



For Immediate Release
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B.C. Seniors Advocate Releases first comprehensive report *Monitoring Seniors' Services* and announces systemic review of resident on resident aggression in licensed care

Victoria – The Office of the Seniors Advocate (OSA) released its first *Monitoring Seniors' Services* report today. The report marks the beginning of what will become a yearly update from the OSA on the status of key seniors' services in the province, highlighting where seniors' needs are being met, and where improvements are most needed.

“Our goal with this process is to provide the public and policy makers with a single source of data where they can compare year over year how we are doing in this province in delivering services that are critical to seniors,” said Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie. “When we examined the data across all areas, we found a number of interesting stories that are starting to emerge, some are positive, some are cautionary, and some indicate the need for immediate improvements.”

Among areas that affect seniors positively, the report notes that 96% of seniors report they have a regular GP. Data also highlights that four out of five seniors over the age of 85 have no diagnosis of dementia. “While the risk of dementia clearly increases with age it is very important to get the message out to seniors that they have greater likelihood of living a full life *without* developing dementia,” stated Mackenzie.

The report also outlines a number of areas of concern, most notably the number of incidents of resident on resident aggression in residential care facilities. Data presented in the report confirm there were between 425 and 550 incidents of resident on resident aggression that resulted in harm in residential care reported in 2014/15. Based on these findings, the Advocate will conduct a systemic review of resident on resident aggression this year.

“While we have to remember this is still a small number when you consider there are more than 27,000 individuals in residential care at any given time in this province, the numbers are still substantial enough to warrant our office taking a closer look at this issue,” said Mackenzie. “We are beginning in-depth research to see if there are particular patterns or systemic issues that contribute to an increased likelihood of resident on resident aggression,” continued Mackenzie.

The 60-page *Monitoring Seniors' Services* report focuses on 2014/15 data highlighting key services in the Advocate's legislated seniors' services which include transportation, health care, housing, income support and personal care. Further highlights from the report include:

- Home support hours decreased in three out of five health authorities, while the number of clients increased in four out of five
- There are 943 individuals on the waitlist for a total of 4,430 subsidized assisted living units. There has been less than a 1% increase in the number of subsidized assisted living units since 2012

- The number of residential care beds in the province has increased by 3.5% since 2012, but the population over 75 has increased 10% during that time and the number of seniors placed within the 30-day target window has decreased from 67% to 63% in the past year
- 18% of licensed residential care facilities did not have an annual inspection within the last year
- Since 2005, the Shelter Aid for Elder Renters (SAFER) maximum rent that qualifies for a subsidy increased 9% while rents increased by 34%
- The number of new HandyDART users is decreasing – down 15% since 2011. 51,926 (1.9%) of regular HandyDART ride requests went unfulfilled in 2014
- Income supports for seniors such as the Old Age Supplement and Guaranteed Income Supplement increased by 1%. The BC Seniors' Supplement, available to low-income seniors, has not increased in over 25 years
- The number of people aged 65 plus accessing the BC Bus Pass Program (offers subsidized passes to low-income seniors and individuals receiving disability assistance from the province) has increased by 21% since 2010
- In 2014, 33%, or 48,840 of all drivers evaluated under the Driver Medical Examination Report (DMER), an evaluation for fitness to drive, were aged 80 or over. Only 1% of people of all ages or less than 3% of seniors evaluated through a DMER were referred to DriveAble for cognitive assessment
- The Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL) received 1,286 calls related to elder abuse in 2014 and 15% of these calls reported the abuse had been going on for five or more years

The Seniors Advocate will use data contained in this report for upcoming reviews in 2016. In addition to a systemic review of resident on resident aggression, the Office of the Seniors Advocate will be conducting reviews of home support, supplemental benefits for seniors, transportation, residential care and hospital discharge experiences in 2016. Additional services monitored by the Advocate will be added as data becomes available.

The Office of the Seniors Advocate is an independent office of the provincial government with a mandate of monitoring seniors' services, issuing public reports focusing on systemic issues and providing information and referral to seniors and their families.

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