
STATEMENTS

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Ministry of Health
Ministry of Attorney General
Office of the Seniors Advocate

Ministers', B.C. seniors advocate's statements on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

VICTORIA – Josie Osborne, Minister of Health; Niki Sharma, Attorney General; and Dan Levitt, B.C. seniors advocate, have released the following statements in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on Monday, June 15, 2026:

Osborne said:

“Every older adult deserves to feel safe, respected and supported in their community. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day reminds us that abuse and neglect of older adults remains a serious concern.

“Elder abuse can affect people of all backgrounds and often occurs in situations where there is trust or dependency. It can take many forms, including psychological mistreatment, financial exploitation, neglect and violations of rights. Many cases go unreported, making awareness and community support essential to prevention.

“Every day, health-care workers throughout British Columbia help make a difference in the lives of seniors. By providing care and support in homes, long-term care, assisted living and throughout the health system, they build trusted relationships with older adults and their families. These relationships help identify concerns early and connect seniors with the supports they need.

“As our population ages, we continue to strengthen the services that help seniors maintain their independence and quality of life. Working with health authorities, community organizations and advocates, we are improving access to care at home through programs such as Hospital at Home, supporting caregivers through Family and Friend Caregiver Supports, and investing in community-based programs such as Better at Home and the Therapeutic Activation Program for Seniors. These efforts help reduce isolation, strengthen connections and ensure older adults can get help when they need it.”

“By building awareness and strengthening community connections, we can help ensure that seniors feel safe coming forward and getting the help they need. Together, we can help build communities where every senior feels respected, supported and safe.”

Sharma said:

“Seniors helped build our province to what it is today, and it’s essential they are treated with dignity and respect as they age. The noted rise in reports of elder abuse is especially concerning as B.C.’s population continues to age, and the number of older adults grows.

“Our government is working with community partners to support greater awareness of elderly people’s rights and available legal protections. We recently passed new laws to stop predatory door-to-door sales tactics that pressure people into making purchases in their own homes. These practices often target seniors and can lead them to buy products or services they don’t need or can’t afford. We are also always looking for ways to improve reporting systems and strengthen support service networks for the elderly. It is important that when abuse is reported, there are clear pathways to support vulnerable seniors and that those who commit abuse are held accountable.

“World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is an opportunity for us to look beyond the statistics at the real people, at the parents, grandparents, neighbours and colleagues who have contributed to building the B.C. we all benefit from today. I encourage everyone to learn the signs of abuse and familiarize yourself with how you can support victims. Together, we can create a place where all of us can age with dignity and without fear.”

Levitt said:

“Unfortunately, abuse and neglect can happen to anyone in B.C. However, older people can be more vulnerable due to frailty, isolation and dependence on others. Elder abuse can be financial, physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or other, and can include mistreatment, neglect and self-neglect. It may be perpetrated by family members, friends, neighbours, caregivers or commercial vendors.

“Data show that reports of most types of elder abuse to designated agencies, police and seniors’ organizations have been steadily increasing for several years as the population of older adults grows. I regularly hear heartbreaking stories from seniors and loved ones about older people being abused. Many people are reluctant or embarrassed to report incidents, so we know there are more instances taking place than are shown in the data.

“Financial abuse is one of the most commonly reported forms of elder abuse, and it is often committed by a stranger engaged in fraud and scams using technology, which are becoming increasingly sophisticated. It’s important to stay informed of new ways scams are being perpetuated in order to protect vulnerable people in our province. I want to encourage anyone who suspects or witnesses abuse, neglect or exploitation of an older adult to report it immediately.

“To reduce elder abuse, it’s important to better understand how, why and when it occurs so we can better support seniors, as well as streamline reporting systems. Currently, many organizations and law enforcement agencies are doing similar work, which makes tracking and addressing elder abuse difficult. My office is working with the provincial government to improve data collection and reporting of elder abuse in B.C., with the aim of strengthening prevention efforts and better protecting vulnerable seniors.”

Quick Facts:

- Anyone concerned about elder abuse or neglect can contact the Seniors Abuse and Information Line for confidential information, support and referrals at 1-866-437-1940.

Learn More:

- For information about elder abuse and neglect, visit:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/health-safety/protection-from-elder-abuse-and-neglect>

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