

## Office of the Seniors Advocate Monthly Update - April 2022

### What's Happening in April

[National Oral Health Month](#)

[Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month](#)

[World Autism Awareness Day](#) (April 2)

[World Health Day](#) (April 7)

[Advance Care Planning Day](#) (April 16)

Easter (April 17)

[National Immunization Awareness Week](#) (April 24-30)

### Activities of the Office of the Seniors Advocate

#### **Panel on Draft National Health Standards for Long-term Care**

The Seniors Advocate participated in a panel discussion this month to provide her take on the newly released draft national standards on long-term care by the Health Standards Organization. Click below to watch the webinar hosted by the Council of Seniors Citizens Organizations of B.C.

[Learn More](#)

#### **Income and Affordability Survey for Seniors**

The Office of the Seniors Advocate is inviting seniors to complete a new Income and Affordability Survey to better understand the needs of seniors living on low incomes. The survey has been mailed to randomly selected seniors who receive the B.C. Senior's Supplement. **The survey deadline is April 8, 2022.**

[Learn More](#)

#### **The Seniors Advocate in McBride**

The Seniors Advocate was pleased to resume in-person engagement opportunities this month with a trip to the village of McBride, where she connected with local seniors, elected officials, and health care professionals to learn more about the needs of seniors in the region.

[Learn More](#)

## Home Support Survey

Thank you to all the home support clients and family caregivers who took the time to complete our recent Home Support Survey. Your feedback will play an essential role in advocating for positive changes to the public home support system. The office is now compiling results, which will be released later in the year as part of a comprehensive report on home support.

[Learn More](#)

## COVID-19

### Rapid Antigen Tests Now Available at Pharmacies

COVID-19 rapid antigen tests are now being distributed to people aged 18+ at B.C. pharmacies. The Seniors Advocate urges younger people to protect the seniors in their lives by taking a rapid test before visiting them. A kit of 5 tests is available every 28 days free of charge to eligible individuals. A Personal Health Number, birth date, and full name are required.

[Learn More](#)

### COVID-19 Vaccinations

News of a second booster, or fourth dose of the COVID-19 vaccine is expected to be announced soon. The Seniors Advocate urges all eligible individuals to register for their COVID-19 booster shot to reduce the risk of serious illness and transmission of the virus. To register, visit the Get Vaccinated website or call 1-833-838-2323.

[Learn More](#)

### COVID-19 Restrictions

Most public health restrictions have now been lifted, including wearing masks in public indoor settings, and capacity restrictions on personal gatherings, events, and more. Starting April 8, 2022, at 12:01 am, proof of vaccination will no longer be required to access businesses, events, and services.

[Learn More](#)

### Long-Term Care update

Most visitor restrictions have been lifted at long-term care facilities and all visitors who meet the visitation requirements are permitted. Visitors must provide proof of vaccination and a negative rapid antigen test, which may be taken at home up to 48 hours before the visit, or on arrival at the facility.

[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.

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

- March 4 [Rapid tests for people now available at pharmacies](#)
- March 7 [PHO finalizes order for health-care professionals](#)
- March 8 [Joint statement on International Women's Day](#)
- March 10 [B.C. takes next step in balanced plan to lift COVID-19 restrictions](#)
- March 11 [Joint statement on National Day of Observance](#)
- March 25 [New rental homes open in North Vancouver](#)

## 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.

### Liberal-NDP Agreement May Benefit Seniors

The federal Liberal and NDP parties recently struck a “supply-and-confidence” agreement, which will see the two parties working together on key policy areas that could benefit seniors in the years to come. Among others, the agreement outlines the following initiatives to improve health care and affordability for Canadians:

- A national dental care plan, which will begin coverage for seniors as early as 2023
- A Safe Long-term Care Act to address shortcomings in residential care exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic
- A universal national pharmacare program, which may provide additional drug coverage for B.C. seniors
- Increased investments in housing for low-income Canadians, including seniors

[Learn More](#)

### Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors

- March 3 [Legislation to support low-income seniors who received pandemic benefits receives royal assent](#)

March 8 [Government of Canada supports improving healthy living behaviours in older adults](#)

March 17 [Government of Canada will remove pre-entry test requirements for fully vaccinated travellers on April 1](#)

## Current Issues and Resources

### **T5007 Tax Slips Issued for Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) Recipients**

This year, the CRA has issued T5007 tax slips to SAFER recipients who received more than \$500 from the program within the last year. Those who received the T5007 must include it in their income tax return so that entitlement to provincial and federal tax credits can be calculated correctly. However, the T5007 amount is non-taxable and will not affect eligibility for income support programs, such as Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

[Learn More](#)

### **Income Tax Resources**

The deadline to file taxes is quickly approaching. This year's tax-filing deadline for most individuals is April 30, 2022. See our website for income tax resources and tips, like how to claim eligible health related expenses and tax credits or find a free tax clinic.

[Learn More](#)

### **Webinar: Future Us: A Roadmap to Elder Abuse Prevention**

On March 24, the Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse launched Future Us: A Roadmap to Elder Abuse Prevention. In this webinar on April 19, Margaret MacPherson (Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children) will provide an overview of Future Us with ideas on how to help create large social change with concrete practical actions.

[Learn More](#)

### **Seeking Your Opinion: COVID-19 Lessons Learned Review**

The B.C. government is launching an independent review and public consultation on its operational response to COVID-19, to better inform preparation and response to future emergencies. They would like to know what aspects of the B.C. government's response to COVID-19 from March 2020 up to now you think worked well. This includes the B.C. government's preparedness, engagement, communication, and implementation activities.

[Learn More](#)

## Recent Research

### **Out-of-pocket expenses related to aging in place for frail older people: a scoping review.**

(JBI Evid Synth)

As the global population ages, there has been increasing attention on supporting older people to live at home in the community as they experience health and functional changes. Older people with frailty often require a variety of supports and services to live in the community, yet the out-of-pocket costs associated with these resources are often not accounted for in health and social care literature.

[Learn More](#)

### **Do assisted living facilities that offer a dementia care program differ from those that do not? A population-level cross-sectional study in Ontario, Canada (**

(BMC Geriatrics)

Many residents of assisted living facilities live with dementia, but little is known about the characteristics of assisted living facilities that provide specialized care for older adults who live with dementia. In this study, we identify the characteristics of assisted living facilities that offer a dementia care program, compared to those that do not offer such a program.

[Learn More](#)

### **2021 Annual Report on Canada's Dementia Strategy**

The 2021 report to Parliament on the national dementia strategy includes a chapter focused on responses to the pandemic relevant to dementia such as efforts undertaken to support caregivers and Canadians living in long-term care. It notes examples of the numerous organizations that pivoted in the wake of an unprecedented public health crisis to continue delivering services and programs that support Canadians. The report also provides several new data points relevant to the strategy's national objectives that help to document our collective progress towards the aspirations set out for each objective

[Learn More](#)

### **Poverty and food insecurity of older adults living in social housing in Ontario: a cross-sectional study**

(BMC Public Health)

Poverty and food insecurity have been linked to poor health and morbidity, especially in older adults. Housing is recognized as a social determinant of health, and very little is known about subjective poverty and food insecurity in the marginalized population of older adults living in subsidized social housing. We sought to understand poverty and food insecurity, as well as the risk factors associated with both outcomes, in older adults living in social housing in Ontario.

[Learn More](#)

## Outreach by the Office of the Seniors Advocate

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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