

Seniors and Community Supports

2008-2009

Annual Report Highlights



Message from the Minister

As the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, I am proud to present highlights of the Ministry's Annual Report for the 2008-09 fiscal year. I am honoured to have the opportunity to work with individuals, families, communities, service providers and agencies to provide services and programs that encourage and support the independence and well-being of seniors and persons with disabilities in need.

As a Ministry, we have accomplished a great deal this year. The Ministry's program expense, totaling over \$1.8 billion, supports the provision of programs, services and information to the province's 382,000 seniors, over 9,100 adults with developmental disabilities and more than 37,000 Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped clients.

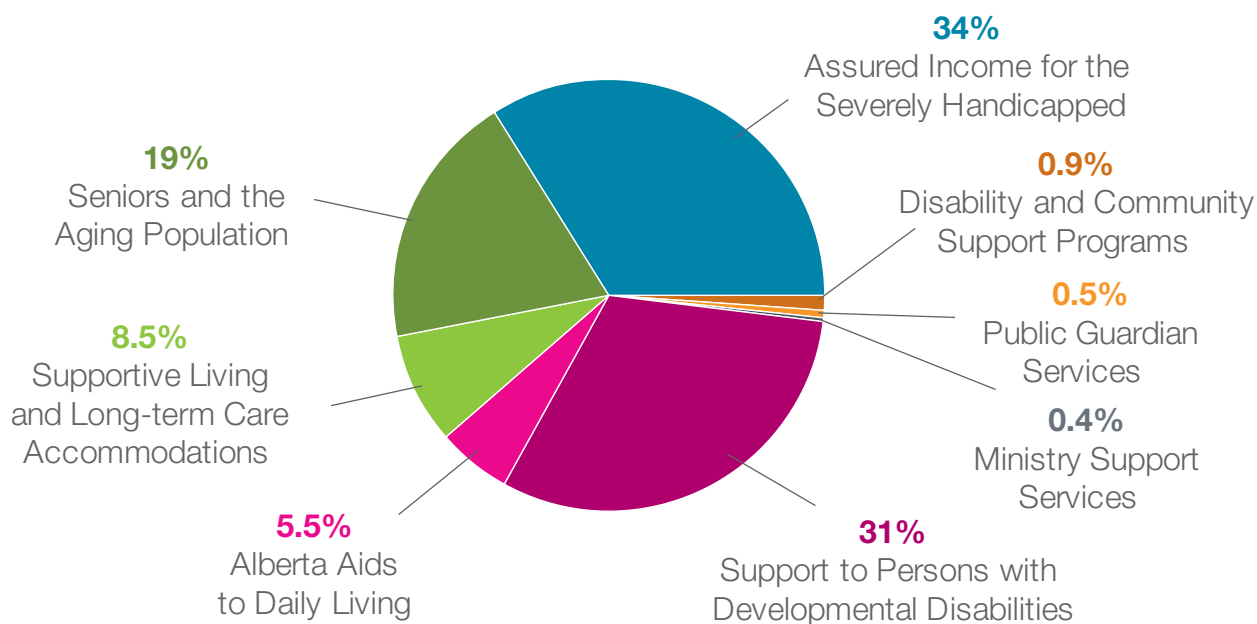
I continue to be very proud to lead this Ministry and I remain confident we will continue to make progress toward our vision that all Albertans, regardless of age or ability, can achieve the best possible well-being and independence.

**Government
of Alberta** ■

Alberta ■

Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

MINISTRY PROGRAM EXPENSES



Valuation Adjustments and Other Provisions represent \$596,000
 Ministry Support Services represent \$8,131,000

ASSURED INCOME FOR THE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED (AISH)

\$627,698,000

- Provided financial and health benefits to more than 37,000 adult Albertans with a permanent disability that severely impairs the person's ability to earn a livelihood. Over 11,000 of these individuals also received personal benefits in 2008-09 to assist with additional expenses such as special diet or maintaining a service animal.
- Increased the AISH employment income exemption by \$500 to \$1,500 per month for single AISH clients and to \$2,500 per month for couples and clients with children.
- Lead the Health-Related Supports Initiative, a joint project of ministries that provides health-related supports and services, designed to ease access to programs and services and ensure their sustainability into the future.

