

Office of the Seniors Advocate Monthly Update – May 2021

What's Happening in May

[Census of Population 2021](#)

[Family Caregiver Month](#)

[National Physiotherapy Month](#)

[Speech and Hearing Month](#)

[Vision Health Month](#)

[Emergency Preparedness Week](#) (May 2-8)

[Mental Health Week](#) (May 3-9)

[National Nursing Week](#) (May 10-16)

COVID-19

COVID-19 Vaccinations

As of Friday, April 23, all adults aged 18 or older are eligible to register for the COVID-19 vaccine using the [online booking system](#), or by calling the provincial phone line at 1-833-838-2323. As of Friday, April 30, invitations to book a vaccination appointment are being sent for people born in 1965 or earlier (56+), indigenous people born in 2003 or earlier (18+), and people who are clinically extremely vulnerable. The province is working with Fraser Health, Vancouver Coastal Health and Northern Health authorities to increase appointments in high-transmission neighborhoods.

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19 Update

Much like other areas in Canada, B.C. is experiencing a third wave in this COVID-19 pandemic with new cases averaging over 1,000 per day since early April. As a result of the continued high levels of COVID-19 transmission in B.C., the provincial health officers orders that were set to expire on April 19, 2021 have been extended and are now in effect to May 24, 2021. New travel restrictions, that are in effect until May 25, have been added to ensure that people are travelling for essential reasons only.

[Learn More](#)

Provincial News

Provincial Budget 2021

In the 2021 provincial budget address, the Minister of Finance Selina Robinson stated that, “We know a recovery won’t happen overnight, but by focusing on the things that matter most to people, we can ensure there are better days ahead for everyone.” Budget highlights that focus on the health and well-being of seniors include:

- \$253 to expand primary care and provide faster access to doctors and nurse practitioners,
- \$585 million to train and hire up to 3,000 new health care workers,
- \$68 million over three years to increase the number of care aides and other community care providers to deliver quality home care,
- \$12 million to provide seniors with complex needs care in their homes,
- doubling the BC Seniors Supplement to \$99.30 per month,
- continued grant funding and \$1.6 billion in capital investments to support the construction of new affordable housing units that will help support middle income families, seniors, Indigenous peoples, and women and children leaving violence.

[Learn More](#)

Recent Announcements from the B.C. Government Impacting Seniors

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|----------------|--|
| April 23, 2021 | Statement on Grace Seniors Home |
| April 17, 2021 | British Columbians urged to prepare for spring flood season |
| April 16, 2021 | Government helps more older adults stay independent with expanded programs |
| April 16, 2021 | Parliamentary secretary’s statement on Advance Care Planning Day |
| April 15, 2021 | \$2 billion to support thousands of new homes for middle-income families |
| April 12, 2021 | Throne speech outlines work to put pandemic behind us, plans for strong recovery |
| April 9, 2021 | Langley Memorial Hospital improvements nearing completion |
| April 7, 2021 | B.C.’s biosimilars program expands |
| April 7, 2021 | Cariboo Memorial Hospital redevelopment moves forward |
| April 7, 2021 | Funding keeps income tax-filing assistance accessible |
| April 5, 2021 | Province shifts to Phase 3: millions to book vaccine appointments online |
| April 1, 2021 | Next steps taken for new Cowichan District Hospital |

National News

Federal Budget 2021

In the [2021 federal budget address](#), the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland began by apologizing to seniors stating, “We have failed so many of those living in long-term care facilities. To them, and to their families, let me say this: I am so sorry.”

