
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

Support for seniors' gymnastics scores a perfect 10

DELTA – An innovative program that keeps seniors active and healthy by getting them on the gymnastics floor is receiving provincial support.

Thanks to a \$150,000 grant, the Delta Gymnastics Society's Seniors Can Move program will continue and expand classes locally, and start in other communities over the coming months.

"I strongly believe seniors programs should support living well as well as living longer. The Seniors Can Move program, the first of its kind in B.C. that is now becoming part of community life in Delta, exemplifies this spirit," said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. "Our government is proud to support this creative program, which gets seniors on the gymnastics floor to improve their strength and agility. Just during its pilot phase, it has made a big difference in the health of local seniors through improving balance, building confidence in movement and helping with falls prevention."

Developed by the Delta Gymnastics Society in 2018, the Seniors Can Move program enables seniors to take part in physical activity in a gymnastics setting. Thanks to the \$150,000 grant, which is provided through Fraser Health, the society will continue to offer the hour-long group class, expand it to five times a week for the summer and eight times a week in the fall.

"The Delta Gymnastics Society has designed a fantastic program that is using physical literacy to help participants both regain their mobility and build friendships across all age spans," said Ravi Kahlon, Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Multiculturalism. "This program clearly has tremendous potential to get seniors across the province moving, promoting their physical health and social connections."

The first day of summer class will be July 2, and classes will run until Aug. 29. Classes are open to all Delta seniors and registration is free. The program capacity has grown up to 150 participants. The classes include simple stretching routines, as well as other exercises designed to help improve agility, balance, co-ordination and strength.

The Delta Gymnastics Society will also create a course based on the program that can be taught and replicated at other gymnastics facilities. The society will scale the 10-week program to pilot it at up to 16 other facilities in British Columbia, with a goal of providing 75 weeks of program delivery through fall 2020.

As well, the society will bring geriatric professionals, like nurses and physiotherapists, to Delta gymnastics for specialized consultations to support seniors' health.

The Delta Gymnastics Society has offered a wide range of high-quality recreational and competitive programs since 1975. The society has more than 2,000 members and continues to

grow. Members range in age from six months to over 80 years old.

Nearly one-fifth of B.C.'s population is over 65 years of age, and the number of seniors is expected to rise from 916,400 in 2018 to 1.4 million by 2032.

Over \$1.018 billion is being invested over three years to improve care for seniors, including investments in primary care, home health, long-term care, assisted living and respite services. Of that, \$240 million is being invested to increase staffing levels in residential care homes, with the goal of achieving the target 3.36 direct care hours per resident day – on average – across all health authorities by the end of 2020-21.

Quotes:

Anne Kang, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors –

“Seniors who take part in regular physical activity with others can keep healthy and are at lower risk of social isolation. I thank the Delta Gymnastics Society for designing a program to help seniors become stronger and improve balance to help avoid falls and get them out in the community.”

Ana Arciniega, executive director, Delta Gymnastics Society –

“We strongly believe that seniors who reconnect with movement are more confident to engage with daily life. It provides them with the ability to complete simple- to more-complex tasks and activities, and more importantly, provides them with the motivation to continue to be active physically, mentally and emotionally.”

Learn More:

For more information on Seniors Can Move, visit: <https://deltagymnastics.com/seniors-50>

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