



The **Suburban**

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Navigating our public healthcare system for home care and long-term care residences



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Seniors and Aging

The thought of accessing home care services or getting a permanent bed in a long-term care residence in the public system can be daunting. As our population ages, we are witnessing a healthcare system that is struggling to meet our increasing needs. Waiting lists to obtain home care services, or to get into a public long-term care home, have almost doubled in the past four years. The task of obtaining these services can be confusing and overwhelming. Here are some explanations of how our system works:

Accessing home care services

The procedure to access public home care services is through your local CLSC. You, someone close to you, or a health professional can make a request. An intake person will do an initial assessment to determine if you qualify for home care services. From there, a healthcare professional will perform an assessment in your home. It may take up to a couple of months to get a formal assessment.

To be eligible for home care services, you must meet the following requirements: You must be homebound because of a temporary or permanent disability; and you need to receive a portion or all the necessary assistance in your home.

Services provided can include assistance with personal care, weekly bathing, medication supervision, nursing care (wound care, post-operative care and follow-ups, specimen collection, etc.), rehabilitation services (physiotherapy and occupational therapy) amongst other services.

Be sure to inquire about the Service Employment Paycheque program (better known as the Chèque Emploi-Service program). This is a method of providing home support services where you hire your own caregiver, and the government will pay the caregiver \$19.48 per hour for all qualified weekly hours. There are eligibility requirements and there is some paperwork to be completed every two weeks.

However, this is a welcome program to assist families with their home care requirements.

Accessing a long-term care residence

A person with diminished autonomy due to aging or a physical or mental impairment, and can no longer live at home, may be admitted to a long-term care centre (known as a CHSLD — centre d'hébergement et de soins de longue durée) or an intermediate resource (known as an RI — ressource intermédiaire). You are obligated to go through your local CLSC to get into a public residence.

An assessment will be performed to establish care

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The procedure to access public home care services is through your local CLSC.

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PUBLIC HEALTHCARE

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needs and to determine if you qualify for a permanent placement. Placement is then based on priority level, not a first come, first served basis. The waiting list to get in a public residence can range from several months to several years. In most cases, you can choose your desired residence for permanent placement. Once a room becomes available, you generally have 24-36 hours to move in.

During the waiting period, a CLSC social worker will work with your family to find a transition bed in a convenient geographical location. However, the choice

is often based on when a bed becomes available regardless of location. The cost of a private room in a public CHSLD is \$2,198.10. The cost for a semi-private room (i.e. two people per room) is \$1,836.30.

It can be challenging to navigate the public system. Reach out to your local CLSC and be prepared to advocate for your loved ones. Always bear in mind, employees in the public system are generally hard working, caring people trying to do their best with limited resources. Diplomacy, patience and perseverance are key traits in making the process effective and efficient. And should you wish to pursue private home care or a private residence,

tap into industry specialists that can help guide you through the process.

Matt Del Vecchio is a Certified Professional Consultant on Aging (CPCA). He is the owner of Lianas Senior Transition Support and Premier Home Care helping families and their loved ones through the aging process. He is also the host of "Life Unrehearsed" on CJAD800. For more, visit <https://lianasservices.com/>, or email mdelvecchio@lianasservices.com. For a free, no obligation consultation, call 514-622-8074.

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