

SILVERA'S PRIORITIES

ADVOCACY POSITIONS



Overview of Advocacy Initiatives

About Silvera for Seniors

Ensuring seniors in our community have a safe and affordable place to call home with the services and supports to meet their lifestyle needs and requirements matters to our Board of Directors, executives, partners, donors, employees, volunteers, residents, their families and the 700 seniors on our waiting list for affordable housing. Silvera is a trusted leader and a strong advocate for affordable (discounted) and well-priced market housing on behalf of seniors.

Silvera is a solutions-oriented community leader and a champion of seniors living in Calgary. We provide a diverse selection of housing with services and supports for independent older adults in 27 buildings in Calgary with 1,750 residents and 400 employees.

We are proud to partner with all orders of government to deliver on our commitment, to provide policy input to all orders of government, and to tirelessly advocate for issues and solutions that allow our seniors to live their best life and age with dignity. Our collective efforts can ensure that Calgary is a great city to age for all.

24/7 Onsite Home Care Support

The supportive living (lodge) program provides low-income seniors with the ability to remain as independent as possible while receiving supports/services to assist with their basic daily needs, such as meals, weekly housekeeping and social activities. While this unique made-in-Alberta program does not provide onsite medical services, it is a critical component in the Alberta continuing care spectrum. However, as seniors in our community stay in their homes longer, they often come to Silvera's supportive living communities with more advanced and complex health requirements. Although these individuals can access scheduled home care services if required, it leaves significant gaps in ongoing care that Silvera does not have the scope to manage.

As a result, Silvera residents become frequent users of limited EMS services (average of 61 calls be month) or being prematurely transferred to higher levels of care that are up to seven times more expensive and significantly impair the quality of life and independence of a senior.

Funding for 24/7 onsite home care support would allow operators to proactively manage residents' health care needs and respond to certain health-related situations that current employees are not licensed to handle. This would result in significant cost savings to the government and taxpayers, decrease pressure on EMS services and optimize the deployment of home care workers.

Updated Outbreak Funding Model

The safety and health of residents in congregated living settings is critically important to ensuring that these settings provide a comfortable place to call home for seniors. This was never more apparent than during the COVID-19 pandemic, however ongoing outbreak management of pathogens causing influenza and GI is just as important. We have learned a lot about outbreak prevention and management over the last several years. As COVID-19 funding begins to be eliminated, it is imperative that the funding model to support ongoing outbreak management activities is updated to reflect best practices and public health requirements for the prevention and response to COVID-19, influenza, GI, and other public health illnesses. This will provide operators with the necessary resources to effectively prevent and respond to outbreaks and instill confidence in Albertans regarding congregated housing and accommodation options.

Grow Affordable Housing

The need for affordable housing in our community has never been greater, particularly for low-to-moderate income seniors on fixed incomes. As the cost of living continues to increase, these seniors are at risk of being able to afford a place to call home. With rents in Calgary increasing on average by 25% over the last year, and the number of seniors living in Calgary increasing by 18% over the last five years, the need for affordable seniors housing is urgent. Silvera has added nearly 200 additional housing units for low-to-moderate income seniors in Calgary over the last 18-months, with an additional 47 units to be available by the end of 2023, but more is required.

Silvera supports the innovative approach outlined in the Government of Alberta Stronger Foundations Affordable Housing Strategy, which will enable Silvera's capital growth plan and add approximately another 225 housing units for low to moderate income seniors' in the immediate term, but this ambitious plan requires that capital funding and other supports are made available from all orders of government so that housing providers can leverage and optimize resources that are available to them.

Workforce Stability

Supporting seniors in our community to live their best life is at the core of the day-to-day work of the nearly 400 Silvera employees. From cooks and housekeepers to activity coordinators, administrators, and maintenance personnel, these staff play an integral role in ensuring that Silvera residents are safe and able to live as independently as possible as they age. Being able to recruit, retain and maintain a workforce is essential to delivering on this commitment for Silvera. However, with nearly a \$5/hour gap between Calgary's living wage and what Silvera is able to offer certain employees, maintaining a stable workforce is challenging. Furthermore, after making progress in closing this gap, current government funding is failing to keep up with inflationary and wage growth in Calgary and Silvera is beginning to fall behind again. It is essential that the Government of Alberta prioritize workforce stability in the seniors housing sector by committing to funding living wages for employees and working with the sector to create a multi-skilled (non-medical) Seniors Support Worker program that helps train and recruit individuals seeking meaningful work in supporting seniors in our community.