



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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B.C. Launches Survey to Assess the Impact of Visitor Restrictions

Victoria, B.C.— B.C.'s Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie is today launching a province-wide survey that will allow residents of long-term care and assisted living and their family members to tell the story of their experience during this pandemic.

“Of the many hardships that COVID-19 has brought, one of the most heartbreaking has been the need to limit those who can visit residents of long-term care and assisted living,” said Mackenzie. “Restricting visitors to long-term care and assisted living facilities has been an enormous sacrifice for our seniors and their families, but it has been necessary for us to protect those who are most vulnerable to this virus. The impact however is having a profound effect on many people and it is time for these people to have their voices heard and their stories told.”

The survey, *Staying Apart to Stay Safe: The Impact of Visitor Restrictions on Long Term Care and Assisted Living*, is asking residents and family members about their experiences before the pandemic and how these have been impacted over the past seven months. The survey, which can be completed until September 30, is available at www.carehomevisits.ca

“We know that many family members play an integral role in supporting the health and well-being of residents. Family members are sometimes at the bedside providing care, they are helping their loved ones at mealtimes and they are keeping their loved one engaged in the world around them. The loss of this connection has had an impact not just on residents, but family members themselves have clearly been impacted as well. We want to better understand how much life has changed for the family member and for the resident living in long term care and assisted living,” said Mackenzie.

“I encourage anyone affected to participate in this survey. We need to hear your voice as we plan for a future that will see us living with this pandemic well into the next year,” said Mackenzie.

The survey is online at carehomevisits.ca and respondents can choose from the following options:

1. The survey can be completed on-line at www.carehomevisits.ca
2. The survey can be downloaded and a print copy can be completed and mailed in.
3. Residents and/or family members can call the Office of the Seniors Advocate at **1-877-952-3181** and request that a copy be sent to them in the mail.
4. Residents and/or family members can call the Office of the Seniors Advocate and request to complete the survey over the phone.

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUNDER

Facts about long-term care and assisted living in B.C.

- The visitor restrictions affect approximately 560 long-term care and assisted living homes with approximately 40,000 beds.
- Visit restrictions began on March 20th, when visits were restricted to “essential visitors” only.
- On June 30th, visit restrictions were expanded beyond essential visitors to allow for one designated visitor per resident.
- Since March 7 (date Lynn Valley outbreak declared), 46 long-term care homes/assisted living sites have experienced an outbreak of COVID-19, with some having had more than one outbreak.
- Since March 7, 355 residents and 233 staff have been infected with COVID-19.
- Since March 7, 123 residents of long-term care and assisted living have died from COVID19.
- In 2019/20, 103 long-term care homes in BC experienced 170 outbreaks of a communicable disease such as influenza or norovirus.
- In an average year, over 7,000, or approximately 21% of residents in long term care pass away.

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