



PRESS RELEASE



Canadian Mortgage News - National Archive 2007

New Assisted Living Units Benefit Houston Seniors

HOUSTON, British Columbia, May 24, 2007 — Federal, provincial and community partners gathered today to celebrate the opening of five units of assisted living at the Houston Lions Senior Citizens Home Society's Cottonwood Manor.

The five units were added to 16 existing units to expand the range of housing and care options available to Houston and area seniors.

"Canada's New Government is committed to providing housing solutions for seniors, so that they can continue to live in their communities, close to family and friends," said the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. "Seniors in Houston now have more access to quality, affordable housing to meet their specific needs."

The new units were developed under Independent Living BC, an innovative housing-for-health program, that provides seniors with a middle option between home support and residential care.

"Seniors should have the opportunity to access affordable housing in their own communities, close to family and friends," said Dennis MacKay, MLA for Bulkley Valley - Stikine. "This partnership between the province, other levels of government and the Houston Lions Senior Citizens Home Society is making that happen."

Assisted living homes are self-contained apartments where residents receive hospitality and personal care services, such as meals, housekeeping and laundry services, recreational opportunities, and assistance with medications, mobility and other care needs, as well as a 24-hour response system.

"One of our goals is supporting seniors in staying independent for as long as they can. These units will provide local seniors with more care options that will help them stay independent. The new complex care beds that will be added in the near future at the Houston Health Centre will also make a big difference by supporting local seniors who can no longer care for themselves and need around the clock nursing care," said Rowena Holoien, Northern Health's chief operating officer for the Northwest Health Services Delivery Area.

"The District of Houston is a proud supporter of this project and it is comforting to know that this assisted living development will help make the lives of many seniors in the community easier," said Mayor Sharon Smith.

"These additional units of assisted living will make a big difference and allow us to help more seniors access the care and independence they deserve," said George Rhodes, President of the Houston Lions Senior Citizens Home Society.

These new units are part of the British Columbia government's commitment to provide 5,000 net-new residential care beds, assisted living units, and supportive housing with home support units by the end of 2008. To date, 8,494 new and replacement beds and units have been built, including 3,196 net-new.

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The Province of British Columbia is committed to providing more than 4,000 affordable assisted living apartments for B.C. seniors and persons with disabilities. To date, more than 3,900 have been allocated in communities across the province. The Province's budget for shelters and affordable housing is \$328 million — nearly triple what it was in 2001.

The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will contribute more than \$130 million by 2010 towards affordable housing in this province. The provincial government will provide a minimum of \$34 million annually to subsidize the cost of units built under the Canada – BC Affordable Housing Agreement, as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for British Columbians in greatest need.

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Backgrounder

Cottonwood Manor

Development Facts

Five new units of assisted living for seniors have been added to 16 independent seniors housing units at the Houston Lions Senior Citizens Home Society's Cottonwood Manor. The development is at 2261 Copeland Avenue in Houston.

Tenants receive two meals a day, weekly housekeeping and linen services, 24-hour emergency response, personal care services and social and recreational opportunities. Tenants pay 70 percent of their after-tax income for their units and services.

Funding Facts

Capital cost of this project is approximately \$1.5 million.

Partners and Funding:

- The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, is providing a \$300,000 capital grant.
- The provincial government is providing a housing subsidy of up to \$986,000 over 35 years.
- Northern Health will provide annual funding in the amount of \$45,578 for the personal care and part of the hospitality services to tenants.
- The municipality is contributing \$7,000 in reduction of municipal fees.
- The Houston Lions Senior Citizens Home Society is providing \$16,000 in land equity and \$60,000 in private donations.