

Office of the Seniors Advocate Monthly Update - September 2021

What's Happening in September

Labour Day (September 6)

[World Heart Day](#) (September 29)

[National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#) (September 30)

[World Alzheimer's Month](#)

[Arthritis Awareness Month](#)

OSA Report Releases

The Office of the Seniors Advocate's Annual Report

On August 23, the Office of the Seniors Advocate released its annual report for 2020-21. In addition to reporting the Office's activities for the past year, it describes some of the work currently underway and future planned activities.

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19

COVID-19 Vaccinations

To register for the COVID-19 vaccine, everyone in B.C. must use the [Get Vaccinated provincial registration system](#) or call the provincial phone line at 1-833-838-2323. All people born in 2009 or earlier (12+) are now eligible for vaccination. If you booked your first vaccine by phone or through a pharmacy, you must still register online to receive your second dose.

Individuals who have not yet been vaccinated or received their first dose more than 28 days ago can walk into any vaccination clinic without an appointment and receive a vaccine.

On August 12, the [provincial government announced](#) that vaccinations will be mandatory for long-term care and seniors' assisted living workers by October 12.

As of September 1, 84.5% (3,915,153) of eligible people 12+ in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 76.7% (3,556,961) received their second dose.

Proof of vaccination will be required to access some events, services, and business in British Columbia. Starting September 13, you must have at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. By October 24, you must be fully vaccinated to access certain venues.

This requirement applies to all people born in 2009 or earlier (12+) and covers; indoor ticketed concerts, theatre, dance, symphony, and sporting events; indoor and outdoor dining; casinos; movie theatres; gyms, pools, and recreation facilities; indoor high intensity group exercise; indoor organized gatherings like weddings, conferences, meetings, and workshops; and indoor organized group recreational classes and activities.

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19 Update

In B.C., the fourth wave of COVID-19 pandemic began in August 2021. The first week saw the seven-day rolling average for new cases nearly tripling compared to the prior week. Case counts steadily increased, especially in the Interior Health region.

On August 23, the provincial government announced it is unlikely that we will move to Step 4 of B.C.'s reopening plan in the near future as case counts continued to rise across the province. Additionally, masks are mandatory in all indoor spaces and businesses will continue to keep safety plans in place.

[Learn More](#)

Provincial News

Statements from the Provincial Health Officer and Minister of Health

The Provincial Health Officer and the Minister of Health release regular statements that can be accessed on the [BC Government News](#) website.

B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner Guidance on proof of vaccination requirements

(British Columbia Human Rights Commissioner)

New guidance has been issued to clarify the human rights considerations needed when developing rules about vaccination status. The Commissioner's position is that in some circumstances a vaccination status policy such as a proof-of-vaccination requirement can be implemented—but only if other less intrusive means of preventing COVID-19 transmission are inadequate for the setting and if due consideration is given to the human rights of everyone involved.

[Learn More](#)

Heat Dome in B.C.

(BC Gov News)

British Columbia saw temperatures soar to record levels during the last week of June, peaking on June 28 and 29. The province's chief coroner confirmed the majority of people who died suddenly during this week lost their lives as a direct result of the extreme temperatures, with 569 of the 815 deaths deemed "heat related" and 79% of those who died were 65 or older.

[Learn More](#)

Recent Announcements from the B.C. Government Impacting Seniors

- Aug 25, 2021 [B.C. records significant two-day increase in vaccine registrations, bookings](#)
- Aug 18, 2021 [New affordable homes coming for Clearwater seniors](#)
- Aug 17, 2021 [Construction begins on affordable housing project in Langley](#)
- Aug 12, 2021 [Plans further protect people living, working in long-term care](#)
- Aug 6, 2021 [Protecting seniors through education, awareness](#)
- Jul 30, 2021 [Chief coroner's statement on public safety during high temperatures](#)
- Jul 28, 2021 [New, improved BC Seniors' Guide hot off the press](#)
- Jul 27, 2021 [New affordable homes for seniors, families coming to Powell River](#)
- Jul 14, 2021 [New training opportunities for people to help seniors](#)
- Jul 14, 2021 [B.C. acting to improve ambulance response times, support emergency workers](#)
- Jul 8, 2021 [Eased visitation restrictions, new protections coming for seniors in long-term care](#)
- Jul 2, 2021 [New supportive homes coming for seniors, Indigenous Elders in Prince George](#)

National News

Statements from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada

The Chief Public Health Officer of Canada releases regular statements that can be accessed on the [Government of Canada News](#) website.

Parliamentary Budget Officer Estimated Cost for Long-Term Care Improvements

(Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer)

This report estimates the cost of implementing House of Commons Motion-77, which proposes several financially significant changes to long-term care for seniors. Implementing the changes proposed in the motion would require increasing public spending by \$13.7 billion a year.

[Learn More](#)

Seniors Experience Challenges with CERB and GIS

(Prince George Citizen)

The Office of the Seniors Advocate responded to several inquiries where seniors had discovered that their access to the guaranteed income supplement (GIS) was impacted if they collected the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) in 2020. A person applying for GIS can earn up to \$5,000 of taxable income a year and still receive GIS. After collecting CERB during the first wave of the pandemic, some seniors discovered that they were no longer eligible for the full GIS payment.

[Learn More](#)

Federal Election Called for September 20

(CBC News)

Following a meeting with Justin Trudeau on August 15, Governor General Mary Simon approved his request to dissolve Parliament, formally triggering the start of Canada's 44th federal election. Election Day is September 20.

