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BC SOCIAL WORKERS JOIN CALL FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT IN LONG TERM CARE HOMES

(Vancouver) BC's social work association supports the call for the immediate creation of a multi-stakeholder task force to spearhead a paradigm shift in long-term care that focuses on facilitating quality of life and addresses long standing structural issues.

"Social workers across BC welcome Dr. Penny MacCourt's recommendations and support the work of the Action to Reform Residential Care in BC" said Michael Crawford, President of the BC Association of Social Workers. "We join with other healthcare professionals, seniors' organizations, schools of social work, and others calling for improved quality of life for people living in long-term care."

The report, "Improving Quality of Life in Long Term Care- A Way Forward", makes 35 recommendations about the need for more person-centred care and focus on quality of life in a more home-like environment through new licensing standards, increased staffing levels and training, higher wages and benefits, and development of regional support for family councils.

"Our members work on interdisciplinary teams, and social workers are essential in helping to meet the needs of residents and their families in long-term care" said Crawford. "Social workers bring a unique perspective and skill set, including advocacy and system navigation, as well as emotional and mental health support to residents and their families."

The report includes an addendum written by the Seniors Community of Practice, a working group within the BC Association of Social Workers, calling for increased staffing levels including professional social workers in long-term care. Social workers have expertise in working with families and advocating for vulnerable seniors.

"Unfortunately, social work is not a mandated service in long-term care and many care homes do not have social workers on staff" said Crawford. "Social work support in assisted living is even more limited where recent changes in legislation means individuals who need an increased level of services now qualify for assisted living settings."

The BC Association of Social Workers supports the call for older adults to have a range of high-quality options whether they choose to live at home, in an assisted living site or in a long-term care setting. The association calls for investments in seniors' care with quality of life at the forefront.

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"Improving Quality of Life in Long Term Care – A way forward" - <http://arrcbc.ca/>

Michael Crawford | President
BC Association of Social Workers