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MANITOBA TO DEVELOP OUTDOOR, ALL-SEASON VISITATION SHELTERS AT PERSONAL CARE HOMES

Government Also Accepting Proposals for Safety and Capital Upgrades: Friesen

The Manitoba government is working to develop outdoor, all-season shelters that will be located near personal care homes and be suitable for residents to safely visit with loved ones, Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Cameron Friesen announced today.

“Allowing personal care home residents to safely maintain the connections they have with their families and friends during the COVID-19 pandemic is central to their ongoing health and well-being,” said Friesen. “We are planning ahead by moving forward with the development of all-season shelters, ensuring those needed and valuable visits can remain safe and uninterrupted.”

The Manitoba government will ask for feedback on conceptual designs for personal care home shelters in the near future. The shelters will be outside, but close to personal care homes year-round. They must be accessible, protected from the elements, easily cleaned and provide a space for quality connections. Feedback can be provided at <http://EngageMB.ca>.

“Despite advances in technology that have allowed for virtual visits, this pandemic has taught us that nothing can replicate a face-to-face visit,” the minister said. “Today’s announcement shows that once again Manitobans are innovative, resilient and kind-hearted.”

Across Canada, approximately 80 per cent of all deaths related to COVID-19 have been linked to those living in personal care homes. In Manitoba, similar outcomes have been avoided thanks to a number of precautions taken in the early stages of the pandemic including strict visitor restrictions, enhanced screening for staff and the implementation of the one-site staffing model at personal care homes.

“The pandemic will challenge personal care homes for months to come, but we are committed to finding the right balance in enabling this all important human contact to continue while preserving the safety of residents, staff and families,” said Charles Gagné, CEO, Actionmarguerite. “Accessible spaces designed to meet these goals can only help but enhance these precious interactions and reduce the effects of loneliness by virtue of the public health restrictions.”

Additionally, the Manitoba government will be requesting proposals for safety and capital upgrades at personal care homes including:

- sprinkler protection,
- fire alarm voice communication systems,
- carbon monoxide detection,
- emergency lighting,
- infection control measures so not to affect residents, and
- planning and phasing of moving vulnerable residents.

The minister added these proposals are intended to build on the government’s commitment to ensure health-care facilities are in line with revised Manitoba Fire Code requirements including provision of fire suppression systems and increased fire separation enhancements to better protect residents, staff and the public.