

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 14, 2022

BC Seniors Advocate's Statement on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2022

VICTORIA – “June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Today, we recognize seniors can be more vulnerable to abuse due to frailty and dependence on others. While most seniors will not experience abuse, we know that many do, and that it often goes unreported.

“I ask all British Columbians to take the time to look more closely at the seniors in your lives. If you are concerned they are being abused financially, physically or emotionally, report your concerns to your local health authority, which is the agency designated to investigate the abuse. If you are uncertain how to contact them, call 2-1-1 and they will assist you.

According to a 2021 systemic review conducted by the Office of the Seniors Advocate, reports of abuse and neglect of people 65 and over have increased significantly in the last five years.

- 49% increase in report of abuse, neglect, and self-neglect to health authorities (and Designated Agencies)
- 69% increase in reports of victims of violent crime to the RCMP
- 87% increase in reports of physical abuse to the Vancouver Police
- 49% increase of financial abuse to the Vancouver Police

“It will take the eyes and ears of all of us to stamp out elder abuse and let seniors live in safety.”

Isobel Mackenzie
BC Seniors Advocate

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The Office of the Seniors Advocate is an independent office of the provincial government with a mandate of monitoring seniors' services and reporting on systemic issues affecting seniors. The office also provides information and referral to seniors and their caregivers by calling toll-free 1 877 952-3181, BC211, via email at info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca, Canada Post and the OSA web site <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/>.

Learn More: <https://seniorsfirstbc.ca/getting-help/elder-abuse-and-neglect/>

Link to the systemic review: <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/hidden-and-invisible-report/>

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Backgrounder

Elder abuse and neglect are any actions by someone in a position of trust, such as a family member (adult child or spouse), friend or caregiver, that results in harm to a senior. The common types of elder abuse include physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, financial, neglect and self-neglect. A senior may experience more than one type of abuse.

Preventing Elder Abuse and Neglect

- **Reporting to the Police:**
If you think a senior is being abused, taken advantage of, or neglected, and you believe that the senior is in immediate danger, call the police (9-1-1).
- **Designated Agencies (Health Authorities)**
Designated agencies under *the Adult Guardianship Act*, have a responsibility to investigate reports of suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults and seniors. To report abuse, neglect or self-neglect, whether the person is in a health facility or the community, visit:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/regional-health-authorities>
- **Financial Elder Abuse**
Information about financial elder abuse and what it looks like is available in a [video by the BC Securities Commission and Office of the Seniors Advocate](#).
- **Public Guardian and Trustee**
If you have concerns about the financial and legal affairs of a vulnerable adult or senior:
<https://www.trustee.bc.ca/services/services-to-adults/Pages/assessment-and-investigation-services.aspx>
- **Seniors First BC: Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL)**
SAIL is a safe place for older adults, and those who care about them, to talk to someone about situations of abuse or mistreatment, or to receive information about elder abuse prevention.
Telephone: 1-866-437-1940 (toll-free) or 604-437-1940
Website: <http://seniorsfirstbc.ca/>
Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL):
TTY: 604-428-3359 TTY Teletype for the deaf
- **Government of BC – Scams and Frauds**
Website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/financial-legal-matters/scams-and-fraud>