

NEWS RELEASE

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New data shows B.C. seniors living longer and healthier, but waitlists increasing

Advocate calls on new government to develop cross-ministry seniors' plan

VICTORIA – B.C. seniors are living longer and staying healthier until later in life but waitlists for vital services to support healthy ageing continue to grow.

The Office of the Seniors Advocate (OSA) released the Monitoring Seniors Services 2024 Report today which tracks trends over time for demographics, health care, completed surgeries, home support, long-term care, housing, rent and income supports, and abuse.

“Unfortunately, despite government investment in seniors’ services, we continue to fall behind meeting many basic needs. There is less home care, long-term care beds, rent subsidies and subsidized seniors housing available today per population compared to five years ago,” said BC Seniors Advocate Dan Levitt. “This is particularly worrisome when the seniors’ population in B.C. has grown 45% over the past 10 years and will continue to increase over the next decade.”

“The new government must develop an action oriented, measurable cross-ministry seniors’ plan that defines how it will meet the growing needs of a population we have known for decades will access significant public services as they age,” said Levitt. “Seniors and their families must feel that health care, housing and social supports will be available when they’re needed.”

New data in the 2024 monitoring report found that over the past five years:

- The percentage of the population 85+ increased 10%, and 65+ rose 15%.
- For people 65+, there were slight decreases in hospitalization and emergency department visits, and the percentage of people with dementia remained the same.
- The waitlists for knee and hip replacements for people 65+ increased 53% and 59% respectively.
- There were 6,500 people waiting for a publicly-subsidized long-term care (LTC) bed in 2023/24, a 150% increase from five years ago (2,600).
 - The average wait time for someone admitted to LTC 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-subsidized home support clients increased 11%, while the rate of clients per 1,000 seniors decreased 7%.

- The number of applications for seniors subsidized housing was almost 14,000 in 2023/24, a 59% increase over five years; just 6% of total applicants received a unit last year.
- The number of seniors receiving the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) subsidy decreased 8%, and the number of clients per 1,000 seniors decreased 18%.
- The number of unfulfilled HandyDart ride requests increased 44%, while the number of rides provided decreased 15%.

“The Better at Home Program, which delivers transportation, housekeeping, meal programs and other services to help seniors remain living at home, is providing more supports to more people, but the waitlist has increased 56% over the past five years,” said Levitt. “The vast majority of seniors want to age in place and we must do a better job helping people live safely at home – and out of hospital and long-term care – for as long as possible.”

The number of seniors and their loved ones reporting abuse to the Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL) has increased 92% over the past five years. RCMP have reported an 18% increase in seniors being victims of a violent offense, a 23% increase in being an assault victim, and an 88% increase in frauds experienced by seniors over the past five years.

“The trend in the increase of reported abuse against seniors is especially concerning because incidents often go unreported. Often the victim feels embarrassed, fears retaliation or is unwilling to get a family member or other loved into trouble,” said Levitt. “Anyone who suspects a senior may be being abused can call police, health authorities, Crime Stoppers, SAIL, BC211 or my office.”

Quick Link:

- Monitoring Seniors Services 2024 Report: [Monitoring Seniors Services - Seniors Advocate](#)

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The Office of the Seniors Advocate (OSA) 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 at 1 877 952-3181, BC211, via email at info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca, Canada Post and the OSA web site at www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca.

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