

BC Seniors' Guide



Ministry of
Health

12th Edition

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

In B.C., we want to help our growing number of seniors live independently in their own homes for as long as possible, to promote a healthy active lifestyle, and provide the best possible care and support when and where people need it. Making sure information and resources about services are readily available for seniors, their families, and caregivers is important to help them make informed decisions about their health.

The *BC Seniors' Guide* is a comprehensive tool that can help British Columbians with the information they need as they age. It includes information on provincial and federal programs, with sections on benefits, health, lifestyle, housing, transportation, finances, safety and security and other important services. It is available in English, French, Punjabi, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Farsi. The guide is accessible in book format or online. The *BC Elders' Guide* is a similar resource designed for Indigenous, First Nations and Métis older adults. It was created through a partnership between the B.C. Government and the First Nations Health Authority. You can find both the *BC Seniors' Guide* and the *BC Elders' Guide* online at www.gov.bc.ca/seniorsguide.

We are fortunate in British Columbia to have many incredible services available to help us as we age. The *BC Seniors' Guide* can help people discover these resources. It's important to have this tool as accessible as possible that is why we have had it translated into more languages than ever before. I encourage you to have a copy on hand, electronically or paper, and share it with as many people you can think would benefit from it.

Sincerely,

Adrian Dix
Minister of Health

The 12th edition of the British Columbia Seniors' Guide was printed in 2020.

Information may change from the time of publication. Visit www.gov.bc.ca/seniorsguide for periodic updates to this guide, as well as translated version available in Chinese, French, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Korean and Farsi.

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Key Resources



A PERSONAL RECORD & EMERGENCY NUMBERS

MY PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name	
Address	
City	
Postal Code	
Telephone	
Mobile Phone	
BC Services Card Number	
Old Age Security Number	
Location of Will	
Any Allergies	



KEY NAMES & TELEPHONE NUMBERS

	Name	Telephone #
Emergency Contact		
Relative		
Friend		
Clergy		
Lawyer		
Insurance Agent		
Doctor		
Walk-in Clinic		
Pharmacy		
Hospital		
Ambulance		
Fire Department		
Police		
Poison Control		
BC Hydro		
Fortis Gas		
Municipality		
24/7 Insurance Call		



KEY RESOURCES

The following key resources provide information about healthy living, health care, and government programs and services for B.C. seniors

HEALTHLINK BC

Representatives at HealthLink BC are available 24 hours per day to provide information and support on accessing health services and can provide a connection to a nurse, dietitian or pharmacist. Access Healthlink BC by dialing 8-1-1 or through the HealthLink BC website.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY]): 7-1-1

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (MLAS)

For information on how to contact an MLA, go to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia MLA Finder website.

Website: www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm

OFFICE OF THE SENIORS ADVOCATE

The Office of the Seniors Advocate is a resource for seniors' information and referrals. Members of the public are encouraged to call, email or visit the website for information on how to access resources for seniors. Please contact the Office of the Seniors Advocate between the hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Office of the Seniors Advocate

6th Floor – 1405 Douglas Street

PO Box 9651, STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9P4

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 952-3181

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 952-3181

Email: info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca

Website: www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca

SENIORSBC.CA

The SeniorsBC.ca website provides information on services and programs for seniors offered by the British Columbia and federal governments and non-profit organizations, as well as information on health, finances, benefits, housing, transportation, tips for healthy living and more.

Website: www.seniorsbc.ca



SERVICE BC

For information about government programs and services, call Service BC. Representatives are available Monday to Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. excluding statutory holidays. Available in 140 languages.

Phone (toll-free in B.C.): 1 800 663-7867

Phone (Vancouver): 604 660-2421

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-6121

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD): 711 (Across B.C.)

Phone (Vancouver): 604 775-0303

Text Message: 604 660-2421

Website: www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

The Office of the Ombudsperson may provide assistance if individuals think a B.C. provincial government ministry, local government, or any other provincial public authority has acted unfairly. As an independent statutory office of the provincial legislature, the Office of the Ombudsperson impartially investigates individual complaints. In addition to resolving individual problems, the investigation of a complaint can lead to systemic improvements that benefit many people. These services are provided free of charge.

For more information, or to make a complaint, please contact the Office of the Ombudsperson between the hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., on a working day.

Office of the Ombudsperson
2nd Floor 947 Fort Street
Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Phone (toll-free in B.C.):
1 800 567-3247

Phone (Greater Victoria):
250 387-5855

Mailing Address:

PO Box 9039

STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9A5

Website:

www.bcombudsperson.ca

WELCOME BC

Welcome BC provides information about programs, services and resources for newcomers to British Columbia and publishes the British Columbia Newcomers' Guide. To order a print copy of the guide, call or visit:

Service BC (toll-free in B.C.): 1 800 663-7867

Representatives are available Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Website: www.welcomebc.ca



NOTES

For information about government programs and services, visit:
www.SeniorsBC.ca

For information about healthy aging and to find services in
your community, visit:
www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1

Lifestyle





LIFESTYLE

Seniors Redefine the Concept of Aging

By 2028, about a quarter of the population will be over 65. Today's seniors enjoy increased life expectancy and generally better health than ever before. Most seniors live in their own homes and they have better access to information than any previous generation of seniors.

Staying active, eating well and having social connections contribute to living a healthy lifestyle. Only about 30 per cent of the way a person ages can be explained by biology and genetics; the lifestyle decisions a person makes every day affects how they age. The risk of chronic disease and disability can be reduced by staying physically active, eating a healthy diet, remaining socially engaged, quitting smoking and vaping, and avoiding risky and harmful drinking.

This section of the *BC Seniors' Guide* provides information on resources and tools to support healthy lifestyle choices for older British Columbians. These include the *Healthy Eating for Seniors* handbook – available in English, French, Chinese, and Punjabi – and resources to promote physical activity, prevent falls and plan for aging well in the future.

Taking advantage of lifelong learning and recreational opportunities contributes to a healthy, active lifestyle. This section of the guide provides information on post-secondary institutions that may offer reduced or free tuition for seniors; English Language Training for adult learners; and information about seniors' discounts on campsite fees and other recreational activities. Please visit www.SeniorsBC.ca for more information on healthy lifestyle choices.



SeniorsBC.ca

The SeniorsBC website provides information on programs and services for seniors offered by the B.C. and federal governments and non-profit organizations. The website includes information on health, finances, benefits, housing, transportation, tips for healthy living and other topics of importance to seniors. The website also includes online versions of this guide (the *BC Seniors' Guide*) in English, French, Chinese, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Korean and Farsi, as well as the *BC Elders' Guide*, which has been culturally adapted for Indigenous, First Nations and Métis older adults.

Website: www.seniorsbc.ca

Aging Well

Aging Well is an online site with information on how to create a healthy and independent lifestyle and plan for a healthy future. It features tools, videos and information about healthy eating, physical activity, brain health, housing, financial planning, seniors' benefits and discounts, transportation, staying socially connected and more.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/aging-well

HealthLink BC

Learn about healthy eating, physical activity, finances, housing, transportation and staying connected at:

Website: www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Choose to Move

Choose to Move is a free six-month physical activity program for older adults. Participants receive both one-on-one support from an activity coach who helps participants develop and achieve a goal driven physical activity action plan and encourages them to join a group of other Choose to Move participants to share successes and challenges.

Choose to Move promotes physical activity, social connectedness, and independence among older adults. This highly successful program is delivered in partnership with YMCA and the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association.

Phone: 604 875-4111 ext. 21790

Email: contact@choosetomove.info

Website: www.choosetomove.info/



Physical Activity Services at HealthLink BC

For every age and health level, there's a free physical activity plan that works. Just connect with B.C.'s Physical Activity Services at HealthLink BC, where qualified exercise professionals will provide custom physical activity plans that meet individual needs. Call or go online at:

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY]): 7-1-1

Website: www.HealthLinkBC.ca

(enter "Physical Activity Services" in Search)

BC Seniors' Community Parks

BC Seniors' Community Parks provide specialized outdoor recreation equipment designed to improve mobility, co-ordination and balance, and foster social interaction for older adults. Parks are free, and are available in the following communities: Abbotsford, Burnaby, Courtenay, Cranbrook, Dawson Creek, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Nelson, North Cowichan, North Vancouver (District Municipality), Oak Bay, Prince George, Richmond, Sidney, Surrey, Terrace, Tsawwassen and Vancouver.

Short online videos demonstrate how to use the equipment in 12 of the BC Seniors' Community Parks. These videos provide guidelines for using each piece of equipment, teach proper form and technique, and show alternative exercises adapted to various fitness levels.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "BC Seniors' Community Parks")

Move for Life! DVD

Move for Life! a physical activity DVD for older adults, was created through a partnership between the BC Recreation and Parks Association and the Ministry of Health. It provides physical activity instruction and tips for older adults and demonstrates how physical activity is key to living a healthy independent lifestyle. Move for Life! can be downloaded from the Seniors website.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "Move for Life DVD")



Healthy Eating for Seniors

The *Healthy Eating for Seniors* handbook includes recipes, menu plans, and information on good nutrition. The handbook is available in English and French and has also been culturally adapted and translated into Chinese and Punjabi.

The healthy eating for senior's community presentations are three engaging and interactive presentations that cover the key content from the handbook. The presentations are intended to support healthy eating for seniors in the community. A facilitator's guide has been developed to support the delivery of the presentations.

The handbook, community presentations, and facilitator's guide are available online or a free hardcopy can be ordered by calling HealthLink BC or through the online link to the order form.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 7-1-1

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "*Healthy Eating for Seniors Handbook*")

Healthy Eating for Seniors is also offered as an audio book in DAISY and MP3 format. The audio book is available online and in all B.C. public libraries.

Website: www.seniorsbc.ca

(enter "*Healthy Eating for Seniors*" in search)

For more healthy eating and nutrition information, see HealthLink BC's webpage on healthy eating. An online self-assessment tool for older adults (50 years of age and older), Nutri-eSCREEN, helps individuals determine what is going well, ideas for action and where to find trusted healthy eating and physical activity information and tools.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating/your-age-and-stage/seniors

Nutri-eSCREEN direct link: www.nutritionscreen.org/bc/escreen/



Contact a Registered Dietitian

For free nutrition information, call HealthLink BC and ask to speak with a registered dietitian, Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (or leave a message after hours).

Translation services are available in over 130 languages, upon request.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 7-1-1

To email a registered dietitian, use HealthLink BC's online form.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca (enter "Contact a Dietitian" in Search)

First Nations Health Authority – Eating Healthy and Being Active

The BC Elders Guide is a resource designed for Indigenous, First Nations and Métis older adults. It was created through a partnership between the B.C. Government and the First Nations Health Authority and contains information on health eating.

Website: www.fnha.ca (enter "BC Elders Guide" in Search)

The First Nations Health Authority provides information and links to a variety of resources for First Nations and Indigenous people about healthy eating and being active, as part of four wellness streams to improve overall health.

