

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

### Activities of the Office of the Seniors Advocate

#### **New Report – Billions More Reasons to Care**

OSA's latest report Billions More Reasons to Care finds rising costs, rising profits and spending disparities in B.C.'s contracted long-term care sector. This second review into government's funding of publicly subsidized for-profit and not-for-profit operated long-term care homes has again found spending differences impacting care for residents, many cost increases exceeding inflation, a lack of clarity on many reported expenses and inequitable funding for capital assets.

[Learn More](#)

#### **Fall Council of Advisors Meeting**

The OSA Council of Advisors met in Victoria at the end of September to engage on seniors' issues across B.C. We welcomed five new members to the council: Lynn Wood, Sandra Gerbhardt, Diana Leung, Caroline Alexander and Pauline Gobeil who represent various regions across the province.

[Learn More](#)

### CURRENT ISSUES AND RESOURCES

#### **Fall Vaccination Program**

Starting this month, people six months and older can get an updated influenza and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time. Invitations will be sent by email and text message to everyone who has received a COVID-19 vaccine in B.C. The invitation will include a direct link to book an appointment to receive the vaccines. People most at risk of severe illness, such as residents of long-term care facilities, seniors 65+, Indigenous peoples and those with chronic health conditions, as well as healthcare workers, will be the first to receive vaccinations.

[Learn More](#)

#### **Medical Masks in Long-Term Care Homes**

Due to the increase in respiratory virus infections in B.C., visitors to long-term care facilities are required to wear a medical mask when they are in common areas and participating in indoor events, gatherings, activities in communal spaces of the care home or residence.

[Learn More](#)

## International Day of Older Persons

October 1 marked the International Day of Older Persons as well as [National Seniors Day](#) in Canada. On this day, stakeholders around the world come together to highlight the important contributions that older people make to society and raise awareness of the challenges of ageing in today's world.

[Learn More](#)

## Seniors Personal Planning Workshops

The Seniors' Health & Wellness Institute is hosting a series of free webinars on advance care planning to help seniors prepare for future personal, medical and legal needs. Topics include representation agreements, advance directives and wills. Webinars take place weekly during the months of October and November.

[Learn More](#)

## Provincial News

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

- September 11, 2023 [Province caps annual rent increase well below inflation](#)
- September 11, 2023 [Nearly 60 affordable homes for seniors open in Vancouver](#)
- September 12, 2023 [Second hospital, new cancer centre breaks ground in Surrey](#)
- September 12, 2023 [More accessible Meals on Wheels coming to Langley](#)
- September 13, 2023 [New homes open for families, seniors in Burnaby](#)
- September 18, 2023 [New long-term care home coming to Cranbrook](#)
- September 18, 2023 [B.C. moves to increase housing supply, deliver more homes faster](#)
- September 22, 2023 [New funding supports local governments with housing initiatives](#)
- September 26, 2023 [Targets released for 10 municipalities to deliver more homes for people](#)
- September 26, 2023 [New affordable homes open in Powell River](#)
- September 26, 2023 [Seventy new affordable homes coming for families, seniors in Saanich](#)
- September 27, 2023 [Physician assistants are one step closer to joining B.C.'s health-care workforce](#)
- September 27, 2023 [Expanded travel programs benefit patients needing cancer care](#)
- September 28, 2023 [Community organizations will have better infrastructure to offer people healthy food](#)
- September 29, 2023 [More affordable housing for families, seniors open in Victoria](#)

## National News

### Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors

September 21, 2023 [Government introduces legislation to build more rental homes and stabilize grocery prices](#)

## Recent Research

### Targeting the hallmarks of aging to improve influenza vaccine responses in older adults

(Immunity and Ageing)

Age-related declines in immune response pose a challenge in combating diseases later in life. Influenza (flu) infection remains a significant burden on older populations and often results in catastrophic disability in those who survive infection. Despite having vaccines designed specifically for older adults, the burden of flu remains high and overall flu vaccine efficacy remains inadequate in this population. Recent geroscience research has highlighted the utility in targeting biological aging to improve multiple age-related declines.

[Learn More](#)

### Future temperature-related excess mortality under climate change and population aging scenarios in Canada

(Canadian Journal of Public Health)

Climate change is expected to increase global temperatures. How temperature-related mortality risk will change is not completely understood, and how future demographic changes will affect temperature-related mortality needs to be clarified. We evaluate temperature-related mortality across Canada until 2099, accounting for age groups and scenarios of population growth.

[Learn More](#)

### Insights on Canadian Society: Dwelling satisfaction among older adults: Dwelling characteristics and their influence on satisfaction

(Statistics Canada)

Housing choices and requirements often shift as individuals approach and enter retirement, based on personal preferences, proximity to services, functional impairments, and financial considerations. These housing needs, coupled with the overall desire of older Canadians to 'age-in-place', are increasingly at the forefront of housing discussions at the national, provincial and municipal government levels. Using the 2021 Canadian Housing Survey, this study examines dwelling satisfaction as a key indicator of housing needs for older adults aged 55 years and older.

## Outreach by the OSA

BC 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).

Please note that Isobel Mackenzie has announced that she will retire after March 31, 2024, therefore our office is not accepting invitations for events after this date at this time.

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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