

TO: CITY MANAGER

2004 June 29

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: BRITISH COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT AND SERVICE EMPLOYEES' UNION RESOLUTION ON HOME SUPPORT

PURPOSE: To provide Council with preliminary information on Home Support services, as context for a delegation from the British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU).

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council receive this report for information.

R E P O R T

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 2004 June 14, Council referred to a letter from the British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) requesting that Council entertain a BCGEU delegation regarding Home Support services for the frail elderly, the chronically ill, and people living with disabilities. The delegation is scheduled for 2004 July 5. The purpose of the delegation is to seek the City of Burnaby's endorsement of a resolution concerning the ongoing viability of British Columbia's Home Support program. See sample resolution, *attached* as Appendix 1. Arising from consideration of the request, Council referred the BCGEU letter to staff for a brief report.

This report responds to that request from Council.

2.0 HOME SUPPORT SERVICES

2.1 *Home Support as Part of a Continuum of Services*

Home Support services can be viewed as the maintenance and preventive component of a larger continuum of services referred to as Home Care.¹ The purpose of Home Support services is to help people with health and/or functional deficits maintain their ability to live independently and to prevent health and functional breakdowns and eventual institutionalization. The types of basic daily-living services which are

¹ The term Home Care is generally used to refer to services provided in the home or in the community to individuals with functional disabilities.

offered to eligible individuals through Home Support include assistance with medications, getting into and out of bed, dressing, bathing, using the toilet, carrying out prescribed therapeutic exercises, and emotional and psychological problems. Family care-giver relief and health status monitoring are also provided.

The larger Home Care system also provides nursing- and medically-oriented support, such as administration of intravenous medications. Through the long-term care and acute care functions of Home Care, individuals who would otherwise require long-term institutionalization or have to remain in or enter into acute care facilities can be supported in their homes. These long-term and acute care services are generally delivered by registered nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and other health care professionals.

2.2 BCGEU Concerns About Home Support Services

Information supplied by the BCGEU suggests that Home Support has traditionally been accessible to anyone who, due to his/her mental or physical health condition, requires support and assistance to live a functional, safe and independent life in his/her home. As most of those who require Home Support cannot afford to pay for it, the services have traditionally been funded by the Province and delivered through the Regional Health Authorities.

According to the BCGEU, however, policy and funding changes initiated by the Province and the Health Authorities over the past several years have tightened eligibility requirements for Home Support, limited the services offered through Home Support,² and reduced overall budget allocations to the program. Figures provided by the BCGEU suggest that as a result of the changes, 8,696 fewer British Columbians were eligible for Home Support in 2001 than in 1996. During that same time period, the population of seniors in British Columbia increased by 13%. The BCGEU is concerned that many people who could otherwise be supported to remain in their homes will be required to enter institutions, a situation which not only increases overall costs to the health care system, but reduces quality of life for those so affected. To illustrate these concerns, the BCGEU's documentation cites a 2001 B.C.- based research study which, over a three year period, compared a group of clients which had been disqualified from receiving Home Support with a group which had not been disqualified. The study results suggest that:

- the annual per person cost of health care for those who formerly received Home Support increased by \$4,000 over the cost for those still receiving such services;

² In most cases, Home Support no longer provides cleaning, laundry, shopping, banking, meal preparation, or personal grooming services, as it once did.

- among those disqualified from receiving Home Support services, the death rate was 7% higher and the admission rate to long-term care facilities was 10% higher.

In seeking support for its resolution, the BCGEU hopes to:

- 1) encourage the Provincial government to direct Health Authorities to enhance Home Support for frail elderly, chronically ill and people with disabilities;
- 2) encourage the Provincial government to revise current Home Support eligibility guidelines to make Home Support available to those who require it; and
- 3) encourage the Provincial government to budget sufficient funds for delivery of the Home Support program.

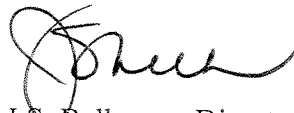
3.0 CONCLUSION

The BCGEU is concerned about policy and funding changes which have taken place over the past ten years with respect to Home Support services. The Home Support program provides basic daily-living services, such as assistance with dressing and bathing, to individuals who would not otherwise be able to live independently. As a result of the changes, fewer British Columbians are eligible for Home Support, and fewer daily-living services are offered through the program.

The BCGEU is seeking Council's endorsement of a resolution in support of the Home Support program. The resolution urges the Provincial government to direct Regional Health Authorities to enhance Home Support for the frail elderly, chronically ill and people with disabilities, to revise Home Support eligibility guidelines to ensure services are available to those requiring them, and to budget sufficient funds for delivery of the program.

As Council is aware, the funding and delivery of health care services is a very complex matter. If it is deemed appropriate, staff will prepare a more detailed report on the role of Home Support in the overall wellness and health services continuum, and on a proposed resolution. That report would be forwarded to Council through the Social Issues Committee.

This report is for the information of Council.



J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JS/sla
Attachment (1)

SAMPLE RESOLUTION ON HOME SUPPORT

WHEREAS the province of British Columbia will receive funds from the federal government under the First Ministers Accord on Health Care Renewal for the delivery of home care services from 2002 – 2006; and

WHEREAS this funding was designated under the Health Accord to be directed only to palliative, mental health and post-acute care home care which made no provisions for home support for the frail elderly, the chronically ill or people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS home support and part of the home care program, maintains safe, healthy living environments for frail seniors, the chronically ill, and people with disabilities; allowing them to live with dignity in their own home; and

WHEREAS a decade of cutbacks has caused shortages of long term care and continuing care beds in communities throughout the entire province; and

WHEREAS high demand and service cuts have obliged citizens in need of care to move from their own homes, and unnecessarily increased the demands on institutional and acute care services; and

WHEREAS people with disabilities and elder citizens of our society are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity; and

THEREFORE TO BE RESOLVED that the (*Municipality of _____, Regional District of _____*), send a letter to the Minister of Health Services, the honourable Colin Hansen, strongly encouraging him to amend current provincial policy, and to direct changes to the policies of the health Authorities, to include home support under the Home Care Program; and to enhance home support for frail elderly, chronically ill and people with disabilities in order to prevent the clients of this service from requiring more expensive and dislocation institutional care; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the (*Municipality of _____, Regional District of _____*), strongly encourage the Minister and the (*appropriate Health Authority*) to revise current Home Support guidelines to make home support available to those that need it, and to budget sufficient funds for delivery of the program.