

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

### Activities of the Office of the Seniors Advocate

#### **Report Release – Monitoring Seniors Services 2022**

The Office of the Seniors Advocate will release the 8th edition of the annual Monitoring Seniors Services report later this month. The report will focus on 2021/22 data in seniors health care, housing, transportation, community supports and safety. Stay tuned to our social media feeds to follow the report's release.

[Learn More](#)

#### **Seniors Advocate at Housing Central**

The annual BC Non-Profit Housing Association Housing Central conference in late November focused on the challenges seniors face accessing affordable housing. The Seniors Advocate moderated a panel of seniors with lived experience of homelessness and precarious housing situations. The panel also discussed the Province's commitment to a stand-alone Ministry of Housing which was announced at the conference by Premier Eby. A housing minister will be appointed when a new cabinet is named on Dec. 7.

[Learn More](#)

#### **Stronger Resident and Family Councils in Long-Term Care**

The Ministry of Health announced increased support for family councils last month, which was welcomed by the Seniors Advocate. Isobel Mackenzie has engaged extensively with family councils across the province to promote opportunities for residents and their loved ones to have more input into decision-making at long-term care homes. "These changes will give residents of long-term care, and the people who love them, a much stronger voice in shaping the quality of life for our most frail seniors. It is an extremely positive step forward," said Mackenzie.

[Learn More](#)

#### **Official Launch of the Canadian Coalition Against Ageism**

The official launch of the newly-formed Canadian Coalition Against Ageism took place in Toronto in late November. The coalition's goal is to combat ageism, focus on strengthening, protecting and promoting the human rights of older adults and

“encourage the Canadian government and the United Nations to support recommendations from the World Health Organization’s Global Report on Ageism”. The BC Seniors Advocate was one of many Canadian organizations and experts committed to ending ageism who attended. The event was also an opportunity to connect with the seniors advocates in Newfoundland and New Brunswick to discuss common issues impacting older Canadians.

[Learn More](#)

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

While the OSA Long-Term Care Survey is well underway, there will still be many volunteer opportunities starting in the new year. Sign up to become a volunteer surveyor and engage with residents in meaningful conversations about their quality of life in long-term care homes.

Are you fluent in German, Italian, Korean, Punjabi, Cantonese, or Mandarin? We are looking for bilingual surveyors to interview residents in their preferred language.

[Learn More](#)

## **Current Issues and Resources**

### **Flu Vaccine**

This year, the Province is offering all seniors 65+ an enhanced influenza vaccine for free. Previously, free enhanced influenza vaccines were offered only to seniors living in long-term care homes, assisted living settings and First Nations communities. The Ministry of Health says enhanced influenza vaccines offer seniors better protection against the flu than standard-dose vaccines. The enhanced vaccine stimulates stronger immune responses which can lead to better protection against influenza.

[Learn More](#)

### **Access your Health Records Online**

B.C. residents can now access their full health records in one place by logging in online or via a mobile app called Health Gateway. Available records include medications, lab results, healthcare visits and immunizations, among others. The BC Services Card app is required to log in.

[Learn More](#)

### **Hydro Cost-of-Living Credit**

The provincial government has announced British Columbians will receive a one-time \$100 cost-of-living credit on their hydro bills to help offset winter household expenses. Beginning in December, the credit will be automatically applied to the accounts of all eligible residential customers, including people who receive electricity from BC Hydro, FortisBC or a municipal utility.

[Learn More](#)

## **Cold Weather Safety**

Winter weather has arrived in most of B.C. and it is important to recognize that older adults are especially susceptible to cold-related illness and injury. Seniors often lose body heat much faster compared to younger people and a chill can more easily turn into hypothermia or frostbite. Read these cold weather tips from the National Institute on Aging to stay safe during the winter months.

[Learn More](#)

## **COVID-19**

### **COVID-19 Boosters and Flu Shots**

The Province is now rolling out its COVID-19 fall booster campaign. Everyone five years and older is encouraged to get a fall booster at a 6-month interval from their last dose. Adults 18+ and high-risk youth aged 12-17 will be eligible to receive a new bivalent vaccine. Vaccination invitations will go out through the Province's Get Vaccinated System.