Highlights in the budget announcement that focus on the health and well-being of seniors include:

- \$3 billion to help ensure that provinces and territories provide a high standard of care in their long-term care facilities,
- increased Old Age Security (OAS) for Canadians who will be aged 75 or older as of June 2022; a \$500 one-time payment in August 2021 and a 10% increase starting July 2022,
- \$90 million over three years to launch the Age Well at Home initiative,
- \$29.8 million over six years to improve access to palliative and end-of-life care,
- \$13.2 million over five years and \$2.6 million per year ongoing to ensure Canada’s medical assistance in dying framework is implemented consistently and with appropriate safeguards,
- \$50 million over five years to develop interventions that promote safe relationships and prevent family violence, including elder abuse,
- \$100 million over three years to support projects for innovative mental health interventions for populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19,
- Extend the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit an additional four weeks, to a maximum of 42 weeks, when caregiving options are not sufficiently available, and
- \$15 million over three years to Veterans Affairs Canada to expand the Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund for projects that will support veterans during the post COVID-19 recovery.

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19 vaccine uptake among Canada’s oldest residents higher than for flu shot (CTV News)

Seniors are getting vaccinated in higher numbers for COVID-19 than they did for the flu. Health Canada’s Deputy Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Howard Njoo, says that almost 9 in 10 Canadians over the age of 80 have now received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Health Canada’s annual flu shot survey found that 7 in 10 seniors were vaccinated for this year’s flu season.

[Learn More](#)

CRTC Allows Access to National Wireless Network for Smaller Mobile Service Providers ([Times Colonist – Victoria](#))

The CRTC issued orders that will make it easier for smaller telecom companies to compete with Canada’s biggest wireless network operators, which in turn will likely reduce costs for mobile phone users. The CRTC has also given Bell, Rogers and Telus — plus government-owned SaskTel — three months to provide more affordable plans for seniors, low-income earners and people who use mobile phones sparingly.

[Learn More](#)

Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors

- April 29, 2021 [Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada](#)
- April 28, 2021 [Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada](#)
- April 27, 2021 [Remarks from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada](#)
- April 26, 2021 [Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada](#)
- April 26, 2021 [Statement from the Minister of Health on National Immunization Awareness Week 2021](#)
- April 21, 2021 [Remarks from the Chief Public Health Officer](#)
- April 20, 2021 [Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada](#)
- April 18, 2021 [Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada](#)
- April 17, 2021 [Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada](#)
- April 16, 2021 [Remarks from the Chief Public Health Officer](#)
- April 15, 2021 [Government of Canada announces support for new accessible technology projects](#)
- April 15, 2021 [Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada](#)
- April 15, 2021 [Government of Canada invests in laboratories to support science and research in Canada](#)
- April 8, 2021 [Government of Canada supports the official launch of the United Way’s Healthy Aging CORE resource hub](#)

Seeking Your Opinion

Developing a New National Long-Term Care Services Standard

The Standards Council of Canada (SCC), Health Standards Organization (HSO), and Canadian Standards Association (CSA Group) are collaborating to develop two new complementary National Standards for Long-Term Care that will be shaped by the needs of residents, families, and Canada's LTC workforce. **The public is being asked to provide input on what matters most to you to help shape the future of long-term care in Canada.**

[Learn More](#)

Social Decision-Making in the Pandemic Across Adulthood

Researchers with the Cognitive Aging Lab at Simon Fraser University are interested in understanding older adults' mental wellbeing, mental abilities, and fears during the coronavirus-19 pandemic. They wish to understand how these factors affect older adults' decision-making abilities and increase their risk for falling for coronavirus-19 scams. **They are looking for volunteers aged 60 years or older, to participate in several online questionnaires.**

[Learn More](#)

From Hospital to Home for Persons Living with Dementia

Researchers with the Institute of Health Policy Management and Evaluation at the University of Toronto are interested in understanding the experiences of older adults living with dementia, or caregivers of a person living with dementia, during their transition from hospital to home. **They are looking for people over the age of 65 living with dementia who have experienced a hospital transition back into the community to participate in a one-time interview to share their story.**

[Learn More](#)

Aging and Living Well: Beyond Health Considerations for the 2SLGBTQI Older Adults

