



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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From Health Care to Housing, BC Seniors Advocate Issues Snapshot on the Wellbeing of BC Seniors

Victoria, B.C.—Today, British Columbia Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie released the 2020 update of the *Long-Term Care Quick Facts Directory (QFD)* and the *Monitoring Seniors Services 2020 (MSS 2020)* report.

These annual reports offer a comprehensive picture of the supports and services offered to B.C. seniors and their families, comparing trends and previous performance in an effort to identify program successes and continuing gaps. Updated data is presented on a wide range of services including health care, hospitalizations, housing, transportation, income supports, affordability, taxation and elder abuse.

Among the key findings in this year's reports:

- The population 65 and over increased 4% in the last year. In the past 10 years the proportion of the B.C. population 65 plus has increased 27%, however, the proportion 85 plus has remained relatively stable at 2% of the population.
- The overall health of B.C. seniors remains relatively stable and with more significant chronic conditions and health care utilization at age 85 plus.
- The majority of B.C. seniors (94%) continue to live independently in their own home. Overall, 3% of seniors live in long-term care and 3% live in seniors independent/assisted living. This has remained stable over the past five years.
- Emergency department and hospitalization rates for those over 65 increased relative to the population increase and although the length of stay has continued to decline, there was a 5% increase in alternative length of stay (ALC) cases after two years of only marginal increases.
- The long-term care (LTC) bed rate per 1,000 of population age 85 plus has decreased 9% in the last five years and a variety of measures show increased wait times for long-term care in the past year: clients on the wait list increased 27% (total 2,259), the average time on the waitlist increased by 3% (133 days), the average wait time of 52 days for clients admitted to long-term care is an increase of 37% and the number admitted within 30 days decreased 11%.
- Overall, there was a 67% increase in the number of LTC homes funded for 3.36 hours of care, the most significant annual increase to date.
- Overall, the age and complexity characteristics of residents in LTC remains unchanged and has been stable over the past five years.
- Progress has been made in reducing falls with injury in LTC but have stalled on the goal of reducing the use of antipsychotics.
- Overall, there was an 17% increase in the number of substantiated complaints to licensing.
- 85% of long-term care residents and 69% of staff were vaccinated for influenza, a decrease of 2% for residents and a decrease of 5% for staff.

- The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (S.A.F.E.R) saw a 3% increase in the number of recipients, on pace with the growth in the target population, while rental rates increased 4% on average. The rental cap for S.A.F.E.R. remained unchanged.
- For the first time in four years, the number of seniors subsidized housing units increased, however, the waitlist increased by 11% and the median wait time for a unit increased 13%.
- The Property Tax Deferment program continues to grow, with an increase of 10% in 2019/20.
- The majority of seniors (79%) maintain an active driver's licence and 75,300 seniors age 80 and over were screened for the driver medical fitness. This past year saw an 18% decrease in the number of over 80 drivers referred to a road assessment (6% in total referred).
- There was a 7% increase in the number of seniors using the BC Bus Pass.
- The rate of inflation in B.C. was higher than the Canadian average putting a further strain on federal income supports such as OAS/GIS and CPP.
- Calls related to elder abuse increased 17% in 2019. The Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL) received 5,558 calls in 2019, an increase of 27% since 2018—28% were related to abuse, 46% to non-abuse matters, and 26% were for general information.

It is important to note that the serious impacts of COVID-19 are not included in this data, which relates to fiscal 2019/20. Many of the indicators affected by COVID-19 will be represented in next year's reports.

"The number of seniors continues to grow in British Columbia and monitoring the services they depend upon is a key function of this office. As British Columbians, our challenge is ensuring important services are working as intended and reaching the people who need them most," said Mackenzie.

The Quick Facts Directory and Monitoring Seniors Services report is available at

<https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/reports/>

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