



For Immediate Release
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BC Seniors Advocate releases results of landmark home support survey

Victoria – Isobel Mackenzie, Seniors Advocate for BC, released a report today highlighting results of BC’s first ever province-wide survey of home support clients and their family members.

“We have heard the collective voice of almost 10,000 seniors and their family members on how they rate the quality and effectiveness of our provincial home support program,” said Mackenzie. “There was some good news in the results, as well as clear messages about where there are opportunities for improvements,” Mackenzie added.

Survey results show that, overall, clients are satisfied with the quality of the home support services they receive (62%). However, many respondents want more services to be available to them, such as housekeeping (28%) and meal preparation (12%). Additional highlights include an overwhelming recognition that home support staff are caring and respectful (92%), but there were also concerns around the number of different workers (20% of clients say they get too many regular workers), as well as the lack of skills and training of some home support workers (only 47% of clients think their workers have all necessary skills to provide good care).

“We need to look at how the housekeeping and meal preparation needs of our clients can be better met, how we can reduce the number of different workers involved in care delivery, and how we can increase the skills of a workforce that is highly compassionate,” said Mackenzie.

In addition to questions about home support services, the survey asked clients about their use and awareness of medications. The survey found 80% of clients knew how many medications they were taking, but there was a much lower rate of awareness around why a client is using them (only 59% know why they are taking all medications) and their side effects (only 17% know the side effects for all of their medications). “Clearly, all of us involved in the care of seniors, from physicians and pharmacists to nurses and family members, need to be more diligent about communicating possible side effects of medications. This is important at any age, but particularly crucial for seniors because, in some cases, we might think there is a cognitive impairment or permanent condition when, in fact, what we are seeing is a side effect from one of the many medications some seniors are prescribed,” said Mackenzie.

The Office of the Seniors Advocate’s home support survey was conducted in the fall of 2015. Responses were received from 5,336 clients and 4,040 family members. The margin of error on a survey of this size is +/- 1% after applying a finite population correction.

The Office of the Seniors Advocate is an independent office of the provincial government with a mandate of monitoring seniors’ services and publicly reporting on systemic issues affecting seniors. The Office also provides information and referral: Toll-free 1.877.952.3181.

View the Office of the Seniors Advocate home support survey report and full survey results:
www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca

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