



**For Immediate Release**

**June 10, 2019**

**Office of the Seniors Advocate seeking new members for Council of Advisors**

**VICTORIA, B.C.** – The B.C Seniors Advocate is seeking applicants from four of the provincial health authorities to replace retiring Council of Advisors.

Applicants who currently reside in the following regional health authorities are invited to apply:

- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Fraser Health
- Vancouver Island Health
- Northern Health

[See map for details.](#) There are currently no vacancies in the Interior Health Region.

The council, made up of 25-30 volunteer seniors from around the province, represents diverse backgrounds, ages, geographical areas and cultures, and advises the Office of the Seniors Advocate on issues of importance to seniors in B.C. “I am honoured to have a group of seniors who provide so much insight,” said Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie. “The commitment and connection they give to their communities and to my office is truly inspiring.”

COA members bring forward issues and concerns from their communities and from their own experience. They review projects, reports and recommendations developed by the Office of the Seniors Advocate. “They are essentially the eyes and ears on the ground,” said Mackenzie. “These seniors are also an integral part of ensuring that the issues we are bringing forward to the public, service providers and government are reflective of what is top of mind for seniors in the province.”

Council members have a three-year term and meet in person twice a year in Metro Vancouver. Applicants (65 years of age or older) are required to be able to read material in English and use a computer either alone or with assistance. In order to reflect the vast diversity of seniors across B.C., seniors from a variety of health, socioeconomic, educational and cultural backgrounds are encouraged to apply

Selection criteria have been developed in collaboration with the Council of Senior Citizens’ Organizations of B.C. (COSCO), and COSCO will make the final recommendations for the council member appointments. COSCO is an umbrella organization made up of seniors’ organizations and individual members.

Interested seniors are requested to fill out an application and submit it by 4:00 p.m., July 5, 2019. New council members will be announced by mid-August.

**Learn More:**

Application forms and details are available at [www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca](http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca) or email [info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca](mailto:info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca) for more information.

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**Backgrounder attached.**

# BACKGROUND

## The Office of the Seniors Advocate

The Office of the Seniors Advocate was established by the provincial government as part of the Seniors' Action Plan, a strategy to address the needs and issues of B.C.'s growing seniors population.

The Seniors Advocate Act was passed in 2013. In March 2014, Isobel Mackenzie was appointed the first seniors advocate for the Province of British Columbia.

### Key functions of the Office of the Seniors Advocate

1. **Monitoring and analysis:** The advocate is responsible for monitoring the provision of seniors' services in the areas of health, personal services, housing, transportation, and income supports. The office will monitor through data analysis, surveys, consultation and input from seniors and their families.
2. **Information and referrals:** The office will provide information to seniors and members of the public about seniors services. The office will refer individual complaints to the appropriate person or body for resolution and will track the issues raised by individuals and stakeholders, which may become topics for review.
3. **Examining issues of importance:** The office will work in the best interest of seniors by identifying, analyzing and promoting awareness of systemic challenges, and finding solutions to these challenges.
4. **Recommendations:** The office will make recommendations through direct advisories to service providers and stakeholders; public statements and reports on specific topics; and mandated formal reports to the minister.

### About the Seniors Advocate

Isobel Mackenzie has over 20 years' experience working with seniors in home support, licensed care, community services and volunteer services. Isobel led B.C.'s largest not-for-profit agency, serving over 6000 seniors annually. In this work, Isobel led the implementation of a new model of dementia care that has become a national best practice and led the first safety accreditation for home support workers, among many other accomplishments. Isobel has been widely recognized for her work and was named B.C. CEO of the Year for the not-for-profit sector and nominated as a Provincial Health Care Hero.

Prior to her appointment as the Seniors Advocate, Isobel served on a number of national and provincial boards and commissions, including the BC Medical Services Commission, the Canadian Homecare Association, BC Care Providers, BC Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry, and the Capital Regional District Housing Corporation.

Isobel received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Victoria and has a Certificate in Health Care Leadership from the University of Toronto.

### For more information

The Office of the Seniors Advocate can be reached Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at 1-877-952-3181 (250-952-3181 in Victoria) or via email at [info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca](mailto:info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca). Translation services are available. Website: [seniorsadvocatebc.ca](http://seniorsadvocatebc.ca).