



Reports and Publications Updates

The OSA has released two reports so far this year. The inaugural *Monitoring Seniors' Services* report, released in late January, marks the beginning of a yearly update on key seniors' services in the province, highlighting where seniors' needs are being met, and where improvements are most needed. The report focuses on 2014/15 data highlighting key services under the Advocate's legislated mandate.

The Office of the Seniors Advocate released its *British Columbia Residential Care Facilities Quick Facts Directory* in March. This is an online resource that includes information for 292 publicly funded facilities around the province in a standardized format. Information includes food services, languages spoken, room configurations, care hours provided to residents, inspection and complaint information as well as levels of therapies provided and drug use. The Directory can be viewed at www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/british-columbia-residential-care-facilities-quick-facts-directory.

The Office is working on two reports currently. A review of resident to resident aggression in residential care will be released in June. A systemic review of home support is currently underway drawing on results of our home support survey conducted this past November.

Monitoring Seniors Services Report Highlights

- ◆ Home support hours decreased in 3 out of 5 health authorities, while the number of clients increased in 4 out of 5
- ◆ 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
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Since 2005, the SAFER maximum rent that qualifies for a subsidy increased 9% while rents increased by 34%



Upcoming Events

Alzheimer's Walk for Memories – May 1

Find walk details in your community here:
http://support.alzheimer.ca/site/PageServer?pagename=wfa15_prov_britishcolumbia

BC Seniors Week – June 6–10

Join the conversation!



Like us on Facebook:
[www.facebook.com/
SeniorsAdvocateBC](http://www.facebook.com/SeniorsAdvocateBC)



Follow us on Twitter:
twitter.com/SrsAdvocateBC



OSA Council of Advisers members Janet Lee and Walter Popoff at the 2015 Union of BC Municipalities Convention in Vancouver.

Toll-Free 1.877.952.3181 | Monday to Friday, 8:30-4:30
Translation services available in more than 180 languages.
info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca | seniorsadvocatebc.ca



OSA Survey Work

The OSA will be launching a province-wide survey of 27,000 residential care clients in 303 publicly funded facilities in May. Over five months, 1,500 volunteers will be conducting survey interviews with residents. Most frequent visitors will also be surveyed via mail. This is the first time a survey of this magnitude has been conducted in BC. If you are interested in volunteering and can commit a minimum of 30 hours, please contact our office at 1-877-952-3181 or Project Manager Lillian Parsons at LParsons@providencehealth.bc.ca for more information. The OSA is also currently in the process of planning a province-wide survey of HandyDART users in the province. Results of this survey will be used to inform a systemic review of transportation issues affecting seniors.

Government Responds to OSA Recommendations

The provincial government is undertaking several initiatives in response to concerns raised by the OSA on behalf of seniors. Changes to the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* have been introduced in the Legislative Assembly that would increase the flexibility of Assisted Living and allow seniors to live in this housing choice for longer. This was one of 18 recommendations made in the OSA's review of seniors' housing released last May. The government also announced new thresholds for MSP Premium Assistance in the 2016 provincial budget in February and committed to a provincial campaign to increase awareness of this subsidy which is available to low-income individuals in BC. The OSA highlighted that 39% of seniors are not aware of this subsidy in a survey conducted last year. The government also announced a review of care hours provided to seniors in residential care following extensive media coverage and debate in the Legislature resulting from analysis of information contained in the OSA's *Residential Care Facilities Quick Facts Directory*.



BC Seniors Income Statistics

- ◆ Median income 65+ \$24,000
- ◆ 24% of senior homeowners have household income of less than \$30,000
- ◆ 34% of seniors who rent have a household income less than \$20,000 annually
- ◆ 54,000 seniors receive the BC Seniors Supplement, meaning an annual income of \$17,000 or less

Property Tax Time

As the deadline approaches for homeowners to pay taxes, the Seniors Advocate is reminding seniors to consider property tax deferment as a way to stay living independently. Approximately 80% of seniors in BC are homeowners (609,920) and at least 30% of senior homeowners have an annual income of \$24,000 or less. B.C.'s Property Tax Deferment program allows homeowners 55 and older to defer paying taxes for a low simple interest charge (currently 0.7%) that accrues until they withdraw from the program voluntarily, upon ownership transfer, or upon death. The scenarios below show examples of how deferment impacts property values:

Vancouver: Home price in year 1:	\$1,000,000
Home price in year 10:	\$1,195,093
Equity remaining in year 10:	96.7%
Total amount deferred as of year 10:	\$39,886
Home price in year 20:	\$1,456,811
Equity remaining in year 20:	93.7%
Total amount deferred as of year 20:	\$91,217
Kelowna: Home price in year 1:	\$470,000
Home price in year 10:	\$561,694
Equity remaining in year 10:	93.7%
Total amount deferred as of year 10:	\$35,637
Home price in year 20:	\$684,701
Equity remaining in year 20:	88.1%
Total amount deferred as of year 20:	\$81,499
Comox: Home price in year 1:	\$250,000
Home price in year 10:	\$298,773
Equity remaining in year 10:	92.3%
Total amount deferred as of year 10:	\$23,137
Home price in year 20:	\$364,203
Equity remaining in year 20:	85.5%
Total amount deferred as of year 20:	\$52,914