

Office of the Seniors Advocate Monthly Update - May 2022

What's Happening in May

[Vision Health Month](#)

[Family Caregiver Month](#)

[National Physicians' Day](#) (May 1)

[Emergency Preparedness Week](#) (May 1-7)

[Mental Health Week](#) (May 2-8)

[National Nursing Week](#) (May 9-15)

[Paramedic Services Week](#) (May 22-28)

Activities of the Office of the Seniors Advocate

Income and Affordability Survey for Seniors

Thank you to those who took the time to complete our recent Income and Affordability Survey. Your feedback will play an essential role in advocating for changes to income and benefit supports for seniors. We are now holding stakeholder engagement sessions to inform a comprehensive report on affordability issues for B.C. seniors, to be released later this year.

[Learn More](#)

The Crisis in Long-term Care: Richard B. Splane Lecture in Social Policy

Last month the Seniors Advocate participated in a panel discussion on systemic issues in long-term care and the policy changes necessary to address them. Click below to watch the event hosted by the University of British Columbia.

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19

COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests

Free COVID-19 rapid antigen tests are now available to people of all ages at B.C. pharmacies. No ID is required. The Seniors Advocate urges younger people to protect the seniors in their lives by taking a rapid test before visiting.

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19 Boosters

A second booster, or fourth dose of the COVID-19 vaccine is now being offered to seniors 70+ and Indigenous people 55+. This booster is currently available to long-term care and assisted living residents. Eligible seniors in the community who received their last booster at least six months ago will soon begin receiving invitations via the Get Vaccinated System.

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19 Restrictions

Most public health restrictions have now been lifted, including wearing masks in public indoor settings, capacity restrictions on personal gatherings, events, and more. Proof of vaccination is no longer be required to access the majority of businesses, events, and services.

[Learn More](#)

Long-Term Care Update

Most visiting restrictions have been lifted at long-term care facilities and people 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

April 5, 2022 [B.C. takes next step in COVID-19 response](#)

April 5, 2022 [Parliamentary secretary's statement on National Caregiver Day](#)

April 6, 2022 [Hundreds of new affordable homes for seniors open in Squamish](#)

April 7, 2022 [B.C. shifts to weekly COVID-19 data reporting](#)

April 19, 2022 [Supporting international nurses into B.C.'s health system](#)

April 22, 2022 [90 new long-term care beds coming to Vernon](#)

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.

Budget 2022 makes life more affordable for seniors

The newly released budget from the Government of Canada includes a few perks for seniors. The government will follow through with its plan to implement a 10% increase to OAS for seniors 75+ beginning this July, as well as investments in affordable rental housing, and research into treatment for dementia. Other initiatives include:

- A national dental care plan, which will be expanded to include seniors by 2023
- Expansion of the New Horizons for Seniors Program
- A one-time payment of \$500 to those experiencing housing affordability challenges
- An increase in qualifying expenses of the Home Accessibility Tax Credit and a new
- Multigenerational Home Renovation Tax Credit

[Learn More](#)

Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors

April 4, 2022 [Government of Canada announces affordable high-speed Internet to help connect low-income families and seniors](#)

April 5, 2022 [The Government of Canada highlights National Caregiver Day](#)

April 5, 2022 [Statement from the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health \(CCMOH\) on the importance of staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccines](#)

April 7, 2022 [Budget 2022: A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable](#)

- April 19, 2022 [Government of Canada issuing one-time grant payment this week for Guaranteed Income Supplement recipients who received pandemic benefits](#)
- April 25, 2022 [Government of Canada invests in mental health and distress centres](#)
- April 25, 2022 [Message from the Minister of Health for National Immunization Awareness Week \(April 23-30, 2022\)](#)

Current Issues and Resources

Property Tax Deferment Program

Did you know that you may be eligible to defer your property taxes? Property tax deferment is a low interest loan program that helps qualified B.C. homeowners pay the annual property taxes on their principal residence. People 55+, surviving spouses of any age, and persons with disabilities may be eligible for the program. Applications open in early May.

[Learn More](#)

F.A.S.T. Track – Innovation Summit for Seniors Transportation

This virtual event, taking place on May 12th, is the culmination of F.A.S.T. Track – a national initiative supporting transportation innovation, led by HelpAge Canada and delivered by CanAge and O’Hara Aging + Accessibility. Be part of a cross-country conversation connecting government officials, leaders in transportation and aging, community organizations and members of the general public to share ideas, knowledge and discuss the findings of Canada’s first-ever snapshot of seniors’ transportation.

[Learn More](#)

Senior Peer Counselling of British Columbia

Community seniors organizations across the province are eligible to receive free training for their volunteers through Senior Peer Counselling of B.C. Volunteers who are 55+ and interested in the well-being of aging adults can receive training to become seniors peer counsellors. These volunteers provide peer counselling services to seniors in their community suffering from depression and isolation.

[Learn More](#)

Recent Research

Do home adaptation interventions help to reduce emergency fall admissions? A national longitudinal data-linkage study of 657,536 older adults living in Wales (UK) between 2010 and 2017

(British Geriatrics Society, Oxford University Press)

Falls are common in older people, but evidence for the effectiveness of preventative home adaptations is limited. This study aims to determine whether a national home adaptation service, Care&Repair Cymru (C&RC), identified individuals at risk of falls occurring at home and reduced the likelihood of falls.

[Learn More](#)

How Residents' Quality of Life are Represented in Long-Term Care Policy: A Novel Method to Support Policy Analysis

(Journal of Long-Term Care)

In one's final years, quality of life (QoL) is a fundamental desire. In Canada, a publicly-funded long-term care (LTC) system is governed provincially through multiple policies about housing and care provision. A pan-Canadian research team investigated federal and provincial policies' influence on the QoL of older people living in residential LTC in four provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Nova Scotia.

[Learn More](#)

The Future of Virtual Care for Older Ethnic Adults Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic

(JMIR Publications)

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed how Canadians access health care. Although it is undeniable that the rapid adoption of virtual care has played a critical role in reducing viral transmission, the gap in equitable access to virtual care remains pervasive for Canada's aging and ethnocultural minority communities. Existing virtual care solutions are designed for the English-speaking, health-literate, and tech-savvy patient population, excluding older ethnic adults who often do not see themselves reflected in these identities.

[Learn More](#)

Does physical exercise improve the capacity for independent living in people with dementia or mild cognitive impairment: an overview of systematic reviews and meta-analyses

(Aging and Mental Health)

A summary of existing systematic reviews which assessed the effects of physical exercise on activities of daily living, walking, balance and visual processing in people with dementia or mild cognitive impairment. In this overview of systematic reviews

and meta-analyses, seven electronic databases were searched to identify eligible reviews published between January 2015 and April 2021.

[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.

Information and Referral Line

Did you know the Office of the Seniors Advocate has an information and referral line that is available 24 hours a day, every day? Our senior service specialists will work with you during our office hours to provide resources and help resolve issues. Staff at bc211 will assist after hours. **Call Us Toll Free: 1-877-952-3181 Victoria: 250-952-3181**

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