

# What is the difference between a **retirement community** and a **long term care residence**?



**When you hear about retirement residences, you may assume they are the same as long term care homes; however, the two options differ in many ways.**

If you have a senior patient who you believe may benefit from more daily support to live well, including the social supports offered in congregate settings, here are some key points of differentiation to consider when making your recommendation:

## **CARE SUPPORT**

Today's retirement residents are equipped to accommodate seniors with varying care needs. Assistance with the activities of daily living, medication management, meals, housekeeping and personal care can be tailored to the unique needs of the individual. Depending on severity, some retirement residences can also safely accommodate seniors living with dementia in dedicated memory care neighbourhoods.

There are three lifestyle options for retirement residences in Alberta; **Independent Supportive Living (ISL)**, **Private Supportive Living (PSL)** and **Designated Supportive Living (DSL4 & DSL4D)**.

One of the main differentiating factors of a long term care residence is that the older adults who call them home usually require 24-hour registered nursing support and secure environments to help manage highly-complex and unpredictable medical needs, or advanced stages of dementia.

## **PRIVATE PAY VS. FUNDED CARE**

Independent Supportive Living residences are private-pay, meaning residents are responsible for paying for their monthly rent. In Private Supportive Living residences, residents are also responsible for paying the monthly rent, but are also eligible for scheduled care (funded), such as assistance with activities of daily living and medication assistance. In Designated Supportive Living residences, residents pay a flat rate for rent and care, which is set by the Alberta government. Unscheduled and scheduled care is available 24/7.

In Alberta, long term care residences are funded by the provincial government, meaning the residents living in them have a portion of their monthly rent subsidized by the government.

## **MOVE-IN PROCESS**

To move into an Independent Supportive Living residence, individuals are welcome to inquire about availability at the retirement community they are interested in. A Retirement Living Consultant will meet with the individual inquiring about moving in to learn about their unique needs and preferences. ISL residences can generally accept new move-ins immediately, with wait times being infrequent and short.

Admission into Private Supportive Living residences is the same as ISL; however, an Alberta Health Services (AHS) Case Manager will assess the resident and authorize scheduled care as needed.

Admissions into Designated Supportive Living (DSL4 & DSL4D) residences is coordinated by the AHS Access Coordinator. An AHS Case Manager will assess the resident and develop the resident's personal plan of care.

In Alberta, admission into funded long term care is determined by the Health Authority System Care Manager, not directly by long term care homes. Individuals needing to move a loved one into a long term care residence may find that once they engage with their local health authority, they will likely have to be put on a waiting list until a suite becomes available.

**For more information on the differences between retirement living and long term care and other resources for health care professionals, we invite you to visit [chartwell.com/professionals](https://chartwell.com/professionals).**