream the event.

Jan Legeros, executive director of the Long Term and Continuing Care Association of Manitoba, said it's won't be feasible for a shelter to be built at every personal care home in the province.

“We have 127 licensed personal care homes in Manitoba and they’re all different,” she said.

“They have different sized buildings, they have different sized properties so not all of them will be able to accommodate an additional building on their property.”

However, she said, that facilities that can’t fit a shelter on the property are looking at interior spaces near entrances that could be used as safe visitation areas.

“Visitation is of primary importance here, that’s why the government is moving forward with these shelters. The families and the long-term care owners and operators have spoken and have certainly indicated that social isolation has a huge negative effect on our seniors,” Legeros said.

“Whatever we can do to mitigate social isolation is what we should be thinking about for the fall.”

Legeros said there was a committee, that included personal care home owners and operators, architects, engineers and government representatives, that consulted on these shelters.

She said this shelter project has some unique logistical challenges, like transporting seniors outside during extreme cold.

“We know that that is just not going to be possible if the weather is significantly inclement and there is a distance to travel for the senior between the personal care home and the shelter. Then there are going to be times when we’re not going to be able to facilitate that visit,” Legeros said.

She added there have also been other logistical challenges with personal care homes during the pandemic.

“Most of the personal care homes in the province were built 40-50 years ago and never with the kind of high-need vulnerable seniors in mind that we have in these homes today,” she said.

“So you can imagine, every square inch of space is utilized and accounted for making physical distancing extremely challenging so having the option of these shelters or an internal room that could be cordoned off and utilized is really the way forward for visitation in the fall.”

*This is a developing story, more details to come.*