

Office of the Seniors Advocate Monthly Update - January 2023

Activities of the Office of the Seniors Advocate

Seniors Advocate Recognizes Alzheimer's Awareness Month

In support of Alzheimer's Awareness Month, the Seniors Advocate will be participating in a virtual panel discussion organized by the Alzheimer's Society of B.C. on the importance of choice as we age. Listen in on Friday, January 27 from 2-3 p.m. for "Conversations that matter: Aging with choice." To register, email rsvp@alzheimerbc.org.

[Learn More](#)

Report Release – Monitoring Seniors Services 2022

In December, the Office of the Seniors Advocate released the 8th edition of the annual Monitoring Seniors Services report. The report focused on 2021/22 data on services available to seniors in the areas of health care, housing, transportation, community supports and safety.

[Learn More](#)

Seniors Advocate Visits B.C. Communities

Isobel Mackenzie will visit the Sunshine Coast and Southern Interior in February to meet with seniors, seniors organizations, advocates, local government representatives, residential care facilities and others to discuss issues affecting older British Columbians. More details soon to come on our social media feeds and website. If you would like to invite Isobel to speak with your community or organization, please email the office at info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca.

[Learn More](#)

Spring Volunteer Opportunities Available for OSA Long-Term Care Survey

While the OSA Long-Term Care Survey is well underway, there will still be many volunteer opportunities available across the province between January and March. 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

OSA Information and Referral Line

Do you have questions about seniors services in B.C.? Call our information and referral line to speak with our knowledgeable staff about health care, housing, income supports, transportation and community supports. Contact us at 1-877-952-3181 or info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca.

[Learn More](#)

One-time Top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit

The one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit from the federal government aims to help low-income renters with the cost of their monthly rent. This new benefit is tax-free and provides a one-time payment of \$500 to eligible applicants.

[Learn More](#)

Alzheimer's Awareness Month Workshops and Webinars

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is recognizing Alzheimer's Awareness Month by highlighting how British Columbians affected by dementia can continue to live full and meaningful lives. Throughout January, they are offering free, virtual webinars and workshops for people living with dementia and their caregivers.

[Learn More](#)

New Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long-Term Care

Premier David Eby has appointed MLA Harwinder Sandhu as the new Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long-Term Care. She is the MLA for Vernon-Monashee and brings experience as a registered nurse and a patient care coordinator to her new role. OSA looks forward to working with her as she tackles the many urgent issues facing B.C. seniors. We also thank former Parliamentary Secretary Mable Elmore for her work and wish her well in her new appointment.

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19

Rapid Antigen Tests

Free COVID-19 rapid antigen tests are available to people of all ages at B.C. pharmacies. No ID is required. If you are concerned about exposure to COVID-19, please consider asking people you will be in close contact with to take a rapid test before your visit.

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19 Boosters and Flu Shots

The Province is continuing to roll out COVID-19 booster shots. Everyone five years and older is encouraged to get a booster six months following their last dose. Adults 18+ and high-risk youth aged 12-17 can receive a new bivalent vaccine. Vaccination invitations are available 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](#)

Long-Term Care Update

The majority of provincial COVID-19 visiting restrictions have been lifted at long-term care facilities in B.C. however guests should inquire about specific visitation requirements at individual care homes. Non-essential visitors must continue to 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. Updated documentation on provincial rules and restrictions is now available online.

[Learn More](#)

Provincial News

Recent Announcements from the B.C. Government Impacting Seniors

- December 1, 2022 [Committees ready to help create B.C.'s first accessibility standards](#)
- December 1, 2022 [Minister's statement on actions taken by Medical Services Commission](#)
- December 2, 2022 [Review highlights B.C.'s strong pandemic response, opportunities for enhancement](#)
- December 7, 2022 [New cabinet ready to take action on cost of living, health care, housing, climate](#)
- December 8, 2022 [Province launches blitz of walk-in influenza immunization clinics](#)
- December 12, 2022 [Resident doctors ratify agreement under Shared Recovery Mandate](#)
- December 15, 2022 [Minister's statement on mental-health supports for the holiday season](#)
- December 16, 2022 [Province continues funding fair wages for long-term-care, assisted-living staff](#)
- December 28, 2022 [Improved processes will help renters, landlords](#)
- December 31, 2022 [Minister's statement on actions by federal government to protect Canadians from COVID-19](#)

National News

Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors

- December 7, 2022 [Government of Canada invests in MEDTEQ+ to fund groundbreaking technologies that will benefit Canada's seniors and their families](#)
- December 21, 2022 [Minister Khra and Minister Duclos announce the appointment of a new member and a new Chairperson to the National Seniors Council - Government of Canada committed to the well-being and quality of life of older adults](#)
- December 31, 2022 [Government of Canada announces a temporary negative COVID-19 test requirement for travellers arriving from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong or Macao](#)

Recent Research

Navigating the Path Forward for Dementia in Canada

(Alzheimer's Society of Canada)

Dementia is arguably the greatest health challenge of Canada's aging society. What makes it all the more daunting is not knowing the scale of the challenge and its impact on Canadians. The Landmark Study seeks to fill the data gap with a microsimulation study whose intent is to project the number of people who will develop dementia in Canada by the year 2050, and assess the impact of factors such as age, sex, ethnicity, health status and geography.

[Learn More](#)

Community and Provider Evaluation of a Canadian Dementia Support Services Program

(Canadian Geriatrics Journal)

Community programs and services dedicated to support those living with dementia and care partners can improve their quality of life. In close collaboration with the Alzheimer Society of British Columbia, we evaluated the First Link® dementia support services, aiming to identify key strengths and areas of improvements to inform the services offered.

[Learn More](#)

Perspectives on Growing Older in Canada: The 2022 NIA Ageing in Canada Survey Report

(National Institute on Ageing, Environics Institute for Survey Research)

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) and the Environics Institute for Survey Research partnered on an annual survey of ageing in Canada to track, over the next decade, how Canadians feel about both their experience and expectations of growing old in Canada. The survey captures older Canadians' perspectives across three dimensions of ageing: social well-

being, financial security, and health and independence. It does so with 10 key indicators that, when analyzed annually, will make it possible to measure progress — or setbacks — over time across Canada.

[Learn More](#)

A Cost-Benefit Analysis of a Group Memory Intervention for Healthy Older Adults with Memory Concerns

(Cambridge University Press)

This study examines whether memory intervention programs can mitigate health care costs. Research suggests these programs translate to a decreased intention of older adults who are worried about age-normal memory changes to seek traditional outlets for medical/psychiatric help. We employed a cost-benefit analysis approach to analyze the effectiveness of a memory intervention program within Ontario.

[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.

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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