Researchers at Egale Canada seek to expand understandings of aging in 2SLGBTQI communities beyond health alone and to open conversations about how 2SLGBTQI older adults can be better supported to continue to live in the community. The focus is to increase understanding and recognition of the wide range of material considerations (such as housing, finances, etc.) and distinct experiences that characterize aging and living well for 2SLGBTQI older adults. **The study involves semi-structured interviews with 2SLGBTQI older adults over the age of 65 living across Canada.**

[Learn More](#)

Recent Research

Family and Friend Caregivers on the Front Lines

The Family Caregivers of British Columbia conducted a survey in December with the goal of understanding how COVID has impacted caregivers no matter where they live in BC, where their care recipient lives or if they are currently receiving publicly subsidized services. Caregivers reported increased anxiety levels and decreases in mental and physical health.

[Learn More](#)

Canada's Elder Care Crisis: Addressing the Doubling Demand

As a larger share of the baby boomers move into the ages associated with higher care needs, the demand for home and long-term care will grow. This report, released by the Canadian Medical Association, highlights the challenges of meeting this increasing demand by quantifying the costs of providing care to our seniors and explores policy solutions that are aimed at offering improvements.

[Learn More](#)

Effect of a multimethod quality improvement intervention on antipsychotic medication use among residents of long-term care

This paper reports on a quality improvement initiative that was conducted to address inappropriate antipsychotic medication use in 170 long-term care (LTC) sites in the province of Alberta over 3 years. Inappropriate antipsychotic medication use declined from 26.8% to 21.1%. The decrease was achieved without unintended consequences in other outcomes including physical restraint use or aggressive behaviours. Quality of care in LTC improved.

[Learn More](#)

PQI project makes appetizing discovering for long-term care residents

This article reports on a physician quality improvement (PQI) project through Vancouver Coastal Health/Providence Health Authority with the goal of decreasing long-term care residents' food complaints by 20%.

[Learn More](#)

What have staff got to do with it? Untangling complex relationships between residential aged care staff, the quality of care they provide, and the quality of life of people with dementia

This study focuses on establishing areas for improvement in quality of care for residents with dementia and the integral role residential care staff play. The most promising areas for intervening with staff were increasing the relevance and applicability of staff training and qualifications, upskilling staff in empathic care provision, communication, and restraint reduction, using a mixture of permanent and rotating shifts, prioritizing recreational activity provision by all staff, and increasing assistance with meals. The quality of the care provided to residents by staff has strong, widespread influences on their quality of life.

[Learn More](#)

Caregiving for older adults with hip fractures: Exploring the perspectives of caregivers, providers and decision-makers in Ontario, Canada

This study sought to explore perceptions of caregiving for older adults with hip fractures by comparing experiences of caregivers, providers, and decision-makers. It presents three main themes: managing and tailoring expectations, improving communication (e.g., content, timing) and the consistency of information shared with caregivers from different providers could facilitate more positive caregiving experiences and interactions.

[Learn More](#)

Shelter/housing options, supports and interventions for older people experiencing homelessness

While experiences of later-life homelessness are known to vary, classification of shelter, housing and service models that meet the diverse needs of older people with experiences of homelessness (OPEH) are limited. This paper conducted a review of shelter/housing options, supports and interventions for OPEH. Multiple shelter/housing options are needed to support diverse OPEH. The housing models presented here should be considered alongside existing 'ageing in place' research, which largely focuses only on older adults who are housed.

[Learn More](#)

Strengthening Pandemic Preparedness in Long-Term Care

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly devastating impact on seniors living in long-term care. In response, 22 Implementation Science Teams in partnership with long-term care homes from all 10 provinces, are going to study practices and policies in six key areas designed to keep residents, caregivers, families, and staff safe from COVID-19.

[Learn More](#)

Outreach by the OSA

The Seniors Advocate continues to meet with seniors across the province by attending events and delivering presentations virtually. If you would like to invite the Seniors Advocate to present at your event, please contact our office at info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca.

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