**Discretionary Benefits Workshop Questions:**

**What if someone is to disabled to prep their home for bed bug extermination?**

A: There is a service in London that aims to support low-income folks with these matters. VHA Home HealthCare - London Extreme Cleaning Program offers services such as:

* Clean out, de-clutter and discard items
* Thoroughly clean all living spaces in unit including: walls, floors and cupboards, appliances and laundry
* **Prepare home for pest control (bedbug, roach) treatment if required**
* Help with weekly follow-up maintenance when appropriate

Please call the intake line 1-888-314-6622 ext 4218 or call the main office at 519-673-6617. Alternatively they can be emailed at [www.vha.ca/services/extreme-cleaning](http://www.vha.ca/services/extreme-cleaning)

[or contact Lori Siemens - Lead Intake Coordinator
lori.siemens@cheshirelondon.ca](http://www.vha.ca/services/extreme-cleaning)

**What if I have been previously denied from my worker for a bed?**

A: They cannot deny you a bed unless you have already applied for Discretionary Benefits within the past 5 years. Although exceptions are generally made for new mattresses if the old ones contain bugs. They need to provide written confirmation that you have been denied, and outline the reasons for your ineligibility. If they do not, this is a violation of protocol and you should contact Nicole. She will file an internal review with your Caseworker, stating that written confirmation and reasons for ineligibility were never provided, and she will advocate for you on your behalf to put in the request for the new mattress. We should always appeal a deny from our Caseworker, especially if we feel like our needs are not being fairly met, and denials are not being provided in writing.

**I am afraid if I file an internal review, my caseworker will cut my benefits or begin to treat me poorly**

A: Your caseworker cannot cut your benefits for no reason. If they do, they must provide a written statement to the recipient indicating why, if this has not been done, there are no reasonable grounds and again an Internal review will be filed by Nicole. Your caseworkers are responsible for the proper management of your file and bound by policies in the work place that prohibit discrimination based on age, race, sex, gender identity, religion, economic status or income level. Failure to do could result in consequences for the caseworker. If you wish to file a complaint against your caseworker, please call the Ontario Ombudsman for Social services at **1-800-263-1830**.