

## TITLE

**ALTERNATE LEVEL OF CARE ACCOMMODATION CHARGES - PATIENTS WAITING FOR CONTINUING CARE**SCOPE

Provincial: Finance

## DOCUMENT #

FS-01

## APPROVAL LEVEL

Executive Leadership Team

## SPONSOR

Finance (Treasurer)

## INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE

July 13, 2015

## CATEGORY

Financial Stewardship

## REVISED

Not applicable

**NOTE:** The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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If you have any questions or comments regarding the information in this policy, please contact the Policy & Forms Department at [policy@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:policy@albertahealthservices.ca). The Policy & Forms website is the official source of current approved policies, procedures, directives, and practice support documents.

**PURPOSE**

- To ensure clear and consistent communication and processes for levying charges on **patients** who are:
  - approved for a **continuing care living option (Living Option)**; and
  - currently accommodated in an acute care or sub-acute bed.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Alberta Health Services shall levy charges where **alternate level of care (ALC)** patients waiting in an acute care or transition beds have been assessed and approved through the Alberta Health Services Co-ordinated Access process to move to a continuing care living option (Living Option).

**APPLICABILITY**

Compliance with this policy is required by all AHS employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of AHS (including contracted service providers as necessary). This policy does not limit any legal rights to which you may otherwise be entitled.

This policy applies only to reducing/waiving charges as set out in this policy.

## POLICY ELEMENTS

### 1. Accommodation Charges

- 1.1 Where a patient has been assessed as requiring continuing care services and is waiting in an acute care or transition bed for a Living Option, Alberta Health Services shall charge the patient for ALC accommodation in accordance with applicable legislation and ministerial orders.
- a) The accommodation charge shall be the equivalent of the current long term care accommodation (standard room) charge for entitled persons in accordance with the *Hospitalization Benefits Regulations* (s.5(8)) and the *Nursing Homes Operations Regulations* (s.3(1)).
- 1.2 The acute care site Case Manager shall discuss the accommodation fees with the patient and/or the party responsible for paying the accommodation fee.
- 1.3 Should the patient and/or the party responsible for paying the accommodation fee identify that they are unable to afford the accommodation fee, the acute care site Case Manager will consult an Alberta Health Services Social Worker to assist the patient and/or the party responsible for paying the accommodation fee in determining sources for fee payment. (See 6.0 below.)

### 2. Exceptions

- 2.1 Patients whose move to a Living Option is for palliative care shall be exempted from alternate level of care accommodation charges while waiting in hospital.
- 2.2 Patients assessed for a Personal Care Home.

### 3. Notification

- 3.1 Alberta Health Services Seniors Health shall provide to Finance – Accounts Receivable, the following:
- a) a copy of the *Continuing Care Approval and Charges Notification Letter*, and
- b) a copy of the signed *Continuing Care Living Options Declaration of Financial Responsibility*.

### 4. Effective Date of Alternate Level of Care Charges

- 4.1 The charges shall be effective as of the date the patient is assessed and approved as needing a Living Option.
- a) Assessment and approval is completed by the Case Manager in consultation with the patient's health care team, including the patient's **most responsible health practitioner**.

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b) The date is noted on the *Notification of Continuing Care Approval and Charges Letter: Patients Waiting in Hospital*.

4.2 Charges will remain in place until such time as the patient is transferred to an appropriate Living Option or discharged home.

4.3 Finance shall ensure that when the patient is transferred to a Living Option from the acute care setting, there is no duplication of accommodation charges by Alberta Health Services and the Living Option facility.

## 5. Changes in Health Status

5.1 If the patient's health status changes such that acute care services are required, Alberta Health Services shall discontinue accommodation charges from the date the patient was identified as needing acute care services until such time as the patient's status is once again deemed alternate level of care waiting for a Living Option.

a) Health status change is determined by the health care team, including the patient's most responsible health practitioner.

5.2 The acute care site shall notify Finance – Accounts Receivable of the date the patient's status changed to requiring acute care services, and the date the patient is determined no longer to require acute care services.

5.3 The acute care site shall notify the patient, and/or the party responsible for paying the accommodation fees, that the fees will not be charged for the time the patient is considered to be "acute" and re-instated when the patient is again considered to be ALC and waiting for a living option.

## 6. Financial Assistance Options

6.1 Alberta Health Services will provide information and assistance to patients assessed and approved for a Living Option to apply for appropriate Alberta Government Income Support Programs, including Alberta Seniors Benefits and Alberta Income for Severely Handicapped where appropriate.

a) Information and assistance shall be provided by members of the patient's care team, and may include the Continuing Care Case Manager, Social Worker(s) and others.

6.2 Where a patient/**alternate decision-maker** indicates that the payment of alternate level of care accommodation charges will constitute financial hardship, the patient's Continuing Care Case Management Team and Finance personnel will work with the patient/alternate decision-maker to identify options to mitigate financial hardship.

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## DEFINITIONS

**Alternate decision-maker** means a person who is authorized to make decisions with or on behalf of the patient. These may include a specific decision-maker, a minor's legal representative, a guardian, a 'nearest relative' in accordance with the *Mental Health Act* [Alberta], an agent in accordance with a Personal Directive, or a person designated in accordance with the *Human Tissue and Organ Donation Act* [Alberta].

**Alternate level of care (ALC)** means when a patient is occupying a bed in an acute, mental health, or rehabilitation facility; or occupying a sub-acute or transition bed in any facility, and has been assessed as not requiring the intensity of resources/services provided in that care setting, but is waiting transfer to a setting that provides a different level of care, the patient is deemed to be waiting in an alternate level of care (ALC) than the patient's care needs require.

**Continuing care living option (Living Option)** means the level of care in a publicly funded residential accommodation that provides health and support services appropriate to meet the patient's assessed unmet needs. As part of the Alberta Health Services Co-ordinated Access process, all appropriate service options have been exhausted to enable the patient to remain in his/her current living setting before the patient is considered for a Living Option.

**Most responsible health practitioner** means the health practitioner who has responsibility and accountability for the specific treatment/procedure(s) provided to a patient and who is authorized by Alberta Health Services to perform the duties required to fulfill the delivery of such a treatment/procedure(s), within the scope of his/her practice.

**Patient** means an adult or child who receives or has requested health care or services from Alberta Health Services and its health care providers or individuals authorized to act on behalf of Alberta Health Services. This term is inclusive of residents, clients and outpatients.

## REFERENCES

- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - *Coordinated Access to Publicly Funded Continuing Care Health Services: Directional and Operational Policy: Section H* (Alberta Government, and Alberta Health Services)
  - *Hospitalization Benefits Regulation – Fees Payable* (Alberta Health Ministerial Order)
  - *Hospitalization Benefits Regulation* (Alberta)
  - *Hospitals Act* (Alberta)
  - *Mental Health Act* (Alberta)
  - *Mental Health Regulation* (Alberta)
  - *Nursing Homes Operation Regulation* (Alberta)

## REVISIONS

None

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### VERSION HISTORY

Date	Action Taken
June 30, 2015	Initial approval
July 13, 2015	Initial effective
July 2018	Scheduled for review