[Learn More](#)

Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors

- Aug 13, 2021 [Government of Canada Invests close to \\$134 million to Support Canadians Living and Working in Long-Term Care in British Columbia](#)
- Aug 13, 2021 [Government of Canada is reaching thousands of Canada's most vulnerable during COVID-19](#)
- Aug 13, 2021 [Government of Canada announces Expert Panel on Medical Assistance in Dying and Mental Illness](#)
- Aug 12, 2021 [Government of Canada renews investment in largest Canadian study on aging](#)

- Aug 12, 2021 [Canada confirms support for a new community, culture and recreation centre for seniors in South Vancouver](#)
- Aug 11, 2021 [Canada moving forward with a proof of vaccination for international travel](#)
- Aug 11, 2021 [Affordable high-speed Internet for low-income seniors and families](#)
- Aug 3, 2021 [Canada and British Columbia support upgrades to two health care centres in the communities of Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua Nation](#)
- Jul 21, 2021 [Federal, provincial and territorial ministers meet to discuss collaboration on the well-being of persons with disabilities](#)
- Jul 20, 2021 [IRCC to accept a record number of applications for the 2021 Parents and Grandparents Program](#)
- Jul 19, 2021 [Government of Canada announces easing of border measures for fully vaccinated travellers](#)
- Jul 7, 2021 [Date announced for \\$500 one-time payment, and Old Age Security to be automatically increased by almost \\$100 over the coming year](#)
- Jul 6, 2021 [Minister Schulte and Minister Hajdu announce the appointment of a new member to the National Seniors Council: Government of Canada committed to the well-being and quality of life of older adults](#)

Seeking Your Opinion

Consultation on Modernizing the Employment Insurance Program

The federal government is seeking to modernize the Employment Insurance (EI) program, after gaps were highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The online survey will close on October 8, 2021.

[Learn More](#)

Have Your Say on B.C.'s Permanent Paid Sick Leave

British Columbians are invited to provide input into the development of made-in-B.C. permanent paid sick leave to support workers and protect workplaces. Participation can be done online. Phase 1 (employer and worker surveys) closes on September 14 and Phase 2 (feedback on proposed models) closes on October 25.

[Learn More](#)

B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner Launches Province-Wide Public Inquiry into Hate in the Pandemic

B.C.'s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner has been monitoring hate incidents in the province. Since early 2020, there has been a significant increase in reported hate-related incidents, highlighting an urgent need for an Inquiry into Hate in the Pandemic. Due to the challenging nature of the inquiry topic, the Office will not hold open public hearings. Instead, they will solicit expert and public testimony virtually to protect privacy and embed trauma informed practices. The Office will inform the public on how they can participate in the Inquiry later this fall when the submission period formally opens.

[Learn More](#)

Human Rights Watch Research on the Impact of Heat on Older People and People with Disabilities in British Columbia

Seniors and people with disabilities are at a high risk of heat-related illness. Following recent heat waves in B.C., the Human Rights Watch, an international non-governmental organization, is investigating the impact extreme heat has on people with disabilities and individuals above the age of 65.

[Learn More](#)

Recent Research

BC Seniors receive improved long-term care through GPSC initiative

(BC Medical Journal)

The GPSC Long-Term Care Initiative (LTCI) recently reported significant improvement in the medical care of B.C. seniors who are in long-term care facilities. It also outlines key recommendations for the future of long-term care. Following this report, the GPSC is convening a new LTCI task group to further advise and oversee implementation of the report's recommendations. This work is funded through the GPSC, a partnership of Doctors of BC and the Ministry of Health.

[Learn More](#)

Rural-Urban inequities in palliative care

(BC Medical Journal)

On average, B.C.'s rural populations are older, poorer, and have a higher chronic disease burden than urban populations. However, many rural communities have few or no palliative beds and little access to palliative care physicians or 24-hour nursing. These inequities have been amplified by the current pandemic.

[Learn More](#)

Yoga for Healthy Aging: Science or Hype?

(Advances in Geriatric Medicine and Research)

Yoga, one of the world's oldest health systems is receiving new attention for claims that it can contribute to healthy aging. This commentary reviews the evidence for both physical and mental health benefits from yoga, as well as concerns about injuries that have been associated with certain types of yoga practice.

[Learn More](#)

The effectiveness of rapid antigen test-based for SARS-CoV-2 detection in nursing homes in Valencia, Spain

(Journal of Clinical Virology)

The usefulness of the PANBIO™ COVID-19 Ag rapid test for SARS-CoV-2 infection detection has not been widely studied, especially in long-term care. This study aims to show the performance of this test device conducted at geriatric institutions and to compare results to those obtained from RT-PCR.

[Learn More](#)

Comparison of Medication Prescribing Before and After the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Nursing Home Residents in Ontario, Canada

(Journal of the American Medical Association)

This study collected weekly proportion of residents dispensed medications in Ontario nursing homes from March 2017 – September 2020. This population-based cohort study reports small but significant increases in the use of antipsychotics, benzodiazepines, antidepressants, anticonvulsants, and opioids followed the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Learn More](#)

Daily social interactions related to daily performance on mobile cognitive tests among older adults

(PLoS One)

This study examines how changes in daily social interactions related to fluctuations in older adults' performance on mobile cognitive tests from day to day. Results demonstrated that having more daily social interactions, especially more pleasant social interactions, related to better cognitive performance the same day and over the subsequent two days.

[Learn More](#)

Older adults living in social housing in Canada: the next COVID-19 hotspot?

(Canadian Journal of Public Health)

Older adults living in social house have high rates of comorbidities putting them at higher risk of poor outcomes from COVID-19. Social housing tends to be clustered in apartment buildings with shared facilities and common spaces where substantial movement in and out of buildings takes place without screening. There is a need for targeted public health strategies in this context.

[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.

You are receiving this email because you are on our mailing list to receive updates and other occasional correspondence from our office. You can [subscribe](#) or [unsubscribe](#) to this mailing list. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or visit the [OSA website](#).