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New data show progress on some key health care indicators in residential care, but drug use in B.C. still high

Victoria – Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie today, released a progress report on her April 2015 report, *Placement, Drugs and Therapy... We Can Do Better*. The progress report highlights that some improvements are being made in the provision of rehabilitative therapies to seniors in residential care, as well as the use of antipsychotic medications. Data also show that premature placement of seniors into residential care is declining. “I was pleased to see progress on these key health care indicators in residential care and I congratulate all frontline staff and administrators for their efforts,” said Mackenzie. “While more improvement is possible, it is important to acknowledge that we are moving in the right direction. The challenge will be to sustain this momentum.”

The progress report uses health assessment data for 27,000 seniors in residential care for 2015/16. The data show the following changes since 2013/14:

- A decrease of 9.6% in potentially inappropriate admission to residential care
- An increase of 7.8% in the percentage of residential clients receiving physiotherapy
- An increase of 10.6% in the percentage of residential clients receiving recreational therapy
- A decrease of 16.9% in the percentage of residential clients receiving occupational therapy
- No change in the percentage of residential clients receiving speech therapy
- A decrease of 14.2% in the potentially inappropriate use of antipsychotic drugs

The Seniors Advocate underscores the importance of rehabilitative therapies for seniors living in residential care in the report. “It is crucial to maintaining function that seniors get access to the therapies they need—everything from getting help swallowing, being fit for a wheelchair, walking and moving as much as possible and engaging in activities with other people are what make a huge difference to the quality of life in residential care,” said Mackenzie adding it is also very important to ensure that seniors who call residential care home both need and want to be there. “Residential care is a very specialized environment designed for people with complex care needs, and also a very costly care option for government, so we want to make sure seniors are not going to residential care before they absolutely need to and that means fully exploring all care options such as home support and assisted living,” said Mackenzie.

The Seniors Advocate continues to have concerns regarding the use of medications in residential care, as evidence mounts in relation to inappropriate use and adverse effects. “While I am pleased to see a significant decrease of 14% in the potential misuse of antipsychotics, BC still lags other provinces in this area and we have not achieved any progress on the use of antidepressants,” Mackenzie said. “It is critical that we build on the positive achievements of the past year and broaden our commitment to tackle polypharmacy amongst seniors beyond antipsychotics and frankly beyond residential care.”

To view the progress report click here: <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2016/11/PDT-Update-Report-Final-November-2016.pdf>

To view the original *Placement, Drugs and Therapy* report click here: <http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/placement-drugs-and-therapy-we-can-do-better/>

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 or by visiting www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca

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