

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

### What's Happening in July

[Canada Day](#) (July 1)

[National Injury Prevention Day](#) (July 5)

[International Self-Care Day](#) (July 24)

[International Day of Friendship](#) (July 30)

### Activities of the Office of the Seniors Advocate

#### **Calling all Volunteers! Give a voice to residents of long-term care**

We're surveying every long-term care resident in B.C. and we need your help. Join our team of volunteer surveyors to interview seniors about their quality of life in long-term care. No experience necessary. Apply now online.

[Learn More](#)

#### **Seniors Advocate to hold Town Hall in Campbell River**

The Seniors Advocate would like to hear from seniors and their loved ones in the Campbell River area. Join her at the Campbell River Seniors' Centre on July 6, 2022.

[Learn More](#)

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

June 15 was World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, a time to 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.

[Learn More](#)

## **Reconnecting with B.C. Seniors**

During Seniors' Week, the Seniors Advocate was thrilled to travel across the province and connect in person with local seniors. She enjoyed learning about both the challenges and successes of older people and will continue advocating for the issues that matter most to B.C. seniors.

[Learn More](#)

## **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 coming in contact with them.

[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+ in B.C. Eligible seniors in the community who received their last booster at least 6 months ago have begun receiving invitations via the Get Vaccinated System.

[Learn More](#)

### **COVID-19 Restrictions**

Most public health restrictions in B.C. 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 required to access most businesses, events and services.

[Learn More](#)

### **Long-Term Care Update**

Most visiting restrictions have been lifted at long-term care facilities in B.C. 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. Please review each facility's restrictions before your visit.

[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.

### Review of heat dome deaths reveals need for enhanced alert system and risk mitigation for future heat events in B.C.

A new report released from the BC Coroners Service revealed that during the June 2021 heat dome, 619 of reported deaths were heat related. Many of these were vulnerable seniors with compromised health.

A panel of subject-matter experts, including Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie, identified three key areas of focus to prevent loss of life in future extreme heat events in B.C:

- co-ordinated heat alert and response systems
- identification and support of vulnerable populations
- implementation of prevention and longer-term risk mitigation strategies

[Learn More](#)

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

- June 5, 2022 [More British Columbians benefit from new round of farmers' market program funding](#)
- June 6, 2022 [Parliamentary secretary's statement on B.C. Seniors' Week](#)
- June 6, 2022 [Government launches preparedness plan for heat events, heat alert](#)
- June 7, 2022 [Enhanced alert system, risk mitigation needed for resilience in future heat events](#)
- June 7, 2022 [Ministers' statement on 619 lives lost during 2021 heat dome](#)
- June 8, 2022 [B.C. provides funding to enhance infection prevention, control in care homes](#)
- June 13, 2022 [Construction starts on innovative care village in Comox](#)
- June 20, 2022 [New housing opens for seniors, dementia care patients in Vanderhoof](#)
- June 22, 2022 [Premier's statement on strengthening health care in Canada](#)
- June 22, 2022 [B.C. expecting first hot stretch of summer](#)

June 30, 2022 [Island's largest investment in affordable housing taking shape in Saanich](#)

## 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.

### Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors

June 8, 2022 [Minister Khera announces launch of Age Well at Home initiative](#)

June 15, 2022 [Minister of Seniors, Kamal Khera, marks World Elder Abuse Awareness Day](#)

## Current Issues and Resources

### PreparedBC's Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide

The Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide from PreparedBC is a roadmap to help you, your family, and your community prepare for the next Extreme Heat Emergency in British Columbia.

[Learn More](#)

### B.C. Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program

This program provides farmers' market coupons to low-income families and seniors. Each household enrolled in the program is eligible to receive a minimum of \$27 per week in coupons that they can use at participating farmers' markets across B.C. Click the link below to find one near you. Be sure to register soon because coupons are in high demand.

[Learn More](#)

### Property Tax Deferral Program

Did you know that you may be eligible to defer your property taxes? Property tax deferral 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](#)

## **Toolkit: Social Isolation of Seniors: A focus on Indigenous seniors in Canada**

This Toolkit is a resource to help organizations and service providers adopt approaches to help Indigenous seniors strengthen human connections. Social isolation is a silent reality experienced by many seniors, and particularly Indigenous seniors. It is hoped that this resource will heighten awareness and sensitivity and help organizations address their particular social needs.

[Learn More](#)

## **Recent Research**

### **Understanding Social Isolation and Loneliness Among Older Canadians and How to Address It**

(National Institute on Aging)

Social isolation and loneliness are increasingly recognized as important public health concerns. Globally, as well as in Canada, these issues have significant implications for the health and well-being of older persons.

[Learn More](#)

### **Development and implementation of a Heat Alert and Response System in rural British Columbia**

(Can J Public Health)

In 2018, a regional health authority in British Columbia (B.C.) initiated a multi-year project to support planning and response to extreme heat. Climate projections indicate that temperatures in the southern interior of B.C. will continue to increase, with concomitant negative impacts on human health. Successful climate change adaptation must include cross-sectoral action, inclusive of the health sector, to plan for and respond to climate-related events, including extreme heat.

[Learn More](#)

### **Investigation of climate change impacts on long-term care facility occupants**

(City and Environment Interactions)

Climate change is causing alterations to the geophysical system; rising global temperatures are causing extreme heat events, wildfires, and changes in infectious agents; sea-level rise and extreme precipitation events are increasing the frequency and intensity of flood events. These climate change impacts have a negative effect on human health, specifically on the most vulnerable populations.

[Learn More](#)

## **MedSafer to Support Deprescribing for Residents of Long-Term Care: A Mixed-Methods Study**

(Canadian Geriatrics Journal)

Polypharmacy is prevalent in long-term care homes (LTCH) and increases the risk of adverse drug events. Feasible and effective deprescribing interventions applicable in the LTCH environment are needed.

[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).

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.

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