BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE MINISTER OF HEALTH 
AND ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF SENIORS 
MANAGING INTEGRATED SERVICES FOR SENIORS 
THROUGH FAMILY CARE CLINICS

Purpose:
The purpose of this briefing note is to present options and a recommendation to meet the needs of seniors across Alberta for integrated health, housing and community support services, by making Seniors Resource Centres an integral part of Family Care Clinics.

Background:
The Alberta Network of Senior Related Organizations (ANSRO) is an unincorporated and informal network of provincial and community-based organizations that are concerned about the availability, accessibility and affordability of services for seniors. In December 2011, ANSRO issued a white paper to assist provincial leaders in making strategic, client focused policy decisions for Alberta seniors. The following year, then-Minister of Seniors, Hon. George VanderBurg, agreed to fund the development of a pilot project to field test a provincially-standardized, community-based approach to managing integrated services for seniors. An ANSRO steering committee oversaw the selection of three pilot sites and development of a preliminary budget for a stand-alone pilot project. This preliminary budget was submitted to Hon. Fred Horne, Minister of Health, in December 2012; however, by early-January 2013, it became apparent that the fiscal situation in Alberta would not support the implementation of the proposed pilot project.

Current Situation:
Our province’s current fiscal challenges do not change the fact that Alberta’s senior population is expected to double in the next 20 years. The needs of seniors, particularly those who are frail and vulnerable, will not go away, simply because we cannot afford a three-year pilot project. ANSRO’s members and supporters believe the Seniors Resource Centre concept is still very relevant and worth pursuing. We remain committed to realizing our vision and believe the Family Care Clinic development process presents an excellent opportunity to achieve this vision.

The Seniors Resource Centre and Family Care Clinic models are strongly aligned in philosophy, design and operations. There are clear opportunities to share infrastructure, staff and resources, as both models propose to deliver team-based services that meet the needs of their local communities. Significant cost savings can be achieved through co-location, shared information management, and joint planning and evaluation. Practical alignment of these two models is a fiscally responsible solution and can be achieved at little or no additional cost, through the redeployment of current budgeted resources.

ANSRO proposes to develop a standardized model that can be embedded in every Family Care Clinic in Alberta to meet the needs of local seniors (see Figure). This standardized model will operationalize the concept presented in the ANSRO white paper and draw from similar models developed in Canada and internationally. A provincial advisory committee will guide the
development, evaluation and continuing improvement of Seniors Resource Centres, to maintain a standard level of integrated services for seniors, wherever they might live in Alberta. A local seniors advisory committee will identify local needs, advise on the best way to meet those needs and connect the Seniors Resource Centre to senior-serving agencies already in the community.

Every Seniors Resource Centre would provide three service levels, which can be adapted to the needs of the local community:

**Level 1 – Informational-Advisory:** All seniors will have access to information and advice to promote independence, well-being and security, while preventing a decline in abilities.

**Level 2 – Coordinated Linkages:** Seniors living with stable chronic conditions and low-moderate service needs will be connected to appropriate services – including health, housing and community supports – to maintain independence and avoid crises.

**Level 3 – Integrated Service Delivery:** Seniors who are elderly, frail and vulnerable, and whose age-related needs affect their ability to look after themselves, will receive team-based services and integrated case management to address acute/complex needs and enable them to regain independence after a crisis in an appropriate home setting.

**Figure: Proposed Model of a Seniors Resource Centre Embedded in a Family Care Clinic**

![Diagram of proposed model](image)

**Options:**

Option 1: ANSRO works with one or more of its selected pilot sites and/or existing coalitions, that are already preparing to make a Family Care Clinic application in Wave 1, to include a proof of concept pilot project for a Seniors Resource Centre in each proposed Family Care Centre.

- The advantage of this option is that ANSRO can build on established relationships and demonstrated interest to embed the Seniors Resource Centre model in Family Care Clinics developed by these partners. The model can then be evaluated and shared as a best or promising practice with other, non-aligned Family Care Clinics established in Wave 1.
- The disadvantage of a pilot project approach, at this time, is that the Government of Alberta will miss the opportunity to embed a standardized model for Seniors Resource Centres, as an integral component, in all Family Care Clinics developed in Wave 1.
Family Care Clinics that develop their own strategy (or no strategy) for meeting the needs of local seniors will be less open to adopting the Senior Resource Centre model, after two or three years of operation. This will result in significant variation in access, quality, outcomes, effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of integrated services for seniors and a missed opportunity to standardize services.

Option 2: ANSRO works with the Family Care Clinic Implementation Team to present the Seniors Resource Centre model to successful applicants for consideration in developing their business plans.

- The advantage of this option is that the FCC Implementation Team can use existing resources to promote the Seniors Resource Centre concept. All Family Care Clinics developed in Wave 1 will have the opportunity to adopt, adapt and embed a Seniors Resource Centre, as one approach to meeting the standards and requirements set out for Family Care Clinics in responding to the identified needs of seniors in their communities.
- The disadvantage of this approach is that there is no guarantee that all or any Family Care Clinic will adopt the Senior Resource Centre model or all of its elements. As above, this will result in significant variation in access, quality, outcomes, effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of integrated services for seniors and a missed opportunity to standardize services for seniors in Alberta.

Option 3: Government of Alberta makes the Seniors Resource Centre model a standard and integral part of Family Care Clinics.

- The advantage of this option is that the Government of Alberta can bring its Aging Population Framework and Social Policy Framework into alignment with Primary Care Transformation, including greater emphasis on prevention and wellness. Family Care Clinics can provide the infrastructure for the roll-out of Seniors Resource Centres across Alberta, along with sustainable, single source funding for their operation. Significant efficiency and cost savings can be achieved through co-location, shared staff and team-based services, common information management systems, joint planning and simultaneous evaluation of the FCC and SRS models. Health care and community support providers will be able to more readily share information, achieve better client outcomes and increase client satisfaction. Most importantly, seniors across Alberta will have improved access in their communities to information, advice, referral and integrated case management that will enable them to optimize their independence, safety, security and wellbeing.
- The disadvantage of this approach is that the Seniors Resource Centre model will be rolled-out broadly, before it has been field tested and evaluated in an Alberta context. Similar models have been evaluated in other jurisdictions and will be used to guide implementation and evaluation of Seniors Resource Centres in Alberta.

**Recommendation:**
Option 3 is recommended.

**Contact:**  
J. Lawrence Tymko  
Phone: 780 435-8471  
Email: jltymko@telus.net