

STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ageing isn't the problem – ageism is!

VICTORIA – “October 9 is Ageism Awareness Day and an opportunity to reflect how age discrimination manifests in our daily lives to reduce its prevalence.

“Ageism refers to stereotypes (how we think), prejudices (how we feel), and discrimination (how we act) towards others and ourselves based on age. The World Health Organization says ageism affects people of all ages and it negatively impacts health, well-being and human rights.

“Last fall, my office asked British Columbians to take a survey on ageism and 9,200 people responded. 84% said ageism was an issue, and 54% reported being directly impacted by ageism.

“People shared countless stories of firsthand experience and expressed that ageism impacted them in employment, health care, finances, media and culture, social isolation, and personal safety. Older adults said they experienced “physical, emotional and financial abuse”, they saw “negative media portrayals, scornful stereotypes”, and they felt “brushed off by their doctor”.

“In their own words: “I’m getting the message that it’s time for me to step aside”, “I am expected to be old and feeble and not able to look after myself” and “I’m assumed to have dementia, or to be mentally simple and slow”.

“B.C. is rapidly ageing. By 2036, 1 in 4 British Columbians will be over 65. Despite this quickly shifting demographic, seniors are often sidelined and considered a burden. Others are made to feel they should make way for younger generations by retiring from their job, selling their house, or foregoing medical treatment.

“There is hope - the United Nations is drafting a Convention on the Right of Older Persons to provide a comprehensive legal framework, address discrimination, and hold states accountable for their dignity, health, and participation in society.

“British Columbia can be a leader in advancing the rights of seniors by improving access to health care; building more long-term care and seniors subsidized housing; strengthening rent subsidies and income supports; supporting reliable and affordable transportation services, and creating age-friendly communities throughout the province.

“Ageing is good. Ageism is bad. When we embrace ageing, we combat ageism. By eliminating all forms of ageism, we create a better future for everyone.”

Dan Levitt
BC Seniors Advocate

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, via email at info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca, Canada Post and the OSA web site <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/>.

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