Website: www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-and-the-first-nations-health-authority/wellness-streams

An Active and Healthy Brain

Actively keeping the brain in good shape contributes to mental sharpness. There are many healthy behaviors that can be easily incorporated into daily routines that may reduce the risk of some forms of dementia. For example, not smoking, preventing or managing type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure (particularly in midlife), engaging in physical activity, and healthy eating all contribute to a healthier brain. See the Your Brain Matters website for five easy steps to help you promote brain health.

Website: <https://alzheimer.ca/en/bc/About-dementia/Brain-health>



Alzheimer Society of B.C.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s website outlines information on risk factors for dementia and what can be done to help reduce those risks.

Website: <https://alzbc.org/risk-factors>

Parkinson Society BC

Parkinson Society British Columbia is a non-profit charitable organization that aims to ease the burden for those affected by Parkinson's disease through advocacy, education, support services and contributions to research.

The society believes that every person touched by Parkinson's deserves to know they are not alone in their journey. Their friendly and knowledgeable staff are committed to offering support, sharing reliable information and raising awareness of Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson Society of British Columbia

600 - 890 W. Pender St.

Vancouver BC V6C 1J9

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 668-3330

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 662-3240

Website: www.parkinson.bc.ca

Health Promotion Workshops

The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of British Columbia (COSCO) Seniors' Health & Wellness Institute delivers workshops that are approximately one hour long and are free of charge. To view the series of workshops and to learn how to book a workshop for your seniors' group, please visit the COSCO website.

Website: www.seniorshelpingseniors.ca/list-of-workshops.php



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO QUIT SMOKING

Smoking cessation promotes healing, strength and contributes to good health. Long-time smokers get more short-term health gains from quitting smoking than younger smokers. Within days of quitting, breathing becomes easier, and taste and smell improve. Also, non-smokers recover more quickly from surgery and injuries related to a fall.

There is free help to quit smoking or using tobacco. Talk with your doctor, pharmacist or dentist to discuss the health benefits of stopping tobacco use. These two programs provide support to all British Columbians:

QuitNow

Free support for quitting smoking is available by telephone and computer. Talk to trained coaches, get some motivating messages by text, and connect with other quitters online.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 455-2233

Website: www.quitnow.ca

BC Smoking Cessation Program

The PharmaCare BC Smoking Cessation Program provides smokers with no-cost nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and for those on Fair PharmaCare, insurance for prescription drugs. NRTs include patch, gum, inhaler and lozenges. Get NRTs at your local pharmacy or speak to a doctor about prescriptions for quit smoking medications.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “smoking cessation program” in Search)

Alcohol and Aging

Ageing tends to result in a loss of lean body mass, resulting in more body fat and less water in the body to dilute alcohol. Consequently, the same amount of alcohol will produce higher blood alcohol content in an older person, causing greater impairment than in a younger adult of the same weight.

Because older bodies process alcohol less effectively, drinking as one ages, puts an extra burden on the liver. For more information on liver health, visit the Canadian Liver Foundation website.

Website: www.liver.ca

(enter “alcohol consumption” in Search)

The amount that's safe to drink varies depending by age, sex, gender, ethnicity, weight, body fat and health status. For information on safe limits, see Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines on the



Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse's website. Note that due to increased susceptibility for harm, low-risk alcohol drinking guidelines are lower for older adults than those recommended for younger healthy adults.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines" in Search)

When taking medications, check with your doctor or pharmacist to determine whether it is safe to drink.

Your doctor can address concerns about your own or a family or friend's alcohol use or see Mental Health and Substance Use Services in the Your Health section of this guide for information on available services.

Cannabis

Cannabis for non-medical use became legal for adults in Canada on October 17, 2018. Prior to trying cannabis, talk to your health care provider. For more information about cannabis, including health effects and medical cannabis, call HealthLink BC's 8-1-1 line, or visit their website.

Phone: 8-1-1

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca (enter "Cannabis" in Search)

Visit the Government of BC's Get Cannabis Clarity website for information about cannabis laws and regulations.

Website: www.cannabis.gov.bc.ca

Fall Prevention

Falls are the leading cause of injury for seniors and are the main reason that older adults lose their independence. Most falls can be prevented, and there are many resources to help seniors remain strong and stay fall and injury free.

Regular physical activity which is focused on strength and balance is one of the best ways to prevent falls as you age. Activities like Tai Chi and resistance training are excellent ways to build strength and balance. To find out more about falls preventing physical activity, visit this web site:

Website: www.findingbalancebc.ca

The website below provides tips on falls prevention as well as an assessment tool, "Are You at Risk of Falling?", brochures, and other information.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/fallprevention



A primary care provider can provide more information on a falls risk assessment, medication review and other potential risk factors. Regional health authorities (see Health Authorities in British Columbia under Your Health in this guide for contact information) can provide information about fall prevention programs in your community. The BC Health Service Locator App assists people to locate a range of health services using an iPhone, iPad or iPod (see BC Health Service Locator App under Your Health in this guide for information about this free app).

B.C. Brain Injury Association

The Brain Injury Association of Canada facilitates post-trauma research, education and advocacy for Canadians affected by brain injury.

The British Columbia Brain Injury Association is dedicated to promoting better quality of life for those living with an acquired brain injury through education, information, prevention, support and advocacy.

Brain Injury Association

c/o Sea to Sky Meeting Management Inc.

Suite 206, 201 Bewicke Ave.

North Vancouver BC V7M 3M7

Brainstreams.ca is the official website for the BC Brain Injury Association.

Email: info@brainstreams.ca

Website: www.brainstreams.ca

Government of B.C. Accessibility Website

The Government of B.C. is committed to decreasing barriers and increasing accessibility for people with disabilities. Building a Better B.C. for People with Disabilities is a 10-year plan for making B.C. a truly inclusive province by 2024. The Accessibility website includes:

- Information about the accessibility action plan and progress updates;
- Useful links to make it easier to find information about disability resources and services from across government; and
- Links to current accessibility-related news and videos.

Email: accessibility@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/accessibility



Aging with a Developmental Disability

With a growing population of aging individuals with developmental disabilities, Community Living BC has developed new resources to support individuals and caregivers.

Website: www.communitylivingbc.ca (enter “aging with a developmental disability guide” in Search)

Aware Share Care was developed by Community Living BC to promote awareness and provide information, resources, and tools to support the best possible health care for adults aging with developmental disabilities. This site is designed for individuals, families, caregivers and physicians to help guide discussion and planning.

Website: www.awaresharecare.ca

DIGITAL LITERACY

According to the 2016 General Social Survey by Statistics Canada, *Canadians at Work and Home*, internet usage increased substantially from 2013 to 2016. For individuals 65 to 74 years old, internet use increased from 65 percent to 81 percent, while among those aged 75 years and older, internet usage increased from 35 percent to 50 percent, over the three-year period.

Below are some resources to assist in supporting your digital literacy:

Connecting with technology (Canadian Institute for the Blind)

This national initiative provides training in basic digital skills for individuals with sight loss. In-person or teleconference sessions introduce participants to assistive and adaptive technologies to increase knowledge, skills, critical thinking, and information management in the world of digital literacy. Participants learn how to use apps, email, social media, search engines and other communication tools safely and effectively to participate in the digital economy and their communities.

Email: info@cnib.ca

Teach a Parent (ABC Life Literacy Canada)

In partnership with Youth Empowering Parents, this initiative engages and teaches youth to improve the digital literacy levels of their parents, other adults and seniors in their communities. Youth trainers develop their skills through online downloadable tutor guides and provide personalized instruction to adults on topics such as keyboard typing, Internet browsing, online safety and password protection, and accessing e-services. Available in many languages.

Email: info@abclifeliteracy.ca



Gluu Digital Coaching Network

This initiative delivers basic digital skills training to older adults across British Columbia. Gluu Technology Society recruits and supports a network of ‘digital peer coaches’ able to offer digital skills training and support to seniors in their community. Participants learn a variety of skills including: how to safely use public WIFI, securely browse the internet, manage online accounts, identify fraudulent emails, use video calling, understand social media, and access online government services. Available in English and French.

Email: hello@gluusociety.org

Phone (toll free): 1 855 458-8622

Phone: 604 343-4946

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

Healthy communities have more places to play, to grow, to find fresh food and more ways to get around by walking, cycling or using public transportation. They support their residents in adopting healthier lifestyles by providing access to tobacco-free environments and social connections that foster positive mental health.

Age-friendly BC

In an age-friendly British Columbia, older people are supported to live active, socially engaged, independent lives. Through Age-friendly BC, the government of British Columbia is working with local governments and other partners to achieve a vision of a province where people of all ages and abilities feel included and valued in their communities.

Email: AgefriendlyBC@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “age-friendly” in Search)

Better at Home

Funded by the Ministry of Health, the Better at Home program is managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland (UWLM) and provides non-medical support services in many communities throughout the province, helping seniors age in place. Support services are community-specific and may include transportation to appointments, light housekeeping, light yard work, snow shoveling, minor home repairs, grocery shopping and friendly visiting. For more information, contact the UWLM.

Phone Provincial Office:

604-268-1312 (General Inquiries)

Website: www.betterathome.ca



BC Healthy Communities Society

The BC Healthy Communities Society (BCHC) is a province-wide, not-for-profit organization that facilitates the ongoing development of healthy, thriving and resilient communities.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 590-8442

Email: bchc@bchealthycommunities.ca

Website: <https://new.bchealthycommunities.ca/>

BC211

BC211 is a nonprofit organization that specializes in providing information and referrals regarding community, government and social services in BC. It is funded by the United Way, the Government of BC, and the City of Vancouver.

Phone 211

Website: <https://www.bc211.ca/>

COVID-19

On March 11th, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic. Find information about the virus, how to protect yourself, your family and your community on the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) website.

Website: <http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

Healthy Communities

The Province has partnered with many local, provincial and national organizations and all levels of government to create supportive environments that encourage people to make healthy choices every day where they live, work, learn and play.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “healthy communities” in Search)



Service BC

Service BC Centres or government agent offices assist seniors in getting access to provincial government programs and services. These offices are a point of contact for services and programs for people living outside the Lower Mainland. Staff members have knowledge of local programs and will refer seniors to other sources of information and assistance. Government services are available in person, online and over the telephone.

Visit the Service BC Contact Centre or your local Service BC Centre for information and services, including permits, fishing licenses, and the Medical Services Plan. For a listing of office locations, please refer to the *Directory* at the back of this guide.

To be transferred by phone free of charge to the office you wish to contact, call the Service BC Contact Centre at the numbers listed below.

Service BC Contact Centre

The Service BC Contact Centre (formerly Enquiry BC) provides the following services to all British Columbia residents, on behalf of provincial government ministries, Crown corporations and public agencies:

- Basic provincial government information;
- Assistance in identifying the program or person that the caller needs to speak to;
- Government program or government employee contact information;
- Assistance in identifying the level of government responsible for a program or service; and
- Toll-free transfers for callers who would otherwise incur a cost for obtaining information from or conducting business with the provincial government.

Hours of operation for Service BC are 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7867

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-2421

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-6121

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing): Call TELUS Relay Service (711) for free TTY service

Text Message: 604 660-24216

Email: ServiceBC@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca



Elders Transportation Program

The Elders Transportation program provides partial funding towards travel costs for Indigenous, First Nations and Métis Elders to attend the Annual BC Elders Gathering. Applications are accepted each year between January and the second Friday in June.

