

## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **Updated directory notes improvement in long-term care staffing but raises concerns with medication use, food costs**

VICTORIA – The Office of the Seniors Advocate has released its updated directory of long-term care and assisted living homes.

The directory provides detailed information on 400+ publicly subsidized facilities in a searchable, online format and includes information on a number of measures including: funded care hours, number of beds and room configuration, spending on food, medication use, use of physical restraints, how much physical/occupational and recreational therapy is provided, complexity of care in the resident population, licensing complaints, reportable incidents and inspection reports.

This year, the directory includes results from the 2023 Long-Term Care Resident and Visitor Survey for each individual facility and new information on the number of residents taking more than nine medications, people with four or more ER visits annually, and details on monthly fees paid by residents.

“This year, for the first time, we can report 100% of long-term care homes in B.C. are funded to deliver the recommended 3.36 hours of care per resident and per day, with an overall provincial average of 3.42 hours. This is very encouraging and demonstrates that measurable outcomes can be achieved when we set a target and work toward it,” stated BC Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie, whose office first identified the shortfall of funded care hours in 2015.

“We are also seeing continued progress on increasing the number of single rooms, an increase in the number of facilities inspected each year, and a decrease in substantiated licensing complaints,” continued Mackenzie. The report highlighted the percentage of facilities receiving at least one inspection was up year-over-year but had not yet met the rate achieved prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“On the less encouraging side, we are seeing a reversal of previous gains on reducing the use of antipsychotic medications with an increase of almost 17% over the past five years. I am also concerned about the relatively low expenditure on food. The current average of \$10.12 per resident per day is 16% below the \$12.07 per resident per day minimum expenditure required of care facilities in Ontario. With our recent survey results noting nearly 40% of long-term care residents only ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ like the taste of the food, it is reasonable to ask if we could improve on this finding if we spent more on meals,” added Mackenzie.

The report also highlighted a substantial difference between the average wait time and the median wait time to access a long-term care bed, something Mackenzie will be raising with the Ministry of Health in 2024.

Highlights in the 2022/23 directory for publicly subsidized long-term care include:

- For the first time, 100% of facilities were funded to provide 3.36 hours of care or more per resident per day, meeting the provincial guideline, up from 84% last year and from 30% five years ago.
- The average wait time for admission was 101 days, ranging from 65 days in Vancouver Coastal Health to 278 days in Northern Health. Average wait times have increased 166%, or 38 days, over the past five years; median wait times are much lower and ranged from a low of 15 days in Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health to a high of 211 days in Northern Health.
- The proportion of residents taking antipsychotic medication without a diagnosis of psychosis was 28%, an increase of 3.7% over the previous year and 16.7% compared to five years ago.
- 45% of residents were taking nine or more medications compared to 42% last year and 40% five years ago. A higher percentage of residents in health authority owned sites (50%) take nine or more medications than people in contracted facilities (42%). Inappropriate polypharmacy increases the risk of adverse drug effects, including falls and cognitive impairment, harmful drug interactions, and drug-disease interactions in which a medication prescribed to treat one condition worsens another or causes a new one.
- There were 128 substantiated licensing complaints, a 12% decrease from last year and a 23% decrease from five years ago. The rate of substantiated complaints per 1,000 beds in health authority-owned facilities was 20% lower than in contracted facilities.
- The average food cost increased 9% compared to the previous year to \$10.12 per resident per day with a range from \$6.68 to \$26.92.
- In 2022/23, a resident with an average annual income of \$32,500 paid a monthly fee of \$2,039, a 5.8% increase over the previous year.
- The rate of influenza vaccinations for staff decreased to 39% from 54% in 2022/21. The vaccination rate for residents decreased to 88% in 2022/23 from 90% the previous year.
- The overall complexity of residents in long-term care has remained relatively stable over the past five years, although the population is trending slightly younger based on average age and percentage of residents 85 years and older.
- Both the average and median length of stay are trending down slightly. Currently, 50% of residents remain in long-term care for less than 482 days (1.3 years) although the average length of stay is nearly double at 827 days, almost a full year longer.

Highlights for assisted living include:

- The average wait time for admission was 117 days, varying widely across health authorities from 75 days in Vancouver Coastal Health to 408 days in Northern Health.
- 49% of residents were assessed as MAPLe 4+ which means they have complex conditions and are at high risk for long-term care placement.
- The percentage of residents with nine or more medications was 56%.

- 11% of residents had four or more visits to the emergency room in one year; this varied considerably from 3% in Vancouver Coastal Health to 20% in Northern Health.
- A total of 16 inspections were undertaken in 2022/23, approximately one-third of the 45 inspections completed in 2021/22.
- The average monthly resident rate was \$1,484 per month, a 3% increase from last year.

“The directory is a valuable tool for seniors, caregivers and the public – particularly for people interacting with the long-term care and assisted living sector for the first time,” said Mackenzie.

This is the 9<sup>th</sup> directory produced by the Office of the Seniors Advocate (OSA) which is available online and via hard copy by request. The information in the directory is the most accessed content on the OSA web site by a substantial margin. The OSA also responds to many queries through its information and referral service from the public seeking information regarding long-term care and assisted living facilities throughout B.C.

2022/23 Long-Term Care and Assisted Living Directory: [www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/long-term-care-directory/](http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/long-term-care-directory/)

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The Office of the Seniors Advocate is an independent office of the provincial government with a mandate of monitoring seniors’ services and reporting on systemic issues affecting seniors. The office also provides information and referral to seniors and their caregivers by calling toll-free 1 877 952-3181, BC211, via email at [info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca](mailto:info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca), Canada Post and the OSA web site <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/>.

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