

## Office of the Seniors Advocate Monthly Update - April 2024

### Activities of the Office of the Seniors Advocate

#### **New 2023 OSA Monitoring Seniors Services Report Released**

The rising population and residual effects from the pandemic are putting increasing pressure on services for seniors across B.C. as highlighted in the OSA 2023 Monitoring Seniors Services report. The report provides an annual check-up on the state of B.C. seniors' services in the key areas of health care, housing, transportation, income supports, community services and safety.

[Learn More](#)

#### **BC Seniors Advocate's Statement on National Caregiver Day**

April 2nd was National Caregiver Day and an opportunity to recognize the role of family caregivers in supporting the health and well-being of seniors in B.C. Not only are seniors living longer, but each year, the number of seniors as a proportion of the provincial population is increasing. This also means that more and more loved ones throughout British Columbia are becoming caregivers and helping older people in our communities live happy, healthy lives.

[Learn More](#)

#### **Message from New Seniors Advocate Dan Levitt**

I wanted to take this opportunity to say hello in this first newsletter since I began the role of BC Seniors Advocate in March. Since I joined the office, my priority has been to start meeting with seniors, service providers and others throughout the province. I am spending most of April on the road in urban and rural areas hearing first hand about the issues and challenges facing seniors and their ideas for improving programs, supports and services.

[Learn More](#)

### Current Issues and Resources

#### **Income Tax Tips for Seniors**

It's income tax time. This year's tax-filing deadline is April 30, 2024. It's vital to file your taxes on time, even if you don't owe any money. Eligibility for many important federal and provincial supports and benefits, including the new Canada Dental Care Plan,

Guaranteed Income Supplement and Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters is based on your annual income reported in your tax return. Filing on time helps avoid any disruption to your payments and benefits.

[Learn More](#)

### **New B.C. Renter's Tax Credit Available**

Starting in the 2023 tax year, British Columbians who live in rental units will be able to claim a renter's tax credit based on their annual income. For 2023, this tax credit will give \$400 to low- and moderate-income renter households with an income of \$60,000 or less. Individuals and families with an income greater than \$60,000 and less than \$80,000 may receive a reduced amount. Be sure to claim this tax credit when filing if you are eligible.

[Learn More](#)

### **Advanced Care Planning Day**

Advanced Care Planning Day is April 16th and organizations across the country will be holding both virtual and in-person educational workshops and events throughout the month to raise awareness of this important process. Recording your wishes for your future health care and personal care is beneficial at any stage of life.

[Learn More](#)

### **Seeking Participants for Palliative Care Project**

What does good palliative care look like? The BC Centre for Palliative Care is looking for people with lived experience to participate in a province-wide project. The aim is to develop evidence-based recommendations for measuring palliative care outcomes that capture the experiences of patients living with life-limiting illnesses and their families. For more information, please reach out to Simon Anderson at [sanderson@bc-cpc.ca](mailto:sanderson@bc-cpc.ca).

[Learn More](#)

## **Provincial News**

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

- March 1, 2024 [Province announces minimum nurse-to-patient ratios, retention and recruitment investments](#)
- March 4, 2024 [People advised to check immunization records before spring break travel](#)
- March 5, 2024 [Changes aim to help people out of poverty](#)
- March 7, 2024 [Province acts to enhance health care, support providers in Surrey](#)
- March 8, 2024 [164 rental homes open for families, seniors in Coquitlam](#)

- March 10, 2024 [Life-saving cancer therapy now being provided in British Columbia](#)
- March 11, 2024 [New acute care tower coming to Surrey Memorial Hospital](#)
- March 13, 2024 [Province supports seniors living independent, healthy lives at home](#)
- March 18, 2024 [New affordable, accessible homes open in Vancouver](#)
- March 19, 2024 [More affordable homes for young adults, seniors in Chilliwack](#)
- March 28, 2024 [More than 100 affordable homes preserved through Rental Protection Fund](#)
- April 1, 2024 [Saving people money on their energy bills](#)
- April 2, 2024 [Parliamentary Secretary's statement on National Caregiver Day](#)

## National News

### Recent Announcements from the Federal Government Impacting Seniors

- March 4, 2024 [The rise of AI: Fraud in the digital age](#)
- March 6, 2024 [More than 1 million Canadian seniors approved for Canadian Dental Care Plan to date](#)
- March 11, 2024 [Oral Health Providers can now sign up to participate in the Canadian Dental Care Plan](#)
- April 2, 2024 [The Government of Canada highlights National Caregiver Day](#)

## Recent Research

### Evolution and current state of Advance Care Planning in Canada

(Science Direct)

Canada is one of the early pioneers of Advance Care Planning concepts, processes, programs and initiatives. The evolution of national messages, models and frameworks is shaped by our publicly funded healthcare system and culturally diverse populations. Our Pan-Canadian Community Framework highlights the importance of individuals, those that matter to them, communities, organizations, and healthcare professionals collaborating, integrating, sharing, and building upon each other's strengths and successes.

[Learn More](#)

## **The impact and feasibility of a brief, virtual, educational intervention for home healthcare professionals on Parkinson's Disease and Related Disorders**

(BMC Medical Education)

Individuals with advanced Parkinson's Disease (PD) and Parkinson-related disorders (PRD) are frequently referred for home allied therapies and nursing care, yet home healthcare professionals have limited training in PD/PRD. While recognizing the need for such care, patients and families report home healthcare professionals are unfamiliar with these conditions, which may be driven by neurophobia and may contribute to suboptimal care and early termination of services.

[Learn More](#)

## **COMMunity-Based Nutrition RISK Screening in Older Adults Living Independently (COMRISK): Feasibility, Acceptability, and Appropriateness of Community Partnership Models in Alberta, Canada**

(Canadian Journal on Aging)

This feasibility study of routine nutrition risk screening in community-dwelling older adults using a partnership between health care and community-based organizations (CBO) aimed to (1) evaluate the ability of community-based partnerships to provide screening for nutrition risk, and appropriately refer at-risk individuals for follow-up care and (2) determine the barriers to and facilitators of screening.

[Learn More](#)

## **Outreach by the OSA**

If you would like to invite BC Seniors Advocate Dan Levitt to speak to your organization or attend an event, please email [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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