For further information on the Elders Transportation Program, contact the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres.

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

551 Chatham St.

Victoria BC V8T 1E1

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 990-2432

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 388-5522

Website: www.bcaafc.com

Application: www.bcaafc.com/help/elders/

For further information on the Annual BC Elders Gathering, visit:

Website: www.bcelders.com/elders-gathering.php

WelcomeBC.ca

[WelcomeBC.ca](http://www.WelcomeBC.ca) is the Government of British Columbia's website that helps new British Columbians:

- Settle;
- Gain employment;
- Become active in their communities; and
- Contribute fully to B.C.'s social and economic prosperity.

Order a free copy of the B.C. Newcomers' Guide (available in 11 languages) for home delivery or watch videos in several languages on the website.

Website: www.WelcomeBC.ca



Immigrant Services

Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada provides services and support to help new immigrants and families understand, settle and integrate successfully into Canadian society and B.C. communities. Free services for immigrants include language assessments and classes, help finding a job, help with daily life (e.g., finding a place to live, filling out forms and applications) and information about community services. These are services available for permanent residents in B.C.

At the link below, enter your postal code or type in “British Columbia” and use the interactive map to help search for services in your area.

Website: www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp

Settlement services and supports are available to temporary foreign residents. Service representatives provide information on your rights and how to adjust to life in B.C. Visit Welcome BC for a list of services providers.

Website: www.welcomebc.ca

(enter “Temporary foreign residents” in Search)

Foreign Country Contacts

Over 80 countries are represented by consular officers residing in British Columbia. Based mainly in Vancouver, consular officers generally perform the following functions:

- Assist and protect nationals of the country they represent;
- Administer oaths, legalize foreign documents and issue passports, travel visas and certificates;
- Represent their country and promote their country’s trade within the consular district; and
- Explain their country’s policies and achievements in fields such as culture and tourist attractions.

The Office of Protocol website includes a listing, with contact information, for all countries represented in British Columbia.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Office of Protocol” in Search)

All other countries can be contacted through their embassies and high commissions based in Ottawa. Contact information is available on the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development website.

Website: www.international.gc.ca/protocol-protocole/index.aspx?Menu

Or call Service Canada Toll-free at: 1 800 622-6232



GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Line

This toll-free line assists grandparents and other relatives raising children to navigate complex service systems; to find the answers, the support, and the resources they need to prevent or solve problems; and to learn about benefits and services that will support the whole family.

The line is staffed by two part-time advocates with training in advocacy, social work, family law, and government services pertaining to kinship caregiving.

Phone (toll-free): 1 855 474-9777

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 558-4740

Email: GRGline@parentsupportbc.ca

Website: www.parentsupportbc.ca/grandparents-raising-grandchildren/

Affordable Child Care Benefit

The Affordable Child Care Benefit replaced the Child Care Subsidy Program on September 1, 2018, helping more families with the cost of child care. Households earning up to \$111,000 (or more with deductions) may be eligible for savings of up to \$1,250 a month per child. Benefit amounts are determined by factors like family size, type of child care and income.

A parent, including a person with whom a child resides and who stands in place of a parent, can apply for the benefit online using My Family Services, as well as by mail or fax. Eligibility criteria include citizenship, residency, type of child care, income and reason for needing child care.

Visit the website or call the Child Care Service Centre from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Translation services are available on request.

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 338-6622

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD): 711 (Across B.C.)

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “Affordable Childcare Benefit” in Search)

The following community organizations are available to provide assistance in-person:

- Child Care Resource and Referral offices
- Immigrant Settlement Service Agencies
- Service BC offices

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a great way to stay connected, enjoy new experiences, and take part in building the health of your community. With many useful skills and a wealth of knowledge and experience to share, seniors and retirees who volunteer make a significant contribution to all sectors of society.

Local volunteer centres can provide information about volunteer opportunities in your community.

Volunteer BC

Volunteer BC is a provincial organization that promotes the impact and value of volunteerism in B.C. Contact information for your local volunteer centre can be found on the Volunteer BC website under the Volunteering tab.

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 379-2311

Email: volunteerbc@gmail.com

Website: www.volunteerbc.bc.ca

Volunteer Canada

Volunteer Canada is dedicated to strengthening volunteerism and civic participation through the provision of information and resources. The website includes information for older volunteers.

Website: www.volunteer.ca

EMPLOYMENT

WorkBC.ca – Mature Workers

For those seeking employment, the WorkBC.ca website provides information about specialized job-search services that can help individuals get back to work. Programs and services are designed to help mature workers:

- Re-enter the workforce
- Upgrade skills
- Gain experience in a new occupation

Website: www.workbc.ca (enter “Mature Workers” in Search)

For help on a path to employment, visit your local WorkBC Employment Services Centre or call 250 952-6914 to find a WorkBC Centre in your area.

Older Workers Program

The Older Workers Program is funded under the Workforce Development

Agreement to support Canada's unemployed older workers. Over the past ten years, the Older Workers Program has invested over \$30 million dollars and supported over 4,000 unemployed older workers living in communities affected by significant downsizing or closures or experiencing ongoing high unemployment.

The primary objective of the Older Workers Program is to prepare participants for new and immediate employment. This initiative has assisted unemployed older workers remain active and productive participants in the labour market. Currently, the Older Worker Program is funded throughout B.C. and provides a range of employment activities for unemployed older workers who have lost their jobs and who live in vulnerable communities. Project activities include skills upgrading and work experience in new jobs. To learn more about the program and projects in your community, visit the following website.

Website: www.workbc.ca

(enter "Older Workers Program" in Search)

EDUCATION

Post-Secondary Tuition

Some of British Columbia's public post-secondary institutions offer reduced or free tuition to seniors. Contact information for post-secondary institutions is available from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training website.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "Find an Institution" in Search)

English Language Training

Newcomers can take language classes to learn English or improve their language skills. Government-funded classes are offered by the federal and provincial governments. For more information, please visit the following websites:

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter "Improving your English and French" in Search)

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "English upgrade" in Search)

RECREATION AND CULTURE

55+ BC Games

The 55+ BC Games promote active participation in sport and recreation for B.C. residents 55 years and over. This annual five-day celebration attracts more than 3,500 participants from communities across British Columbia to participate in approximately 25 different sports and activities. All ability levels are welcome, and sports include everything from Cribbage to Triathlon. In addition to the annual Games, the year-round activities of the regional zones provide opportunities for recreation, camaraderie and friendly competition.

Competitors are required to pay a registration fee and must be members of the BC Seniors Games Society. The province is one of the funding partners of the 55+ BC Games.

For more information on the 55+ BC Games, regional contact information or other activities of the BC Seniors Games Society, visit the following website.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 778 426-2940

Email: info@55plusbcgames.org

Website: www.55plusbcgames.org

Hunting and Angling (Fishing) Licenses for Seniors

These programs allow B.C. residents 65 years of age or over to buy hunting and angling (fishing) licenses at a reduced rate.

For information on hunting licenses, call or visit:

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 855 3222 (FrontCounter BC)

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “hunting licenses” in Search)

For information on angling (fishing) licenses, visit:

Website: www.fishing.gov.bc.ca

For information on buying a fresh-water fishing e-license online, call or visit:

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 855-3222 (FrontCounter BC)

Website: www.fishing.gov.bc.ca

More information about hunting and angling (fishing) licenses may be obtained at any Service BC Centre or FrontCounter BC. See the *Directory* at the back of this guide for contact information for Service BC Centres.

BC Parks - Campsite Fee Discount

B.C. seniors receive a discount on campsite fees during the off season (from the day after Labour Day to June 14 of the following year). The discount does not apply to group camping, group picnicking, backcountry, marine or electrical fees, or reservation charges. For more information, visit the BC Parks website.

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/fees/senior.html

Information about campsite fees may also be obtained at any Service BC Centre or by calling Service BC. See the *Directory* at the back of this guide for contact information for Service BC Centres. Information may also be found on the BC Parks website:

Website: www.bcparks.ca/fees/senior.html

Royal BC Museum

Seniors pay reduced admission fees at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria, both individually and as a pre-booked group. For more information, contact the Royal BC Museum or visit its website.

Royal BC Museum

675 Belleville St.

Victoria BC V8W 9W2

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 447-7977

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-7226

Email: reception@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

Website: www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

The Royal BC Museum involves volunteers in a wide range of activities and services including school programs, the Royal Museum Shop, coat check, collections and business areas, exhibit interpretation and museum hosts. Seniors interested in volunteering can contact the Royal BC Museum Volunteer Services.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-7902

Ability411

Ability411 is a new website that provides practical information about assistive technologies and equipment to BC seniors, their family members and their health providers and gives personalized answers to their questions. Ability411 is funded by the Government of BC and operated by CanAssist at the University of Victoria.

Website: www.ability411.ca

NOTES

For information about government programs and services, visit:
www.SeniorsBC.ca

For information about healthy aging and to find services in
your community, visit:
www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1

Your Health





YOUR HEALTH

Offering the Best in Both Patient Care and Health Services

Seniors living in British Columbia are part of a growing and vibrant sector of this province's population. More seniors choose to live here than in any other part of Canada. According to the 2016 census, 18.3 per cent of British Columbians are aged 65 or older, and that percentage is expected to increase dramatically in the coming years.

B.C.'s health care system encourages seniors to stay healthy and independent for as long as possible. The Province's accessible and affordable health services are designed to respond to the needs of all seniors. Government is committed to making it easier to find information about the programs and services you need. Knowing what's available is the first step to enjoying improved health services.

This section of the *BC Seniors' Guide* has information about the provincial health care system, assistance for travel within B.C. for medical reasons, health and wellness programs, and focused medical care. For information about managing disease or disability, assisted living resources, or planning for end of life, services listed here can help.

To learn more about useful health information, tools and resources, such as HealthLink BC's toll-free 8-1-1 health and health service information line, visit the *Your Resources* section of this guide.

Also refer to the section on *Your Safety and Security* in this guide to read about planning in advance of incapacity and how to appoint someone to make health and personal care decisions on your behalf. Representation agreements and advance care planning can help ensure that individuals receive care according to their wishes.



BRITISH COLUMBIA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

In British Columbia's regionalized health care system, responsibility for the direct delivery and management of most health services rests with the health authority in each region. The Ministry of Health has ultimate authority and responsibility for our publicly administered health care system. The ministry ensures that health authorities manage and deliver health services consistent with provincial legislation, regulation, policy, standards and other requirements set by the Minister of Health.

The Ministry of Health delivers several provincewide programs, including HealthLink BC, the Medical Services Plan, Travel Assistance Program and PharmaCare.

If you have difficulty finding or contacting local health services, call Service BC from Monday to Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST.

Phone (Elsewhere in B.C.): 1 800 663-7867

Phone (Vancouver): 604 660-2421

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-6121

Phone (Outside B.C.): 604 660-2421

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD): 711 (Across B.C.)

