



For Immediate Release
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B.C. Seniors Advocate launches province-wide survey of all individuals in residential care

Victoria – B.C. Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie announced today the launch of a province-wide survey of 27,000 residents living in 303 publicly-subsidized care facilities in BC.

“For the first time in this province we are going to every care facility and we are asking every resident and their most frequent visitor, a number of questions about their quality of life in the care facility,” said Mackenzie. The survey will explore a range of questions on privacy, food, safety and security, comfort, respect and responsiveness of staff, personal relationships, medications and activities in the facility. Residents will be interviewed in-person and their most frequent visitor, who is usually a family member, will be sent a mail-out survey. “Through this comprehensive and standardized approach we will be able to learn from the people who call residential care their home what impacts their quality of life and whether we are meeting their needs,” said Mackenzie.

The survey and its methodology were designed through a 14-month consultative process involving key stakeholders including facilities, health authorities, family members, union representatives, community groups and academic experts from across Canada. A cornerstone of the survey will be the involvement of trained volunteers.

“I have been inspired by the many generous British Columbians who want to ensure our frail seniors receive the best of care and have volunteered to assist us with this survey so far,” said Mackenzie. “Sometimes it is a university student with an interest in seniors’ care, other times it is retired health care professionals, and other times interested members of the community. I am inviting volunteers from all over the province, from diverse backgrounds, to take part in this very important process. We also welcome people who speak languages other than English.”

A website has been developed for survey volunteers www.surveybcseniors.org. Volunteers can apply online or by calling the Office of the Seniors Advocate office at 1.877.952.3181. Volunteers will be screened and if suitable will participate in a one-day training session and will be asked for a commitment of at least 30 hours over the survey period. Each volunteer will be assigned to a facility and will be responsible for surveying a certain number of residents in that facility. Administrative support will be provided.

“What we’re hearing from volunteers so far is that this is a very positive experience both for them and the residents they are meeting,” said Mackenzie. “It’s an opportunity for volunteers

to gain meaningful volunteer experience and for residents to give feedback in a focused way that they may not have previously had an opportunity to do. “

The Office of the Seniors Advocate is an independent office of the provincial government with a mandate of monitoring seniors’ services and reporting on systemic issues affecting seniors. The office also provides information and referral to seniors and their caregivers.

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