SUPPORT TO PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

\$570,878,000

- Provided supports to approximately 9,100 adults with developmental disabilities to participate in community life and live as independently as possible.
- Collaborated with community agencies, post-secondary institutions and government partners to enhance access to employment and volunteer opportunities for adults with a developmental disability.

- Improved coordination of supports for adults with developmental disabilities by working in collaboration with health regions and Children and Youth Services, resulting in better transitions to community following discharge from hospital, and from childhood to adult services.
- Developed and implemented flexible options for accessing supports for adults with developmental disabilities. This included Family Managed Service arrangements, which allow families to have more control over how their family member is supported.

SENIORS AND THE AGING POPULATION **\$353,240,000**

- Provided approximately 138,000 Alberta seniors with monthly cash benefits through the Alberta Seniors Benefit program.
- Enhanced the employment deduction for ASB so working seniors can earn up to \$3,600 without having their provincial benefits reduced.
- Increased the annual income thresholds for the Alberta Seniors Benefit and Special Needs Assistance for Seniors programs by \$500 for a single senior and \$1,000 per couple.
- Assisted approximately 20,500 seniors with eligible one-time or extraordinary expenses such as home repairs through the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program.
- Provided rebates to 73,000 senior households through the Education Property Tax Assistance Program.
- Partnered with Alberta Blue Cross to enhance processing of seniors' optical claims so that seniors now pay only their portion of the cost up front.
- Provided financial assistance for dental treatment to approximately 81,000 seniors.
- Distributed nearly 50,000 copies of the *Seniors Programs and Services Information Guide*.
- Established the eight-member Demographic Planning Commission to assist the province in developing an Aging Population Policy Framework to guide future government decisions on seniors' policies and programs.
- Worked with federal, provincial and community partners to raise awareness of elder abuse through World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and developed educational resources for seniors and financial institutions on recognizing financial abuse.

SUPPORTIVE LIVING AND LONG-TERM CARE ACCOMMODATIONS

\$157,134,000

- Through the Affordable Supportive Living Initiative, provided \$84.4 million in capital funding to develop 890 new affordable supportive living units and modernize 263 units for a total of 1,153 units.
- Committed \$35.6 million in capital funding to 29 projects that will modernize and improve 1,992 lodge units for seniors through the Lodge Modernization and Improvement program.
- Inspected all long-term care facilities against a set of quality standards for accommodation and related services.
- Supported quality by monitoring against the accommodation standards in supportive living settings, including all of the province's seniors lodges.
- Launched a web-based public reporting system for standards and monitoring, providing information on over 600 licensed supportive living facilities and seniors' lodges in the province.
- Collaborated with Health and Wellness to launch the province's Continuing Care Strategy, *Aging in the Right Place*.
- Developed the new *Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act* which is designed to ensure quality accommodation and related services to enhance the safety and security of residents.

ALBERTA AIDS TO DAILY LIVING

\$102,212,000

- Provided 73,000 Albertans with a disability, chronic illness or terminal illness with equipment and supplies to help them maintain their independence.

DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

\$16,332,000

- Contracted with community agencies to deliver innovative services for adults with brain injuries, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and other disabilities.
- Continued implementation of the Community Access for People in Continuing Care initiative to assist younger adults with disabilities living in continuing care facilities to participate in their communities.
- Implemented the new *Service Dogs Act*, ensuring that all Albertans with a disability who use qualified service dogs have access to all public places in the province.
- Through the Protection for Persons in Care program, made over 600 recommendations to improve the safety of adults receiving care in government-funded settings, such as hospitals or long-term care facilities.

PUBLIC GUARDIAN SERVICES

\$9,033,000

- Provided direct guardianship services through the Office of the Public Guardian for 1,996 dependent adults who are deemed unable to make their own personal, non-financial decisions.
- Enhanced guardianship and trusteeship options through the new *Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act*. The improved legislation uses a “least-intrusive” approach and provides more options for Albertans who need assistance in making decisions.
- Amended the *Personal Directives Act* to make it easier for Albertans to write a personal directive. The Act also establishes the first-ever registry for personal directives in Canada, which can assist care providers in locating a decision-maker for a person in their care.

Information on seniors programs is available through the Provincial toll-free Seniors Information Line at 1-800-642-3853 or by calling 780-427-7876 in the Edmonton area.

More information on programs for seniors and persons with disabilities is available on the Ministry’s website at www.seniors.alberta.ca

The Alberta Seniors and Community Supports 2008-09 Annual Report is also available on the Ministry’s website.