HEALTH AUTHORITIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Fraser Health

Suite 400 – Central City Tower 13450 102nd Ave.

Surrey BC V3T 0H1

Phone (toll-free): 1 855 412-2131

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 587-4600

Website: www.fraserhealth.ca

Interior Health

220 – 1815 Kirschner Rd. Kelowna BC V1Y 4N7

Phone (Kelowna): 250 862-4200 press “2”

Website: www.interiorhealth.ca

Island Health

1952 Bay St.

Victoria BC V8R 1J8

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 370-8699

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 370-8699

Website: www.islandhealth.ca



Northern Health

Suite 600 – 299 Victoria St.
Prince George BC V2L 5B8
Phone (toll-free): 1 866 565-2999
Phone (Prince George): 250 565-2649
Website: www.northernhealth.ca

Vancouver Coastal Health

601 W. Broadway, 11th Floor
Vancouver BC V5Z 4C2
Phone (toll-free): 1 866 884-0888
Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 736-2033
Website: www.vch.ca

Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)

1333 West Broadway
Vancouver BC V6H 4C1
Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 675-7400
Fax: 604 708-2700
Website: www.phsa.ca

First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)

501 - 100 Park Royal South
Coast Salish Territory
West Vancouver BC V7T 1A2
Phone (toll-free): 1 866 913-0033
Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 693-6500
Fax: 604 913-2081
Website: www.fnha.ca

FNHA Indian Residential Schools information line

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 477-0775
Website: www.fnha.ca (enter “Residential Schools” in Search)



HEALTHLINK BC

HealthLink BC is the gateway to access non-emergency health information and services in British Columbia. HealthLink BC provides information on health topics, symptoms, and health services and resources that contribute to healthy living. HealthLink is available 24 hours per day, 365 days per year by phone or online.

HealthLink BC 8-1-1

Call 8-1-1 toll-free to reach a health service navigator who can provide connection to a registered nurse any time of the day or night, a registered dietitian or qualified exercise professional on any weekday, or a pharmacist every evening and night. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY]): 7-1-1

Is it an emergency?

Call 9-1-1 (or a local emergency number) in the event of a medical emergency when immediate action is required.

Phone (toll-free): 9-1-1

To address concerns about a possible poisoning or exposure to a toxic substance, call Poison Control for 24-hour toll-free poison information.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 567-8911

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 682-5050

HealthLinkBC.ca

Visit HealthLink BC's website for information on more than 5,000 health, nutrition, physical activity, medication and medical test topics. You can search the HealthLink BC Directory for health and health-related services, closest to where you live. HealthLink BC's website also offers an interactive Check Your Symptoms tool.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca

BC Health Service Locator App

The BC Health Service Locator App allows people to locate a range of health services in British Columbia using an iPhone, iPad or iPod. Health services include the location of walk-in clinics, hospitals, emergency rooms, immunization clinics and pharmacies nearby. Filter the results to



view wheelchair-accessible locations, or find details about hours of service, contact information and addresses. View the latest health alerts posted on the HealthLink BC website from within the app and have instant access to call 8-1-1 for non-emergency health information and 7-1-1 for the deaf and hard-of-hearing assistance.

For more information about this free app, visit the link below.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/app

MEDICAL SERVICES PLAN (MSP) OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Medical Services Plan (MSP) of British Columbia insures medically required services provided to British Columbians by physicians, including laboratory services and diagnostic procedures. MSP contributes towards supplementary benefits for eligible beneficiaries.

All B.C. residents are required to enroll with MSP. As of January 1, 2020, MSP premiums were eliminated.

New residents or persons re-establishing residence in B.C. are eligible for coverage after completing a waiting period that consists of the remainder of the month residence in B.C. is established, plus two months. To allow time for applications to be processed, apply for MSP coverage immediately upon arrival in B.C., rather than at the end of the waiting period.

Medical Benefits

MSP pays for medically required services of physicians and surgeons, diagnostic X-rays, and approved laboratory services. In addition, MSP will cover dental and oral surgery when it is medically required, which must be performed in a hospital.

Supplementary Benefits

MSP contributes towards supplemental benefits for eligible beneficiaries. If an MSP beneficiary receives premium assistance, MSP pays \$23 per visit for a combined annual limit of 10 visits per calendar year for the following services: acupuncture, chiropractic, massage therapy, naturopathy, physical therapy and non-surgical podiatry.

Surgical podiatry is a benefit for all beneficiaries. Routine eye examinations are a limited benefit for those 18 years of age and under, or 65 years of age and older. Eye examinations are a benefit for all beneficiaries when they are a medical necessity. All supplementary benefit providers, including optometrists, may charge supplemental fees to their patients provided the patient is advised in advance.



Who is Health Insurance BC?

Health Insurance BC manages the day-to-day operations of the Medical Services Plan (MSP) and PharmaCare on behalf of the Ministry of Health. It manages program information and claims, operates a contact centre, and looks after documents and information technology. Health Insurance BC can answer your questions about both programs.

For more information, visit the Health Insurance BC website or call the toll- free automated service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from anywhere in North America. A customer service representative will be available to assist you between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. PST, Monday to Friday.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7100

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “medical services plan” in Search)

General correspondence by mail can be sent to the following address:

Health Insurance BC

PO Box 9035 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9E3

When submitting forms by mail, use the specific mailing address on the form.

BC Services Card

The BC Services Card has replaced the CareCard and Gold CareCard. The BC Services Card can be combined with a driver's license to act as photo ID. It is more convenient, more secure and will enable access to other government services both in-person and online.

Adults aged 19-74 are expected to periodically renew enrolment in MSP and get a photo BC Services Card by going to an ICBC driver licensing office.

Adults over 75 do not need to renew enrolment in MSP but should still get a photo BC Services Card at a driver licensing office. If a senior cannot make it to a driver licensing office, a BC Services Card without a photo can be obtained by contacting Health Insurance BC. A customer service representative is available Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7100

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

For more information on applying for a BC Services Card, visit: Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “BC services card” in Search)



Medical Services Only

Low-income seniors who have left provincial income assistance for federal income support may be eligible to receive coverage for costs associated with the Medical Services Plan, PharmaCare, basic dental, optical and other approved medical supports.

More information is available on the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction website.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “Medical Services Only” in Search)

Dental Care

Routine dental care and professional examinations can help prevent and detect chronic health conditions. Good oral health also allows for an increase in choice to eat a greater variety of foods, which can positively impact health and decrease the risk of malnutrition. Some medications can affect oral health, leading to conditions such as dry mouth. Good oral health can also help maintain an overall better quality of life by minimizing the risk of dental decay, tooth loss, gum disease, inflammation and oral cancer.

For more information, visit the BC Dental Association website.

Website: www.yourdentalhealth.ca

TRAVEL TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Travel Assistance Program (TAP)

The Travel Assistance Program (TAP) offers travel discounts to eligible B.C. residents who must travel within the province for physician-referred non-emergency medical specialist services not available in their own community, and whose travel expenses are not covered by third-party insurance or other government programs. A physician's referral is necessary, and the patient must have the physician's office complete a TAP form. Contact TAP at the number below prior to travel for a confirmation number in order to receive a travel discount.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 661-2668

TAP is a corporate partnership between the Ministry of Health and private transportation carriers who provide fare discounts to patients presenting an approved TAP confirmation form.

TAP does not provide direct financial assistance to patients for travel costs or make travel arrangements for patients. Meals, accommodation, mileage, fuel and local transportation expenses are not included in TAP and are the responsibility



of the patient. There is no reimbursement after travel has taken place.

Once a completed TAP form has been obtained from your physician, call the TAP automated application service, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 661-2668

For general information on TAP, call Health Insurance BC, or visit the TAP website.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7100

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “Travel Assistance Program” in Search)

Local health authorities (health authority contact information is at the beginning of this section of the guide) can provide eligibility criteria to qualify for other travel assistance, including the regional Health Connections programs described below.

Health Connections

Health Connections is a partnership with private providers, BC Transit and regional districts. Within some of the health authorities, the service helps to improve access to health care for patients who must travel to non-emergency medical appointments.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “health connections” in Search)

Northern Health

Northern Health Connections is a travel service program for patients needing to travel for out-of-town medical appointments in Northern B.C. and in Vancouver, Kamloops and Abbotsford.

The service is available to Northern residents over 60 years old who must travel outside their home community for non-emergency health care. Please have your Care Card/BC Services Card number and appointment information ready when calling the toll-free number.

Check the Northern Health Connections bus schedule on the website and call the toll-free number below to reserve your seat.

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 647-4997

(7 days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Website: www.nhconnections.ca



Interior Health

Interior Health's Health Connections is a transit service providing communities with accessible transportation options to access non-emergency medical appointments within health services area. Phone 24 hours ahead to arrange your Health Connections trip.

For more information about Health Connections in the B.C. Interior, contact your local BC Transit office or visit:

Website: www.bctransit.com/kamloops/schedules-and-maps/health-connections

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 376-7525

(Kamloops HandyDART office)

1 855 359-3935 (Lillooet HandyDART office)

1 866 618-8294 (Revelstoke Office)

1 866 933-7812 (Williams Lake office)

Island Health

Wheels for Wellness, a non-profit society, provides door-to-door patient transportation primarily for trips on Vancouver Island that are over 75 kilometers one way.

Website: www.wheelsforwellness.com

Vancouver Coastal Health

Medical Travel Tickets are provided through Bella Coola Valley Health Services for medical travel to Vancouver. The service focuses on the Central Coast and Bella Coola Valley.

Phone (Bella Coola): 250 799-5311

PHARMACARE

PharmaCare helps with the cost of eligible prescription drugs, devices and medical supplies. A person is eligible for PharmaCare coverage if they are covered by B.C.'s Medical Services Plan (MSP). PharmaCare helps B.C. residents through various plans.

Fair PharmaCare Plan

Fair PharmaCare is PharmaCare's biggest plan. All B.C. residents are encouraged to register, and it requires a one-time registration.

Fair PharmaCare coverage is based on your net family income: the lower



the income, the more financial assistance in paying for eligible drugs and supplies. (If you do not register, you still have coverage, but your deductible is set at \$10,000 for each member of your family.)

Registering for Fair PharmaCare

Registration for Fair PharmaCare is free, and there are no premiums. Register by telephone, online or using a paper form. See the contact information below for the phone number and website address.

The following information is required to register for Fair PharmaCare:

All family members:

- Personal Health Number (found on your BC Services Card)
- Birth Date

For you and your spouse:

- Social Insurance Number
- Net income from Line 236 of your income tax return from two years ago
- Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) income on Line 125 of your income tax return from two years ago. RDSP income is deducted from net income to calculate a person's level of Fair PharmaCare coverage

Upon registration, PharmaCare will mail a consent form to allow PharmaCare to check the registrant's income with the Canada Revenue Agency. Sign and return the consent form right away.

PharmaCare bases coverage on family net income from two years earlier (for example, coverage for 2020 is based on income information from 2018).

Increased Assistance

If the family's net income has decreased by 10 per cent or more, (for example through retirement), applicants may fill out an Application for Income Review to have their coverage adjusted (call Health Insurance BC (HIBC) for further information).