People six months and older are eligible for free flu shots and free enhanced vaccines are available to seniors. You can also book your flu shot through the Get Vaccinated System.

[Learn More](#)

### **COVID-19 Restrictions**

Most public health restrictions in B.C. remain 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.

The Provincial Health Officer has confirmed that the restriction on visitors participating in large indoor gatherings in long-term care or assisted living has been lifted. This includes events such as holiday parties and Remembrance Day ceremonies. Proof of vaccination and a negative rapid antigen test still apply to these visitors.

[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

- November 3, 2022 [Residents, family will have stronger voices in long-term care homes](#)
- November 7, 2022 [New affordable rental homes open in Merritt](#)
- November 7, 2022 [Provincial/territorial health ministers committed to continue improving and transforming Canada's health-care systems](#)
- November 8, 2022 [New affordable rental homes coming to Gibsons](#)
- November 15, 2022 [November 15, 2022](#)
- November 16, 2022 [Province urges people to get vaccinated, stay safe during respiratory illness season](#)
- November 18, 2022 [David Eby sworn in as premier, announces cost-of-living credits for people](#)
- November 18, 2022 [Cost-of-living credits will help people, businesses](#)
- November 20, 2022 [Premier Eby takes action to keep people, communities safe](#)
- November 21, 2022 [New premier delivers action to expand housing supply within first days](#)
- November 22, 2022 [Standalone ministry to tackle housing crisis, Premier Eby announces](#)
- November 24, 2022 [New dementia, long-term care facility coming to Comox](#)
- November 27, 2022 [More internationally educated family doctors on the way](#)

## 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

November 10, 2022 [Minister Khera encourages Seniors and all Canadians to get the flu vaccine](#)

November 17, 2022 [Legislation to cover dental care for children and to support low-income renters receives Royal Assent](#)

## Recent Research

### **Do Residential Long-Term Care Policies Support Family Involvement in Residents' Quality of Life in Four Canadian Provinces?**

(Journal of Aging and Social Policy)

Family members are essential contributors to the quality of life (QoL) of persons living in residential long-term care (RLTC). This paper analyzes how the system enables or inhibits family involvement with residents in RLTC. Our analysis of 21 policies that regulate long-term care in four Canadian Provinces reveal differences in their portrayal of residents' families. Family roles are characterized procedurally (task-oriented) or relationally (interactive).

[Learn More](#)

### **Support for Informal Caregivers in Canada: A Scoping Review from a Hospice and Palliative/End-of-Life Care Lens**

(Sage Journals)

Informal caregivers (ICs) providing care for those at the end-of-life face physical, psycho-social, emotional, and/or financial challenges. However, there is a paucity of research towards the effectiveness of available interventions for this vulnerable population. The purpose of this scoping review was to investigate the availability and efficacy of interventions for ICs providing hospice and palliative/end-of-life care in Canada.

[Learn More](#)

### **Life Course Predictors of Young Men Surviving to Age 90 in a Cohort Study: The Manitoba Follow-up Study**

(Canadian Journal on Aging)

The purpose of this study was to identify factors at various time points in life that are associated with surviving to age 90. Data from men enrolled in a cohort study since 1948 were considered in 12-year intervals. Logistic regression models were constructed with the outcome of surviving to age 90. Factors were: childhood illness, blood pressure (BP), body mass index (BMI), chronic diseases, and electrocardiogram (ECG) findings. After 1996, the Short Form-36 was added. A total

of 3,976 men were born in 1928 or earlier, and hence by the end of our study window in 2018, each had the opportunity of surviving to age 90. Of these, 721 did live to beyond his 90th birthday.

[Learn More](#)

## Outreach by the OSA

Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie continues to meet with seniors across the province, attend events and deliver presentations both in person and virtually. If you would like to invite her 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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