

NEWS RELEASE

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New data: Seniors' population increase outpacing long-term care

VICTORIA – Data showing the slow pace of building new public long-term care beds and assisted living units in B.C. was released today by the Office of the Seniors Advocate.

The 2025 Long-Term Care and Assisted Living Directory, containing detailed information on 301 long-term care facilities and 133 assisted living residences in B.C., is now available online. The summary report shows a 5% increase in the number of long-term care beds since 2019/20, compared to a 19% increase in the population of seniors 65+ over the same period.

“We are at the beginning of a rapid increase in the number of people 65 and over and we know the gap between the seniors’ population and older adults requiring public services will only widen if we don’t act now,” said Dan Levitt, BC Seniors Advocate. “Government’s own data shared in our report last July shows 16,000 more long-term care beds will be needed over the next decade and as of today, the Province has no plan to meet this demand”

The directory reports an increase of four publicly-subsidized long-term care homes and 513 more beds in 2024/25 compared to the previous year; there was an increase of six facilities and 1,437 beds since 2019/20. The new long-term care homes were opened in Kamloops, Aldergrove, Victoria and Prince George in 2024/25. There were seven fewer publicly-subsidized assisted living units in B.C. in 2024/25 compared to the year before.

“The wait lists and wait times for long-term care and assisted living continue to grow, putting seniors and family caregivers under tremendous strain. Public home support services remain unaffordable for many seniors and don’t provide adequate help for older people to age at home,” said Levitt. “The stories I hear from families at their breaking point caring for their loved ones are heartbreaking. We simply must do better.”

The directory, which is updated annually, is a popular public resource with over 80,000 website page visits per year. Important care quality measures are included such as: funded care hours, number of beds and room configuration, spending on food, medication use, use of physical restraints, complexity of care in the resident population, licensing complaints, reportable incidents and inspection reports. Changes in this year’s directory include adding information on wait times for new non-urgent admissions from the community, as well as for all new admissions from both hospitals and the community.

“The updated directory also found areas of improvement in long-term care including an increase in single rooms and decrease in double and multi-bedrooms, and funding per bed has gone up,” said Levitt. “However, there are still many areas of concern including use of antipsychotic medication without a diagnosis of psychosis remaining above the national average, as well as increases in substantiated complaints and reportable incidents last year.”

The information in the directory and summary report is compiled from several sources including the facilities/residences, the Ministry of Health, health authorities, the Canadian Institute for Health Information and the BC Centre for Disease Control. This is the eleventh directory the Office of the Seniors Advocate (OSA) has updated and released for the public.

Quick Facts:

- B.C.’s senior population (65+) is projected to increase 26% in the next 10 years.
- The Ministry of Health’s current ten-year bed expansion plan aims to increase the number of new long-term care beds by 10% (2,935 beds) from 2025 to 2030; no additional beds are planned after 2030.
- Today, there is a 2,000-bed shortfall and that gap widens and grows over 700% to meet the ministry’s projected future long-term care demand of 16,000 beds by 2035/36.

Learn More:

- OSA 2025 Long-Term Care and Assisted Living Directory:
<https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/long-term-care-directory/>
- OSA Report - From Shortfall to Crisis: Growing Demand for Long-Term Care Beds in B.C.:
<https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/from-shortfall-to-crisis-growing-demand-for-long-term-care-beds-in-b-c/>

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

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