In the case where a spouse has moved to a long-term care home and applicants are having trouble paying for prescriptions, contact MSP to see about qualifying as "separated" (see "Directory" section under M for MSP contacts). Qualified applicants will not have their spouse's income included when their coverage is calculated. If MSP does not approve a request, contact HIBC.



In the case where a spouse dies, their income still factors into an applicant's level of drug coverage until the end of the year. If this causes financial difficulty, contact HIBC.

PharmaCare's Other Plans

Several additional PharmaCare plans may be accessed by qualified applicants including:

Plan G, for psychiatric medications. Eligibility requirements include financial and clinical need and applications must be submitted by a doctor.

- Plan P, for palliative medications and applications must be submitted by a doctor.
- Plan B, for patients living in residential care facilities. For residents of Plan B facility receive coverage automatically.
- Plan C, for medications for people receiving income assistance. The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction registers applicants.
- Plan W, for clients of the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). Eligibility is determined by FNHA. Call the FNHA to determine registration status; contacts are below.

What's covered?

Visit the website below to find out what drugs, medical supplies and pharmacy services are covered by PharmaCare plans.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "Pharmacare" in Search)

Individuals taking a drug PharmaCare is considering covering may add their voice to the drug review process. PharmaCare welcomes input from caregivers and patient groups. For more information, visit:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "BC Your Voice" in Search)

Monthly Deductible Payment Option

British Columbians registered with Fair PharmaCare have a deductible based on their family net income. Families with the lowest incomes do not have a deductible and receive immediate coverage of eligible prescriptions and medical supplies/devices under the Fair PharmaCare Plan.

All other families have a deductible, based on their family net income. PharmaCare offers a monthly payment option so that deductible payments can be spread over the year.

It is recommended to not register for the Monthly Deductible Payment Program unless there is reasonable certainty that the eligible prescription



costs for the year will be more than the deductible. Once enrolled in the monthly deductible payment option, families pay their Fair PharmaCare deductible in monthly instalments and receive PharmaCare assistance with eligible prescription costs right away.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Fair Pharmacare” in Search)

Medical Services Plan (MSP) and PharmaCare: What’s the Difference?

MSP (see page 34) covers the cost of medically necessary insured doctor services, while PharmaCare covers the cost of eligible drugs, devices, and medical supplies. You must be registered with MSP to be eligible for PharmaCare.

As of January 1, 2020, British Columbians no longer pay MSP premiums. This change does not affect your MSP or PharmaCare coverage. You do not have to re-register for either program.

For More Information about PharmaCare Plans

Health Insurance BC administers PharmaCare and the Medical Services Plan (MSP) on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

Health Insurance BC can answer your questions about both these programs. Customer service representatives are available 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday to Friday, and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays (except statutory holidays).

For more information about the PharmaCare program or to register for the Fair PharmaCare Plan, call Health Insurance BC or visit the PharmaCare website.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7100

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Pharmacare” in Search)

To contact First Nations Health Authority about Plan W:

Toll free: 1 855 550-5454

Email: info@fnha.ca

Website: www.fnha.ca

- Visit any Service BC office for paper forms. Service BC staff can assist with filling out and submitting registrations for Fair PharmaCare.



BC EMERGENCY HEALTH SERVICES

BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) oversees the BC Ambulance Service and BC Patient Transfer Services to provide pre-hospital emergency services and inter-facility patient transfers throughout the province.

The BC Ambulance Service is one of the largest providers of emergency health care in Canada, serving an area of almost one million square kilometres. The service includes more than 4,000 emergency services personnel including medical call-takers, dispatchers and paramedics. BCEHS paramedics are dispatched to a call nearly every minute of every day.

The Province of British Columbia heavily subsidizes the cost of transporting a patient by ambulance. For B.C. residents with a valid BC Services Card who are covered by the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP) the fee is \$80. This includes a BC Ambulance transport of a patient between a facility (care or residential home) and hospital.

When an ambulance is requested but transportation is not required, or it is refused, the fee is \$50.

In a medical emergency:

- Call 9-1-1
- Areas where 9-1-1 is not available, call toll free 1800 461-9911
- Cellphone/SAT Phone from Outside BC 250 374-5937

In the case of a non-medical emergency, call 8-1-1 for confidential health information and advice available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For more information about ambulance services, contact:

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 953-3298

Website: www.bcehs.ca

For ambulance billing, contact:

British Columbia Ambulance Service

Ambulance Billing Department

PO Box 9676 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9P7

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 665-7199

Website: www.bcehs.ca/about/billing/fees



ACUTE, HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES

B.C.'s health authorities provide a variety of acute care, community health, residential and special support services to assist people whose ability to function independently is affected by health-related problems. The type of assistance and support required varies from one person to another and may change over time for each individual.

Acute Care (Hospital Care)

Registrants of the Medical Services Plan, who have a valid BC Services Card, are insured for most services provided by acute care hospitals, as outlined below. This includes both inpatient care (when you are admitted to the hospital), and outpatient care (e.g., scheduled services where you go home the same day or services provided in the emergency department).

Patients admitted into an acute care hospital in B.C. for inpatient care, will automatically receive accommodation and meals at the standard level for the unit, necessary nursing services, and other goods and services that are medically required while you are a patient in the hospital. This includes any needed physician services, laboratory or diagnostic tests and X-rays, prescription medications, medical supplies, routine surgical supplies, and rehabilitation services provided in the hospital.

Patients may only be charged for goods and services used in the hospital when they are not medically required. For example, patients who request private or semi-private hospital room will be charged (some third-party health care plans cover this cost) unless that is the standard for the unit, or it has been determined by a physician that such a room is medically required. Patients may also be charged for certain non-standard medical devices, but only if they have provided consent to purchase these items in advance and a physician has not stated the items are medically necessary.

Items for use in the community, including private residences and long-term care homes, are generally the responsibility of the patient. Patients will not be charged if the item is a vital part of the treatment they received in the hospital and should not leave the hospital without it (e.g., certain neck braces).

Patients are responsible for paying for medical equipment to be used in the community, such as:

- Crutches, eyeglasses, and hearing aids
- Medical supplies
- Prosthetics that are not implanted in the body
- Home adaptations and medications that are to be used after you return home

Some of these items may be insured under Fair PharmaCare, depending on the circumstances.



Home and Community Care

Home and community care services provide a range of health care and supports for eligible British Columbians who have acute, chronic, palliative or rehabilitative health-care needs. These services include:

- Supporting clients to remain independent and in their own homes for as long as possible;
- Providing care within an assisted living residence or a long-term care home for clients who can no longer be supported in their own homes;
- Providing family or caregivers temporary relief/respite from the emotional and physical demands of caring for a friend or family member;
- Supporting clients to avoid, reduce or delay the need for hospital or long-term care services; and
- Supporting clients and their families who are nearing the end of their life with palliative care services at home, in an assisted living residence, or in a long-term care home, which includes hospice.

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for publicly-subsidized home and community care services, such as community nursing or community rehabilitation (physiotherapy social worker or occupational therapy), clients must:

- be a Canadian citizen or have permanent resident status (landed immigrant or have a minister's permit approved by the federal minister responsible for immigration);
- be a resident of British Columbia for at least three months (some exceptions apply); and
- require care following discharge from a hospital, care at home rather than hospitalization, or end-of-life care for a life-limiting condition.

To be eligible for publicly-subsidized home and community care services, an individual must provide documentation that establishes that they:

- are a Canadian citizen or lawfully admitted to Canada for permanent residence; or
- Have applied for permanent resident status and as a result have been issued a Temporary Residence Permit (TRP) by the federal minister responsible for immigration (if issuance of the TRP has been recommended by the committee established by the minister responsible for the Medicare Protection Act to review the admissibility of individuals on medical grounds).



- An individual must be 19 years of age or older to be eligible for home and community care services, with the exceptions of care management, community nursing and community rehabilitation services, for which there is no age requirement.

An individual is eligible for publicly-subsidized home and community care services where the individual:

- has chronic health conditions that impair the individual's ability to function independently;
- has health conditions that require care following discharge from hospital or health conditions requiring care at home rather than hospitalization; or
- requires end-of-life care for a life-limiting condition.

Obtaining Services

For information about home and community care services, contact your local health authority's home care office (you can find health authority contact information at the beginning of this section of the guide). A relative, friend or professional (physician, nurse, pharmacist or social worker) may also contact the health authority on your behalf.

When the call is received, a staff member will ask some preliminary questions to determine the urgency of the situation and determine whether a health professional needs to make a home visit to complete a full care assessment.

Care Management and Care Co-ordination

To complete an assessment, a health professional (often referred to as a care manager) – such as a community nurse, physiotherapist, social worker or occupational therapist – will visit the client and gather information to help them assess the client's care needs and ability to manage their health conditions with the assistance of family and friends. The health professional may recommend home health, assisted living or long-term care services, and other resources available in the community, and may arrange a referral to specific programs. The health professional will stay in touch as needed to help the client with arrangements or to make adjustments if their care needs change.

Home Support

Home support services help clients remain in their own homes by providing personal assistance with activities of daily living such as mobilization, nutrition, lifts and transfers, bathing, cueing, grooming and toileting. They may include safety maintenance activities as a supplement to personal



assistance when appropriate, as well as specific delegated nursing and rehabilitation tasks.

Choice in Supports for Independent Living

Choice in Supports for Independent Living (CSIL) is an alternative for eligible home support clients. CSIL was developed to give British Columbians with physical disabilities and high-intensity care needs more flexibility in arranging home support services. They receive funds to purchase their own services, and they manage, co-ordinate and are financially responsible for recruiting, hiring, training, scheduling and supervising home support workers.

Seniors and people with disabilities who are unable, or not always able, to direct their own care can obtain CSIL funding through a client support group or through a representative named by the adult in a Representation Agreement. The health professional coordinating the care can provide more information on how to establish a support group to manage CSIL services on the client's behalf.

Community Nursing and Community Rehabilitation

Community nursing and community rehabilitation services provide in-home nursing care and rehabilitation therapy as needed to assist adults with acute or chronic illnesses, to support hospital, long-term care and emergency department avoidance, to support patient recovery following a hospital stay, and to provide end-of-life care.

Adult Day Services

Adult day services provide supportive group programs and activities to assist seniors and adults with disabilities to remain independent in the community, and to provide caregivers with short periods of respite. Activities vary with each centre, but may include personal assistance, health care services (including nursing and/or rehabilitation services), an organized program of therapeutic social and recreational activities, and caregiver support and respite.

Caregiver Relief/Respite

A variety of services can be provided to offer caregivers temporary relief from the emotional and physical demands of caring for a friend or family member, or to provide the client with a period of supportive care to increase independence. This gives caregivers the opportunity to join in community activities or renew their energies, so they can continue to provide quality care.



Respite can include assistance in the home or adult day services, or a stay in a long-term care home on a short-term basis.

Assisted Living

Assisted living residences provide housing, hospitality services and assisted living services for adults who can live semi-independently but require assistance with daily activities – due to physical, health or mental health challenges or while in recovery for substance use.

