



Office of the Official Opposition • Bureau de l'Opposition officielle

## **More support for senior care needed**

October 18, 2011

FREDERICTON – The Alward Conservatives' lack of a plan for senior care is coming under fire by the Liberal Opposition.

Opposition critic for seniors and Liberal MLA for Memramcook-Lakeville-Dieppe, Bernard LeBlanc, raised concerns that the Alward government's stalling on the nursing home renovation and replacement schedule and lack of a plan on home care services is hurting those trying to provide senior care in the province.

"This government has abandoned the plan to renovate and renew our nursing home structure, with the promise that a home care strategy would be forthcoming. We're a year into their mandate, and no plan for senior care has been provided."

"We've met with home support associations, nursing home officials and seniors advocates who have all raised legitimate concerns that the Alward government is not taking action on seniors' issues."

Senior care organizations, such as the New Brunswick Home Support Association, have expressed concerns that the Alward government is not doing enough to meet the rising costs of wage increases and training for their workers.

LeBlanc said if nothing is done to address a host of issues related to senior care, from workers' wages, training and retention, to the cancellation of plans to fix up nursing homes and create new nursing home beds, he fears that the province will see a greater number of seniors ending up in hospital.

"It's a known fact that our acute care hospital bed shortage is at a tipping point. We must do something to stem the growing number of seniors who are occupying hospital beds instead of receiving care in a more appropriate setting such as a nursing home, special care home or their own residence."

The Liberals are calling on the Alward government to release immediately a coordinated action plan on home care and senior care infrastructure.

"Our senior support workers are as important a resource as our infrastructure. If we don't maintain those resources, support them and develop them to their fullest capacity, then our system is not operating at its best."

**MEDIA CONTACT** – Hillary Casey, Office of the Official Opposition: 506-453-2548