

## Office of the Seniors Advocate Monthly Update - October 2021

### What's Happening in October

[National Seniors Day](#) (October 1)

[World Mental Health Day](#) (October 10)

[World Arthritis Day](#) (October 12)

[Brain Cancer Awareness Day](#) (October 24)

[World Stroke Day](#) (October 24)

### OSA Report Releases

#### Review of COVID-19 Outbreaks in Care Homes in British Columbia

On October 6, the Office of the Seniors Advocate released the results of a province-wide review of COVID-19 outbreaks in long-term care and assisted living sites during the first year of the pandemic. The review examined factors that can influence the probability that a site will experience a COVID-19 outbreak and factors that can minimize the number of staff and residents who become infected when an outbreak occurs.

[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 in at 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 October 7, 88.5% (4,103,1583) of eligible people 12+ in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 82.1% (3,804,517) have received their second dose.

Proof of vaccination will be required to access some events, services, and business in British Columbia. As of 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+).

[Learn More](#)

### **COVID-19 Update**

In B.C., the fourth wave of COVID-19 pandemic began in August 2021. On August 23, the provincial government announced that we will not move to Step 4 of B.C.'s reopening plan, making masks mandatory in all indoor spaces once again and directing businesses to continue to keep safety plans in place.

On September 13, the provincial government announced that a third vaccine dose will be available for severely immunocompromised people and on September 28, that residents of long-term care and assist living facilities will be eligible as well. Those that are eligible will be contacted directly about how they can receive this dose.

[Learn More](#)

### **Long-Term Care update**

As of October 6, there are 13 active outbreaks in long term care (LTC) facilities and one active outbreak in an assisted living (AL) facility. There are currently 192 active COVID-19 cases among LTC/AL residents.

[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.

### **Income support impacted by CERB**

Seniors who collected the Canadian Economic Recovery Benefit (CERB) in 2020 may have their federal Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payments impacted. However, some individuals may be eligible for additional support from the provincial government.

[Learn More](#)

## **B.C.'s seniors advocate calls for paid sick leave, more staff in long-term care to prevent COVID-19 deaths**

(CBC News)

As a response to the report released by the Office of the Seniors Advocate, Minister of Health Adrian Dix issued comments that he was appreciative of the report, and that some of the recommendations are already in progress.

[Learn More](#)

## **Better planning needed to prevent B.C. heat-related deaths**

(BurnabyNow)

As summer turns into fall, bringing cooler weather to the province, memories of the heatwave may be far from mind for many British Columbians. Yet, it is time to prepare for the next heatwave in B.C. Premier John Horgan has already announced his government will be more proactive before next year's wildfire season arrives.

[Learn More](#)

## **Recent Announcements from the B.C. Government Impacting Seniors**

- Sep 8, 2021 [Maximum allowable rent increase capped at 1.5% for 2022](#)
- Sep 10, 2021 [Agreement signed to expedite Little Mountain redevelopment](#)
- Sep 14, 2021 [Province making progress strengthening ambulance system](#)
- Sep 14, 2021 [Boosting support, hiring to enhance services in Northern Health](#)
- Sep 21, 2021 [Funding supports people affected by dementia](#)
- Sep 24, 2021 [How B.C. counts its daily COVID-19 cases in hospitals](#)
- Sep 27, 2021 [Enhancing Indigenous-led wellness supports for residential school survivors](#)
- Sep 29, 2021 [Expert health team will drive action to confront systemic racism against Indigenous peoples](#)

## **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.

## **New report suggests 75% of dementia cases are undiagnosed**

(Alzheimer's Disease International)

According to the new World Alzheimer Report 2021, around 75 per cent of all dementia cases are undiagnosed – and due to advancements in treatments and testing, there could be a “tsunami of demand” for diagnosis in the next few years.

[Learn More](#)

## **Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors**

Sep 3, 2021 [On September 7, new measures for fully vaccinated international travellers to Canada will come into force](#)

Sep 10, 2021 [Remarks from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on September 10, 2021](#)

## **Seeking Your Opinion**

### **Feedback on Accessible BC Act**

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is seeking feedback regarding which organizations within the public sector and quasi-public sector the Act should apply to. Interested parties are asked to full out a short survey before October 15, 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 2 (feedback on proposed models) closes on October 25.

[Learn More](#)

### **Help shape B.C.'s anti-racism data legislation**

B.C. is drafting anti-racism data legislation, so that the government can better identify existing gaps and create a more equitable province. The public consultation will help inform government about how to collect data in a way that is reflective of the needs and experiences of Indigenous, Black and people of colour (IBPOC) communities. The public engagement will run until November 30 and will be available in multiple languages.

[Learn More](#)

## Recent Research

### **How can we start to make Canada's long-term care homes about care, not profit?**

(Policy Options)

The disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on residents in for-profit long-term-care homes has prompted many Canadians to deliberate the nature of for-profit care. In fact, three in five Canadians believe for-profit care for our elders should be reduced or phased out entirely. Is this a possibility?

[Learn More](#)

### **Comparison of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 who did and did not live in residential care facilities in Montréal: a retrospective case series**

(Canadian Medical Association Journal)

This case study looked at all adults admitted to Jewish General Hospital in Montreal with diagnosed COVID-19 from March to August 2020. The mortality rate was higher among patients living in residential care facilities and risk of death increased with age, being male, and presence of four or more simultaneous medical conditions.

[Learn More](#)

### **Shaping the future of virtual care in BC**

(BC Medical Journal)

This editorial provides examples of doctors using technology to improve access to care in B.C., and addresses challenges of technology use in health care.

[Learn More](#)

### **Shifting to Primary Prevention for an Aging Population: A Scoping Review of Health Promotion Initiatives for Community-Dwelling Older Adults in Canada**

(Cureus)

This article takes a health promotion approach to encourage successful aging in Canada. It reviews the research on prevention programs that address health issues later in life and addresses the need for preventative services in gerontology in Canada.

[Learn More](#)

## **Rural citizen-patient priorities for healthcare in British Columbia, Canada: findings from a mixed methods study**

(BMC Health Services Research)

This article shares results of a provincial survey of rural citizen-patients across B.C. Participants stressed the importance of local access to a broad scope of services, especially primary care services. There is a need to include citizen-patient voices in healthcare planning to ensure local health services meet needs and reduce geographic, financial, and social barriers.

[Learn More](#)

## **Are pre-symptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infections in nursing home residents unrecognised symptomatic infections? Sequence and metadata from weekly testing in an extensive nursing home outbreak**

(Age and Ageing)

This study presents mass testing results from residents and staff in a large COVID-19 outbreak in a Dutch nursing home to determine the contribution of asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic cases. Results indicate symptoms are insufficiently recognized and that those without recognized symptoms still contribute to viral spread.

[Learn More](#)

## **Disentangling interventions to reduce fear of falling in community-dwelling older people: a systematic review and meta-analysis of intervention components**

(Disability and Rehabilitation)

This article reviews interventions meant to address the fear of falling in community-dwelling older adults. Interventions that include meditation, holistic exercise or body awareness were more effective than balance or tailoring exercises.

[Learn More](#)

## **The Impact of COVID-19 on Older Workers' Employment and Social Security Spillovers**

(National Bureau of Economic Research)

This paper addresses the economic toll the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on older and differently-abled workers in the United States. The paper finds that employment significantly dropped in this group, though retirement benefit claims remain unchanged.

[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](mailto:info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca).

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