Assisted living services may include support with activities of daily living (such as eating, meals and snacks, mobility, dressing, grooming, and bathing or personal hygiene), assistance with managing medication, therapeutic diets support, safekeeping of money and other person property, behavior management support, and psychosocial (or programming) supports. There is no limit on the number of services a residence can offer to its residents but at least one assisted living service must be provided.

Hospitality services include planning and providing meals and snacks, housekeeping services, laundry services, planning and providing social and recreational opportunities, and a 24-hour personal emergency response system.

There are three classes of assisted living residences: Seniors and persons with disabilities; mental health; and supportive recovery. Residences can be private and publicly-subsidized assisted living residences, ranging from high-rise apartment complexes to customized private homes.

A health professional or care manager can provide information on the residences in your area, the process for admission to an assisted living residence, what services are provided and applicable costs. For more information, visit:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Assisted Living” in Search)

You may also wish to explore the online map of all assisted living residences at: <http://moh.apps.gov.bc.ca/alrc/>

Assisted Living Registrar

The assisted living registrar was established to promote and protect the health and safety of people living in assisted living residences. The Assisted Living Registry carries out the statutory work of the registrar under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. All assisted living residences in B.C. must be registered with the Assisted Living Registry, regardless of the form of ownership or funding. Operators of registered assisted living residences must meet and maintain provincial assisted living health and safety standards. The registry investigates any complaints that it receives concerning assisted living health and safety standards not being met. A resident, family member or a



member of the public may contact the registry with concerns about registered assisted living residences by phone or by email.

Mailing Address:

PO Box 9638 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9P1

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 714-3378

Phone (Greater Victoria): 778 974-4887

Email: hlth.assistedlivingregistry@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “Assisted Living Registrar” in Search)

Long-term Care Homes

Long-term care services are provided to clients who need 24-hour professional nursing supervision and care and can no longer be supported in their own homes. For seniors and people with disabilities who have complex care needs, long-term care homes provide a protective and supportive care environment. B.C. has both private and publicly-subsidized long-term care home.

Clients with the highest need and urgency have priority for placement in publicly-subsidized long-term care homes. A health professional or care manager can provide information on the publicly-subsidized care homes in your area, the process for admission to a care home, information on services provided, and applicable costs. In addition, your regional health authority website provides information on publicly-subsidized long-term care homes in your area.

Both publicly-subsidized and private-pay long-term care homes in British Columbia must be licensed. More information about licensed long-term care homes, including recent inspection reports, can be found by searching in the online map of all long-term care homes.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “long-term care home” in Search)

Group Homes

Adults with intellectual disabilities who require extensive daily living supports can live in their community in publicly funded group homes. Group homes provide safe homes for three to four residents, enabling them to integrate effectively in their local communities. They offer short- or long-term accommodation, providing eligible clients with care and support to maximize their independence, and to support their access and participation in areas such as household management, employment and social relationships.



Family Care Homes

Family care homes services are provided in a single-family residence that accommodates clients with specialized care needs that cannot be optimally met in a residential care facility. Services include meals, laundry and housekeeping services and supervision, along with any required assistance with daily living activities, such as bathing, grooming and dressing. Family care homes are unlicensed and can house no more than two clients.

End-of-Life Care

Compassionate end-of-life care aims to preserve clients' comfort, dignity and quality of life by relieving symptoms, so those facing death can devote their energy and time to embracing that which is most important to them. End-of-life care services, including palliative care, are provided to clients in their own homes and in home-like settings, in licensed residential care/long-term care facilities, and assisted living residences.

Hospices and Hospice Palliative Care

British Columbians who are in the end stages of a terminal illness or preparing for death, and who do not require acute hospital care, may prefer to spend their remaining time in a hospice. Hospices are home-like settings that provide hospice palliative care, including medical and nursing care, pain and symptom management, and psychosocial, spiritual and bereavement support. Some hospices may provide hospice palliative care services in the community to people who would rather receive this care at home.

BC Palliative Care Benefits

BC Palliative Care Benefits help people of all ages who are at the end stage of a life-threatening disease or illness to receive palliative care at home. British Columbians who are eligible can be registered through their doctors. The program covers prescription and some over-the-counter medications used in palliative care through PharmaCare Plan P. The local health authority will also assess the person's need for medical supplies and equipment. If medical supplies and equipment are needed, the cost will be covered by the local health authority.

For more information on what is covered under PharmCare Plan P, visit the "Who We Cover" page on the PharmaCare website.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "Pharmacare who we cover" in Search)



PATIENT CARE QUALITY OFFICES

Persons with a complaint about the quality of care they or someone they know has received from a health authority may contact that health authority's Patient Care Quality Office. The office will work with the person making the complaint to try to resolve it and will provide a response to the complaint within 40 business days.

The offices are open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, and can be contacted in person during these hours. The offices are closed on weekends and statutory holidays, but can receive messages by phone, fax, mail or email.

Fraser Health Patient Care Quality Office

4th Floor 11762 Laity St., Maple Ridge BC V2X 5A3

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 880-8823

Fax (Metro Vancouver): 604 463-1888

Email: pcqoffice@fraserhealth.ca

Website: www.fraserhealth.ca

(enter "Complaints about patient care quality" in Search)

Interior Health Patient Care Quality Office

505 Doyle Avenue, Kelowna BC V1Y 0C5

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 442-2001

Fax (Kelowna): 250 870-4670

Email: patient.concerns@interiorhealth.ca

Website: www.interiorhealth.ca

(enter "Patient Care Quality Office" in Search)

Island Health Patient Care Quality Office

Royal Jubilee Hospital

Memorial Pavilion Watson Wing Room 315

1952 Bay St., Victoria BC V8R 1J8

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 977-5797

Fax (Greater Victoria): 250 370-8713

Email: patientcarequalityoffice@viha.ca

Website: www.islandhealth.ca

(enter "Patient Care Quality Office" in Search)



Northern Health Patient Care Quality Office

6th floor 299 Victoria Street, Prince George BC V2L 5B8
Phone (toll-free): 1 877 677-7715
Fax (Prince George): 250 565-2640
Email: patientcarequalityoffice@northernhealth.ca
Website: www.northernhealth.ca
(enter “Patient Care Quality Office” in Search)

Vancouver Coastal Health Patient Care Quality Office

Room LBP-117 855 W. 12th Ave., Vancouver BC V5Z 1M9
Phone (toll-free): 1 877 993-9199
Fax (Metro Vancouver): 604 875-5545
Email: pcqo@vch.ca
Website: www.vch.ca
(enter “Patient Care Quality Office” in Search)

Provincial Health Services Authority Patient Care Quality Office

(Includes provincial agencies and services such as BC Emergency Health Services, BC Cancer, BC Renal, BC Transplant, and BC Women’s Hospital + Health Centre, etc.).

Suite 200,1333 West Broadway, Vancouver BC V6H 4C1
Phone (toll-free): 1 888 875-3256
Fax (Metro Vancouver): 604 708-2762
Email: pcqo@phsa.ca
Website: www.phsa.ca
(enter “Patient Care Quality Office” in Search)

Patient Care Quality Review Board

Persons who feel their complaint has not been resolved by a Patient Care Quality Office may contact the Patient Care Quality Review Board. The board is independent from the health authorities and will review the health authority’s investigation of the complaint and its response.

Review requests can be made in writing, online or by phone. Review request forms can be downloaded and submitted or printed from the board’s website or sent to you by mail. Once completed, the review request form can be submitted by mail, fax or directly on the website. Contact information for the board is provided below.



Patient Care Quality Review Board

PO Box 9643

Victoria BC V8W 9P1

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 952-2448

Fax (Greater Victoria): 250 952-2428

Email: contact@patientcarequalityreviewboard.ca

Website: www.patientcarequalityreviewboard.ca

LIVING A HEALTHY LIFE WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Self-Management BC, University of Victoria

The B.C. government has provided funding to the University of Victoria Institute on Aging & Lifelong Health to provide a variety of six-week patient education programs and patient coaching for people with chronic health conditions, with specific programs for diabetes, cancer survivors, and chronic pain. There is no cost for patients and their families to attend. Programs include:

- Chronic Disease Self-Management in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Punjabi. The program is also offered in English in First Nations communities;
- Self-management programs for chronic diseases in general and for chronic pain, diabetes, cancer survivors, health coach program; and
- An online Chronic Disease Self-Management program.

More information is available on the University of Victoria Institute on Aging & Lifelong Health website, or by calling the program's information line.

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 902-3767

Website: www.selfmanagementbc.ca



Family Caregivers of British Columbia

The Family Caregivers of British Columbia strives to improve the quality of life for family and friend caregivers through support, information, education and leadership. The not-for-profit society was established in 1989. Provincial services include a toll-free Caregiver Support Line, 1:1 support for complex situations, access to caregiver resources and support groups, assistance with health system navigation, caregiver webinars, monthly e-news, quarterly newsletters and a comprehensive website of caregiver information. All services are free.

Family Caregivers of British Columbia
6 – 3318 Oak St.
Victoria BC V8X 1R1
Caregiver Support Line: 1 877 520- 3267
Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 384-0408
Email: info@familycaregiversbc.ca
Website: www.familycaregiversbc.ca

University of British Columbia, Faculty of Medicine interCultural Online Health Network (iCON)

The Ministry of Health provides funding to iCON, who delivers culturally and linguistically appropriate health resources on chronic disease management and health promotion to Chinese, South Asian, and Indigenous patients, families and caregivers throughout British Columbia. iCON has both multi-channel online resources and community outreach opportunities (e.g., workshops and forums) for community members and health practitioners to come together to learn and share information about chronic disease prevention and management. Chronic diseases of focus include diabetes, heart disease, dementia, and mental wellness.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877-357-7611
Email: iconsupport@ubc.ca
Website: www.iconproject.org

Pain BC

Pain BC is a unique organization serving the needs of the estimated one in five British Columbians living with chronic pain. Chronic pain might be post-surgical, pain from living with a chronic disease, pain related to injury or pain from an unknown cause. Pain BC provides several resources for people with chronic pain and their families:

- Pain Support Line: volunteers provide information and resources and a safe place to talk to someone about how pain is impacting



your life.

- Phone (toll free): 1-844-880-7246
- Patient education: From the Pain BC website at www.painbc.ca, learn about chronic pain and different ways to manage it through evidence-based resources.
- Self-Management: Live Plan Be is a free online self-management resource to connect with others who have chronic pain, track your health and learn about the science of pain at: www.liveplanbe.ca.
- Coaching for Health: A licensed medical professional can provide a referral form for one-to-one telephone support to help you learn self-management skills and regain function.
- My Care Path: is a free online tool for children and teens with chronic pain at: www.mycarepath.ca.
- Pain Waves is a podcast to hear chronic pain experts and people with chronic pain discuss research, tools, stories and trends at www.spreaker.com/show/pain-waves.

The Ministry of Health provides funding for pain related services for patients, families and caregivers. To learn more, visit the website below.

Website: www.painbc.ca

Patient Voices Network

The Patient Voices Network is a community of patients, families and caregivers working with health care partners to improve the health care system. Their vision is that patients, families and health care partners co-design improved health care through authentic voice and diverse representation.

