

Office of the Seniors Advocate Monthly Update - March 2023

Activities of the Office of the Seniors Advocate

Report Release – We Must Do Better: Home Support Services for BC Seniors

In her newly released report *We Must Do Better: Home Support Services for BC Seniors*, the Seniors Advocate urges the provincial government to undertake a fundamental restructuring of home support services. The report finds the program is not keeping pace with the needs of a growing seniors' population and the service remains unaffordable for a large number of seniors.

[Learn More](#)

Seeking New Members of OSA Council of Advisors

In early March, the office will open applications to British Columbians 55+ who are interested in becoming members of the OSA Council of Advisors (COA). The COA is an engaged and connected group of seniors representing each of the province's five health authority regions. The members support OSA by providing feedback and insight into seniors' issues in their communities. More details will be available online once applications open.

[Learn More](#)

Canada's Three Seniors' Advocates Meet in Ottawa

British Columbia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Advocates identified key issues to improve the aging process for Canadian seniors when they met in person for the first time in Ottawa last month. Their agenda included a series of discussions with organizations and federal officials including Minister of Seniors Kamal Khera.

[Learn More](#)

Volunteer Surveyors Needed in the Lower Mainland

OSA is looking for volunteers to engage in meaningful conversations with residents of long-term care homes and learn more about their quality of life. Volunteers are needed across the province, but especially in Vancouver, Burnaby, Surrey, Richmond and Delta. [Click here](#) to read about the rewarding experience of a volunteer surveyor in Langley.

[Learn More](#)

Current Issues and Resources

Reminder: File Your Income Tax

The annual income tax filing deadline for most Canadians is April 30. It is important to file a tax return to ensure there are no interruptions to your federal and provincial benefits and income supports.

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.

[Learn More](#)

Have Your Say on the Global Campaign to Combat Ageism

The Global Campaign to Combat Ageism is an initiative supported by the 194 Member States of the World Health Organization and is integral to the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030). As the Global Campaign enters its next phase, they are seeking opinions from the public on awareness of ageism and its impacts, and the future of the campaign.

[Learn More](#)

Learn How to Protect Yourself Against Fraud

March is fraud prevention month. According to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC), people in Canada lost more than \$520 million due to fraud and cybercrime in 2022, many of them seniors. CAFC has created a new guide called "Tricks of the Trade: What's in a Fraudster's Toolbox?" to help Canadians identify fraud attempts and protect themselves and the people around them.

[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. Documentation on provincial rules and restrictions is now available online.

[Learn More](#)

Provincial News

Recent Announcements from the B.C. Government Impacting Seniors

- February 1, 2023 [Province reminds people to get a bivalent COVID-19 booster](#)
- February 1, 2023 [New funding supports more accessible taxis](#)
- February 1, 2023 [New payment model for physicians means better care for patients](#)
- February 2, 2023 [B.C. trains more paramedics for emergency health care](#)
- February 6, 2023 [B.C. throne speech outlines plans to build a stronger, more secure future](#)
- February 8, 2023 [Affordable homes for veterans open in Surrey](#)
- February 10, 2023 [Construction begins on housing for seniors in Burnaby](#)
- February 17, 2023 [More than 130 affordable rental homes open in Langford, Victoria](#)
- February 25, 2023 [More cost-of-living support coming for people this spring](#)
- February 26, 2023 [New funding will keep ferry fares affordable](#)
- February 28, 2023 [Budget 2023 takes action on issues that matter most](#)

National News

Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors

- January 31, 2023 [Statement by Ministers Duclos and Khera on Long-Term Care Standards](#)
- February 2, 2023 [Minister Khera and Minister Duclos announce the appointment of a new member to the National Seniors Council](#)
- February 28, 2023 [Government of Canada invests \\$2.5 million in the mental health of older adults and caregivers](#)
- March 1, 2023 [Government of Canada supports seniors in Long Term Care by helping to ensure they access safe and quality care](#)

Recent Research

Life and Death in Long- Term Care: Are We Learning the Wrong Lessons from COVID-19?

(Institute for Research on Public Policy)

This study presents a novel approach to measuring the performance of long-term care institutions during the pandemic, and identifies the factors behind their performance. Based on the findings, it proposes three areas for action that could inform federal, provincial and territorial government discussions on how to improve long-term care in Canada.

[Learn More](#)

Balancing Flexibility and Administrative Burden: Experiences of Family Managers Using Directly Funded Home Care in Manitoba, Canada

(Canadian Journal on Ageing)

Directly funded (DF) home care provides funding to home care recipients to coordinate their own care and supports, and is available across all Canadian provinces. Current research on DF home care focuses on the experiences of adults with disabilities self-directing their own care, but less is known about the experiences of family members managing services for adults 55 years of age and older. This article presents findings from a qualitative analysis of 24 semi-structured interviews with older adults and caregivers using the DF program in Manitoba, Canada, focusing on family manager experiences.

[Learn More](#)

Social Frailty in Late Adulthood: Social Cognitive and Psychological Well-Being Correlates

(The Journals of Gerontology)

Social frailty poses a major threat to successful aging, but its social cognitive and psychological well-being correlates remain poorly understood. This cross-sectional study provides initial insights into whether social cognitive difficulties in older age are associated with social frailty, as well as how social frailty is linked to psychological characteristics known to be important for health and well-being.

[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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