

## Office of the Seniors Advocate Monthly Update - February 2023

### Activities of the Office of the Seniors Advocate

#### **Report Release – Home Support Review**

In February, the Office of the Seniors Advocate will release a second comprehensive review of British Columbia's Home Support program. The report includes results from a survey of public home support clients in the province and their family caregivers. Stay tuned to our social media feeds to follow the timing of the report's release.

[Learn More](#)

#### **Seniors Advocate Visits Sunshine Coast and East Kootenay**

Isobel Mackenzie will visit the Sunshine Coast (Feb 7-8) and East Kootenay (Feb 13-16) this month to meet with seniors, seniors organizations, advocates, local government representatives, residential care facilities and others to discuss issues affecting older British Columbians. She will be holding several town halls open to the public to hear from seniors, their loved ones and others. Keep an eye on our events page and social media feeds for more information about upcoming town halls.

[Learn More](#)

#### **Winter Meeting of OSA Council of Advisors**

The Seniors Advocate was pleased to meet with the OSA Council of Advisors last month. This dedicated group of older adults from around the province keeps the office up to date on local emerging issues and provides important feedback. The meeting featured remarks from the new Parliamentary Secretary of Seniors and Long-Term Care Harwinder Sandhu and a panel discussion on the continuum of seniors care in B.C.

[Learn More](#)

### Current Issues and Resources

## **Free Income Tax Clinics**

Do you need help with your tax return? If you have a modest income and a simple tax situation, volunteers at a free tax clinic may be able to complete your tax return for you. Search for free tax clinics in your community on the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website. Tax clinics for 2023 will be added continuously over the next few months. The income tax filing deadline for most Canadians is April 30.

[Learn More](#)

## **Seeking Your Opinion on Cancer Care for B.C. Seniors**

The Cancer and Aging Research Engagement team is seeking feedback on improving cancer care for older adults in B.C. The team is surveying anyone who has/had cancer as a senior (65+) or cared for a senior with cancer in either a personal or professional capacity. This project is a collaboration with the UBC School of Nursing and BC Cancer. For questions, contact [kristen.haase@ubc.ca](mailto:kristen.haase@ubc.ca) or call 604-827-0979. Click below to register.

[Learn More](#)

## **Free Safety Workshops for Seniors**

The Council of Seniors Citizens of BC is offering a series of free online workshops through their Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute on seniors' safety throughout February. Workshops cover important topics for older adults such as falls prevention, frauds and scams, emergency preparedness and more.

[Learn More](#)

## **New Voluntary National Long-Term Care Standards**

The Health Standards Organization (HSO) and CSA Group have released a new set of complementary standards for long-term care homes. The organizations say the new standards provide long-term care facilities across Canada with evidence-informed practices to provide safe, reliable and high-quality care for residents.

[Learn More](#)

## **COVID-19**

### **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](#)

### **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](#)

### **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**

- January 3, 2023 [Home Owner Grant to help people with property taxes in 2023](#)
- January 3, 2023 [Dawson Creek hospital replacement moves to next step in procurement process](#)
- January 5, 2023 [Help with costs arrives for British Columbians](#)
- January 5, 2023 [PharmaCare expands diabetes, heart failure, blood clot drugs coverage](#)
- January 6, 2023 [B.C. renews use of emergency operation centres to support patients, hospitals](#)
- January 9, 2023 [Nurses receive support to join B.C.'s health system more quickly](#)
- January 12, 2023 [New fund will protect thousands of renters in B.C.](#)
- January 13, 2023 [Province provides update on respiratory illness season](#)
- January 16, 2023 [New homes open for Witset First Nation Elders and families](#)
- January 18, 2023 [Over 60 new rental units for seniors coming to Nanaimo](#)

January 20, 2023 [New affordable rental homes open in Vancouver](#)

## National News

### Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors

January 9, 2023 [Message from the Minister of Health – Alzheimer’s Awareness Month](#)

January 31, 2023 [Statement by Ministers Duclos and Khera on Long-Term Care Standards](#)

## Recent Research

### Optimizing the Care of Older Canadians with Cancer and their Families: A Statement Articulating the Position and Contribution of Canadian Oncology Nurses

(Canadian Oncology Nursing Journal)

Canadian oncology nurses face important challenges in providing care for older adults with cancer and their families. These challenges are often related to a misalignment between the healthcare system environment, processes, and resources and patient/family needs. This misalignment leads to challenges in care delivery, contributes to ethical dilemmas, and impacts treatment outcomes and healthcare costs.

[Learn More](#)

### Impact of Geriatric Assessment and Management on Quality of Life, Unplanned Hospitalizations, Toxicity, and Survival for Older Adults With Cancer: The Randomized 5C Trial

(Journal of Clinical Oncology)

American Society of Clinical Oncology recommends that older adults with cancer being considered for chemotherapy receive geriatric assessment (GA) and management (GAM), but few randomized controlled trials have examined its impact on quality of life (QOL).

[Learn More](#)

### Long-Term Care Staffing Policies Pre-COVID-19 and Pandemic Responses: A Case Comparison of Ontario and British Columbia

(Canadian Public Policy/Analyse de politiques)

By late May, 2020, in Ontario COVID-19 cases among long-term care (LTC) residents constituted 5,157 of the province’s 28,499 cases. In British Columbia, there were 339 cases among LTC residents compared to a provincial total of 2,562 cases.

While the LTC sectors in these two provinces have some differences, this article reviews their pre-pandemic LTC staffing policies and compares their staffing-related COVID-19 prevention measures in 2020. Ontario's policies before 2020 corresponded with lower staff-to-patient ratios than B.C.'s, which may have constrained Ontario's pandemic responses. Implementation of standards or guidelines, and changes to funding could help achieve LTC sector staffing resiliency.

[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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