The Patient Voices Network is supported through the BC Patient Safety and Quality Council.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 282-1919

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 668-8240

Email: pvn@bcpsqc.ca

Website: <https://patientvoicesbc.ca/>

(enter “Patients Voices Network” in Search)



CULTURAL SAFETY

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVOR SERVICES

Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program

The First Nations Health Authority Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support program provides mental health and emotional supports to eligible former residential school students and their families before, during and after their participation in settlement agreement processes, including:

- Common Experience Payments
- Independent Assessment Process
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission events and commemoration activities

Information line phone (toll-free): 1 877 477-0775

National Indian Residential School Crisis Line

The National Indian Residential School Crisis Line has been set up to provide support for former residential school students. You can access emotional and crisis referral services by calling the 24-hour crisis line.

National Indian Residential School Crisis Line

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 925-4419

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES

The Ministry of Health provides a comprehensive and integrated system of mental health and substance use services delivered by the health authorities. These services focus on health promotion, prevention, harm reduction, treatment, rehabilitation and recovery, including supporting individuals and families with self-care and resiliency. Mental health and substance use services are targeted to different age groups, including seniors.

The treatment of seniors' mental health issues is often made more complex due to the presence of chronic pain or other physical health problems. Mental health services for seniors often focus on the need for collaborative practices that can include the family physician and/or home and community care services.

Seniors are as prone as the rest of society to suffer from the effects of mental illness and substance use. For example, issues surrounding depression, anxiety, and problematic substance use, such as alcohol.

Loneliness is an additional factor that impacts mental health and can contribute to declining health and earlier death for seniors. Loneliness may



develop due to many psychosocial and health factors and can be successfully addressed through community programs supporting social connectedness, as well as specific assessment and treatment approaches through mental health and substance use services.

To find mental health and substance use supports in B.C. call 8-1-1 any time of the day or night:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “mental health and substance use supports” in Search).

You can also find health authority contact information at the beginning of this section of the guide (Your Health).

The next few pages contain additional information and resources that may be of assistance.

Bounce Back: Reclaim Your Health

Bounce Back is a free program providing resources and services to individuals experiencing symptoms of mild to moderate depression, low mood or stress, with or without anxiety. The program offers telephone coaching in a series of self-help modules along with a DVD called BounceBack® Today. The coaching program can be accessed by referral from family physicians' offices everywhere in British Columbia. Individuals who prefer to work on their own can use the online program to learn at their own pace. A referral is not required to access the online program.

The video and coaching program are available in English, French, Mandarin, and Cantonese, and coaching is available in English, French, Mandarin, Cantonese and Punjabi. To find out more about Bounce Back®, seniors are encouraged to talk to their family doctor.

Bounce Back is delivered through the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division with funding from the Ministry of Health and Provincial Health Services Authority.

Website: www.bouncebackbc.ca



The Living Life to the Full course

Living Life to the Full is an 8-week mental health promotion course designed to help people deal with everyday life challenges by learning better self-management skills using Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) principles. Course content and materials are practical and easily applied to everyday life situations.

The course is suitable for people of all ages – from youth to seniors. In BC the course is delivered through branches of the Canadian Mental Health Association. Booklets can also be purchased individually at:

www.cmha.bc.ca

Booklets are available in English, French, Chinese Traditional and Chinese Simplified.

Website: www.livinglifetothefull.ca

Crisis Line Association of BC

Crisis line workers are trained in critical skills such as empathetic reflection, active listening, and collaborative problem solving. They use crisis and suicide assessment and intervention protocols that are based on recognized better practices. Calling a crisis line does help.

For help with a mental health crisis:

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE)

For mental health information and support:

Phone (toll-free): 310-6789 (no area code needed)

Website: www.crisislines.bc.ca

BC Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Service

BC Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Service (ADIRS) can refer you to counseling and resources in your community. Call for 24-hour services, free, multilingual.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-1441

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-9382



BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information

Seven provincial mental health and substance use agencies are working together to provide evidence-based information on mental health and substance use.

A toll-free information line provides 24-hour taped information on various mental health and substance use disorders, including symptoms, causes, treatment, options, support groups and community resources. The website is an excellent source of information for individuals and families.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 661-2121

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 669-7600 Email: bcpartners@heretohelp.bc.ca

Website: www.heretohelp.bc.ca

Problem Gambling

The Problem Gambling Help Line is a confidential, toll-free service available to all British Columbians. The help line provides counseling information and referral 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Information and referral specialists can provide immediate information for problem gamblers, their families and friends, and can refer callers to professional problem gambling counseling services around the province.

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 795-6111

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, collect calls accepted): 604 875-0885

E-mail: info@bcresponsiblegambling.ca

Website: www.bcresponsiblegambling.ca

PUBLIC HEALTH

Public health units across British Columbia offer a variety of health services, including nutrition resources and immunizations. These services support the health and independence of seniors and contribute to family and community health.

Immunization Services

Information on the availability of immunization, such as influenza and pneumococcal vaccines, can be obtained by calling HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 or your local public health office.

For convenience, you may also wish to visit the ImmunizeBC website for useful information regarding immunization, including locations of influenza clinics during the flu season.

Website: www.immunizebc.ca



Many pharmacists across B.C. are authorized to administer vaccines. Call your local pharmacy to see if an immunizing pharmacist is available

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca (enter “immunizations” in Search) for information on vaccinations, and to find local public health units and pharmacies where vaccinations are offered.

BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) manages a range of provincial programs and clinics on public health and diseases, including COVID-19, visit:

Website: www.bccdc.ca/our-services

DEMENTIA SUPPORTS & SERVICES

Alzheimer Society of B.C.

Active in communities across the province, the Alzheimer Society of B.C.’s vision is a world without Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, and that world begins with a more dementia-friendly society, where people affected by dementia are acknowledged, supported and included.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 667-3742

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 681-6530

Email: info@alzheimerbcb.org

Website: www.alzheimer.ca/en/bc

First Link® Dementia support

The Alzheimer Society of B.C.’s First Link® dementia support connects individuals and families affected by Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia to support and educate at any point in the dementia journey. Referral from health-care providers allows for proactive contact, or the public can call the helpline at:

First Link® Dementia Helpline:

Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 936-6033



LGBTQ2S

Older adults who identify as LGBTQ2S may face unique challenges when accessing care and support resources. This section of the guide profiles gender- and sexuality- specific resources to ensure older adults can locate safe and inclusive services and spaces to meet many of their health and support requirements. The list also includes resources for family and friends of gender- and sexually-diverse individuals, so they may learn more about their loved ones.

Trans Care BC (PHSA)

Trans Care BC provides various types of resources for gender-affirming care and the following related issues: legal/advocacy, immigrant and refugee, partners and spouses, caregiver and family.

Website: www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/care-support

Prideline BC

Peer support, information, and referrals for anyone in British Columbia.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 566-1170

Phone (Lower Mainland): 604 684-6869

Monday to Friday, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Trans Lifeline

Trans Lifeline is a new transgender crisis hotline, which has recently opened a toll-free line in Canada. Their goal is to assist anyone who may be struggling with their gender identity and connect them with services that can assist them in their journey.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 565-8860

Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays BC

Information and support for parents, families and friends with questions about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender.

Website: www.pflagcanada.ca/pflag-chapters/british-columbia/

QMUNITY

Older adults program serves Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, and 2-Spirit seniors 55+

Phone: 604 684-5307

Email: reception@qmunity.ca

Website: www.qmunity.ca/



MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING (MAiD)

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) occurs when an authorized doctor or nurse practitioner provides or administers medication that intentionally brings about a person's death, at that person's request. This procedure is only available to people who meet specific eligibility criteria. Not all doctors or nurse practitioners provide medical assistance in dying.

To ensure this service is provided in a safe manner, a system of safeguards has been designed to protect and support all people to make an informed decision.

People looking for information about MAiD should speak to their doctor or nurse practitioner or contact their local health authority's care co-ordination service regarding the options available within their region.

For people living in a First Nations community or care providers working in First Nations communities, please email the First Nations Health Authority (maid@fnha.ca) if you have any questions or require further assistance in coordination.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "Medical Assistance in Dying" in Search).

AFTER A DEATH: WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES

Find out what to do when someone dies in British Columbia. When someone dies, you will make decisions about what to do next. On this website, find out first steps, discover support options and learn about funerals and wills. Although each situation is different, this website will guide you in the right direction.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "After a Death" in Search).

NOTES

For information about government programs and services, visit:
www.SeniorsBC.ca

For information about healthy aging and to find services in
your community, visit:
www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1

Housing





HOUSING

Housing Options for a Growing Seniors Population

From living independently in the family home to living in an assisted living residence, seniors in British Columbia have a wide range of housing options. Planning for the future housing needs of B.C. seniors is critical. By 2029, nearly 30 per cent of Canada's seniors will be between 75 and 84, and 13 per cent will be over age 85. Many of the growing number of older seniors will be able to remain independent, but others will require more support. The provincial government is working hard to meet the unique housing needs of British Columbia's diverse senior population by providing a wide variety of programs, services and housing alternatives.

This section provides information about programs and services for older British Columbians about subsidized assisted living for seniors who require some support, who own their own home, including homeowner grants for seniors, property assessment and property tax deferment. Whether individuals own or rent their home, they or their landlord may be eligible to receive assistance to make their home more accessible--an important consideration for many seniors who want to age in place.

Finding affordable housing is a major issue for many seniors living on fixed incomes. The British Columbia government provides rent subsidies to seniors living in private rental housing and subsidizes rents in affordable housing units built in partnership with non-profit housing providers and other levels of government. This section provides more information about these programs in this section.



SENIOR HOMEOWNERS

Home Owner Grant for Seniors

The home owner grant reduces the amount of property taxes a person pays each year on their principal residence. A senior aged 65 or older and meets certain requirements, may be eligible for the additional grant of \$275 on top of the regular grant of \$570. The total grant amount for seniors aged 65 or older is \$845 in the Capital Regional District, Metro Vancouver Regional District and the Fraser Valley. For all other areas of the province the total grant amount for seniors aged 65 or older is \$1045.

A homeowner must pay at least \$100 in property taxes before claiming the home owner grant to help fund services such as road maintenance and police protection.

For information about the home owner grant including who qualifies and how to apply, visit:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca
(enter “home owner grant for seniors” in Search).

For any questions about the home owner grant, contact your municipality or the province if your property is in a rural area.

Website: www.civicinfo.bc.ca/directories

Or rural area, contact the Surveyor of Taxes:

Phone (toll-free): 1 888-355-2700

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-0555

Email: ruraltax@gov.bc.ca

Low Income Grant Supplement for Seniors

The low-income grant supplement allows low-income seniors to supplement their home owner grant if it's been reduced or eliminated because of the high assessed value of their principle residence. Applicants must apply for the home owner grant and the low-income grant supplement separately.

Most low-income seniors who qualify and apply for the supplement receive a cheque for \$845 (\$1045 in a northern and rural area). However, the amount of the supplement depends on an individual's income and the assessed value of their home.

For information about the low-income grant supplement, including who qualifies and how to apply, visit:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca
(enter “home owner grant for seniors” in Search).



