
Allow families into homecare: Jones

She added: "Every option should be examined, including whether more families can qualify under special circumstances, to address this growing gap in how our home care services are delivered in the province."

Government home care policy excluding family members from providing paid care is limiting options available to many patients, especially those living in more rural and remote areas where availability of care workers is limited, Opposition Leader Yvonne Jones says.

Policies within the Department of Health and Community Services state that immediate family members are not eligible to receive government funding to provide care to their relatives, a Liberal release says.

Section 7.30 of the home support guidelines defines a family member and sometimes permits a special circumstance that allows a family member to provide care. While this is outlined in the policy, many families are indicating that this provision is not being enacted and their situation is not being appropriately accommodated, the release went on to say.

" There are many people in rural communities throughout the province that are having significant difficulty obtaining home care services due to smaller populations," Ms. Jones said. "Families that have contacted our office have outlined the difficulty of getting non-related workers to provide this necessary care. While family members would very much be willing to provide care for free, the financial difficulties of staying home without pay make it very challenging."

In other circumstances, the person requiring the care refuses to allow strangers to look after their needs and will only accept a family member to provide care, she said, adding that this can be caused by mental or physical impairments that require a worker to be placed in very personal and private situations with the client.

"I would encourage government to look at this policy and determine whether it can be improved to address these types of circumstances," Ms. Jones said. "By having these clients at home versus publicly funded long-term care facilities, government is saving a significant amount of money."