

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BC Seniors Advocate seeks family caregivers for research survey

VICTORIA – The Office of the Seniors Advocate wants to hear from family caregivers about their experiences helping a loved one access publicly-funded long-term care in B.C.

The office is undertaking a systemic review to better understand long-term care supply and demand issues in the province. The BC Seniors Advocate is asking caregivers supporting a family member currently waitlisted for publicly-funded long-term care, or were previously waitlisted and accessed a long-term care bed within the last year, to complete a short survey. The feedback provided will inform the review.

“People caring for a senior are often working, have children or are seniors themselves. Many caregivers tell our office home support doesn’t provide enough care or is too expensive, respite through adult day or community programs are not available or insufficient, and they experience burnout as a result of these shortfalls,” said Dan Levitt, BC Seniors Advocate. “Caregivers report challenges with wait times, placement processes and communication, and availability, particularly in rural areas. We want to make sure their experiences are captured in our review and contribute to the recommendations in the report.”

The current availability of long-term care beds in B.C. falls short of what is needed and seniors and caregivers are facing significant challenges due to long waitlists and wait times. Nearly 6,500 seniors are waiting for long-term care with an average wait time of 242 days; some seniors are waiting two to three years for their preferred care home.

“We’re asking government to create a detailed plan on how many new long-term care beds are needed, how many need to be replaced, and how it will address this shortfall over the next ten years,” said Levitt. “By 2036, one in four of British Columbians will be a senior, and the oldest baby boomer will be 90 years old. The clock is ticking for us to take action to ensure seniors, regardless of where they live in the province, have timely access to quality long-term care close to home.”

The review of long-term care supply and demand will analyze data and system factors driving waitlists and wait times for long-term care; the current and projected supply of long-term care beds; government policies, legislation and regulations in long-term care; workforce and staffing challenges; and caregiver feedback. The final report will be available in Spring 2025.

The online survey is available until March 4. The estimated time to complete the survey is 5-15 minutes. Surveys are available in hard copy upon request and are also being shared through stakeholder groups and other partners. Anyone needing assistance completing the survey can contact the Office of the Seniors Advocate directly at 1 877 952-3181 (toll free).

Quick Facts:

The most recent data presented in the office's Monitoring Seniors Services 2024 report found:

- There were 6,500 people waiting for a publicly-funded long-term care bed in 2023/24, a 150% increase from five years ago.
- The average wait time for someone admitted to long-term care from hospital was 36 days, compared to 225 days for someone assessed as eligible but not urgent from the community in 2023/24.
- The number of publicly-funded home support clients increased 11%, while the rate of clients per 1,000 seniors (75+) decreased 7%, compared to five years ago.
- The number of adult day programs in B.C. was 124 in 2023/24, compared to 110 in 2019/20, the highest in five years. However, there are over 1,200 seniors waiting to access a program.

Links:

- Caregiver Survey is available at <https://feedback.engage.gov.bc.ca/479526?lang=en>
- [Monitoring Seniors Services Report 2024](#)

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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, Canada Post and the OSA web site <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/>.

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