Or contact Home Owner Grant Administration at the Ministry of Finance for questions about the low-income grant supplement, at:

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 355-2700

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-0555

Email: hogadmin@gov.bc.ca

Property Assessment

In January of each year, BC Assessment sends all property owners a Property Assessment Notice showing the fair market value of the property as of July 1 of the previous year. This market value is used, in part, by taxing authorities to calculate your property taxes. Individuals who have questions or concerns regarding the information on their assessment notice, may contact their local BC Assessment office by January 31 at the phone number or address written on the front of their assessment notice.

Website: www.bcassessment.ca

Property Tax Deferment

The tax deferment program is a low interest loan program that allows a home owner to defer paying all or part of their property taxes on their principal residence if they are 55 or older, a surviving spouse of any age, or a person with a disability.

If the application is approved, the Province pays the home owners municipal or provincial property taxes directly to the taxing authority on their behalf. The deferred taxes, with interest and an administration fee (if applicable), must be repaid to the Province, either:

- Before the property can be transferred to a new owner other than to a surviving spouse; or
- Upon the home owner's death, with repayment through their estate.

For more information on the property tax deferment program, including the eligibility criteria and how to apply, visit:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "property tax deferment" in Search).

Contact the office where you pay your property taxes or the Tax Deferment Office for further information:

Tax Deferment Office – Ministry of Finance

PO Box 9475 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9W6

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 355-2700

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387 0555



Email: taxdeferment@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “property tax deferment” in Search).

HOME ADAPTATIONS

Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

The Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities is a refundable personal income tax credit to assist with the cost of permanent home modifications that improve accessibility or help a senior be more functional or mobile at home.

The maximum credit is \$1,000 and is annually calculated as 10 per cent of eligible expenses. The credit can be claimed by seniors, whether they own their home or rent, and by individuals who share a home with a senior relative.

Seniors or family members living with a senior can claim the tax credit on their annual personal income tax return, for expenses incurred after April 2012. The credit is a refundable tax credit, which means if the credit is higher than the taxes owed, the person will receive the difference as a refund. For more information, contact the BC Income Taxation Branch, at the Ministry of Finance.

PO Box 9444 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9W8

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 387-3332

Email: ITBTaxQuestions@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “seniors home renovations” in Search)

Home Adaptations for Independence (HAFI) Program

The Home Adaptations for Independence (HAFI) program is a grant program for people with diminished physical abilities. It helps low-income households pay for modifications to their home for accessibility. Many past recipients were older adults, but the funding is available to help people of any age and families with children. If eligible, a person could receive up to \$20,000 in financial assistance.

For full details about the program, including eligibility requirements and how to apply, visit BC Housing’s website or contact BC Housing using the contact information below.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 257-7756



Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Website: www.bchousing.org/HAFI

HOUSING OPTIONS FOR SENIORS

Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) Program

The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program provides monthly cash payments to subsidize rents for eligible B.C. residents who are age 60 or over and who pay rent for their homes.

Eligibility criteria for SAFER include:

- Applicant is 60 years of age or older;
- Applicant has lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months immediately preceding their application;
- Applicant and their spouse (with whom they are living) meet the citizenship requirements; and
- Applicant pays more than 30 per cent of their gross (before tax) monthly household income towards the rent for their home, including the cost of pad rental for a manufactured home (trailer) that the applicant owns and occupies.

Applicants will **not** be eligible if any of following is true:

- Applicant is under the age 60;
- Applicant lives in subsidized housing or a residential care facility funded by the Ministry of Health;
- Applicant lives in co-operative housing and are a shareholder;
- Applicant or their family receive income assistance through the B.C. *Employment and Assistance Act* or the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* (excluding Medical Services Only);
- Applicant or their spouse (if applicable) are in Canada under a private sponsorship agreement that is still in force;
- Applicant does not live in British Columbia;
- Applicant has not lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months immediately preceding their application;
- Applicant does not meet the citizenship requirements; or
- Applicant's gross monthly household income exceeds the maximum allowable income. Maximum income varies based on household size and location in the province.
- For full details about the program, including eligibility requirements and how to apply, please visit BC Housing's website or contact



BC Housing between the hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., on working days.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 257-7756

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Website: www.bchousing.org (enter “SAFER” in search)

Affordable Housing for Seniors

Low-income seniors able to live independently without any support services, or with the assistance of home care, may apply to live in affordable housing developments.

There are three types of affordable housing developments in B.C.:

- Public housing – managed by BC Housing;
- Non-profit housing – managed by non-profit societies; and
- Co-op housing – managed by residents.

Many affordable housing developments are listed on the Housing Registry, a centralized listing and application service maintained by BC Housing. The Housing Registry includes public housing and some non-profit and co-op housing providers. Other non-profit and co-op housing providers maintain their own registries.

For full details about subsidized housing options available in B.C. and how to apply, please visit BC Housing’s website or contact BC Housing between the hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., on working days.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 257-7756

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Website: www.bchousing.org
(enter “housing assistance” in search)

Seniors’ Supportive Housing

The Seniors’ Supportive Housing program provides housing and support services to older adults, seniors and people with disabilities. The program assists low-income British Columbians who are 55 years of age or older, and people of any age who have a disability or diminished ability.

To determine eligibility, applicants may be asked:

1. If they are becoming less independent in your current living situation?
2. If they could regain their independence if they were living in a modified home with services?
3. Could they respond appropriately in an emergency, including following instructions?



4. Could they still manage their own personal care, including eating, grooming and bathing?

For more information about the program and how to apply, please visit BC Housing's website or contact BC Housing between the hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., on working days.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 257-7756

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Website: www.bchousing.org (enter "subsidized housing" in search)

Subsidized Assisted Living

The Independent Living BC (ILBC) program is a subsidized, assisted-living program that provides housing with support services to seniors and people with disabilities. This program's assisted living units provide a middle option between home care and long-term care home, so individuals can continue to live independently.

Applicants must speak with a health care worker at a health authority to receive a referral. The health care worker will review an applicant's needs, complete an assessment and put eligible applicants on a waiting list for a unit. For more information about the program, please visit BC Housing's website.

Website: www.bchousing.org

(enter "independent living BC program" in search)

Seniors Services Society

This non-profit organization provides information on all types of housing options and services for seniors living in British Columbia. Specialized programs and outreach are available for seniors who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Seniors Support Bank of BC can offer funding to seniors aged 60 and older who live in Metro Vancouver and are at risk for eviction due to temporary shortage of funds, or financial crisis. The society also provides independent living programs (such as Meals on Wheels, Better at Home and social programs) for seniors in New Westminster. For more information, use the contacts provided below.

Seniors Services Society

750 Carnarvon St.

New Westminster BC V3M 1E7

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 520-6621

Email: info@seniorsservicessociety.ca

Website: www.seniorsservicessociety.ca



LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

Know Your Rights And Responsibilities

Residential Tenancy Branch

The Residential Tenancy Branch provides information to landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities, and options under the *Residential Tenancy Act* and the *Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act*. The branch can provide information to help resolve disputes related to tenancy, such as claims for damages, return of security deposits, rent increases, and eviction notices. Where disputes cannot be resolved by the landlord and tenant, either party can apply for dispute resolution directly at a branch office, at Service BC or online. The Residential Tenancy Branch also provides information and dispute resolution services for manufactured home park tenancies.

Information about landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities is available on their website. To speak to an information officer or listen to 24-hour recorded information on renting in B.C., call the numbers listed below.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 665-8779

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-1020

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-1602

Email: HSRTO@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “residential tenancies” in search)



NOTES

For information about government programs and services, visit:
www.SeniorsBC.ca

For information about healthy aging and to find services in
your community, visit:
www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1

Getting Around





GETTING AROUND

Transportation is Crucial to Help Seniors Stay Active

This section provides information about a variety of transportation programs and services available to seniors. There are discounts for transportation services like transit fares and passage on BC Ferries. The BC Bus Pass program is offered in over 60 B.C. communities and benefits more than 65,000 people each year.

In the case where an individual requires someone to drive for them, many local community organizations provide volunteer driving services, or can connect individuals with commercial driving services. Seniors can also access specialized services like HandyDART and the Taxi Saver program.

Seniors are eligible for reduced rates on automobile insurance. Information about driver's licenses for seniors and license plates for veterans can be found in this section. For road report and travel weather updates, the DriveBC website provides up-to-the-minute information about conditions, travel hazards and road closures.

With a record one-in-seven Canadians now aged 65 or older, there may be more seniors on the road now than ever before. Many seniors wonder how long they should continue to drive. This section provides driver medical fitness and an online toolkit to help senior drivers assess and improve their driving skills.

DRIVING ALTERNATIVES

Transit Seniors' Fare Discounts

Seniors in British Columbia (age 65 or over) are eligible for discounted travel on most public transit systems. For detailed information, please contact the following agencies:

Metro Vancouver Region

TransLink

Phone: 604 953-3333

Website: www.new.translink.ca

Greater Victoria Region

BC Transit

Phone: 250 382-6161

Website: www.bctransit.com/victoria



Elsewhere in British Columbia

Visit the BC Transit website and search for your local transit system.

Website: www.bctransit.com

Bus Pass Program

The BC Bus Pass program provides affordable transportation to low-income seniors and persons with disabilities. Eligible people can buy a yearly pass at a reduced cost. The bus pass allows travel without additional cost on BC Transit and TransLink, including SkyTrain and SeaBus. The bus pass is not valid on HandyDART or the West Coast Express.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the BC Bus Pass program, the applicant must meet one of the following criteria:

- Receiving federal Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), the Federal Allowance (Old Age Security), federal spousal allowance or the Allowance for the Survivor;
- 18 years of age or older and receiving persons with disability assistance from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction;
- 60 years of age or older and receiving income assistance from the Province of British Columbia;
- 65 years of age or older and would qualify for GIS, but does not meet the Canadian 10-year residency requirement;
- 18 years of age or older, living on a First Nations reserve and receiving disability assistance from the band office; or
- 60 years of age or older and living on a First Nations reserve and receiving assistance from the band office.

People with the persons with disability designation who live on reserve and receive assistance from their band should contact their band office for information.

- Your name
- Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Phone number
- Date of birth
- Spoken language if other than English

**BC Bus Pass Program**

Mailing Address:

PO Box 9985 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9R6

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 866-0800; then follow the prompts

Email: SDSIBUSPA@gov.bc.ca

If your name or address changes, please contact the program to ensure you receive next year's application and pass.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "Bus Pass Program" in Search)

Community Travel Training Program: BC Transit

The Community Travel Training program is a free service that provides training to seniors and people with disabilities who wish to use the regular transit service.

Travel trainers have in-depth knowledge of the transit system and are familiar with the issues facing seniors and persons with disabilities. They have experience working with a range of assistive devices, mobility aids and special needs, and will work with seniors and their caregiver or family member, and provide follow-up, to provide assurance when using the transit system.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 384-7723

Website: www.bctransit.com

Accessible Transit

TransLink offers a variety of services to ensure people with disabilities, seniors and new immigrants are comfortable and confident when using public transit in Metro Vancouver.

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 953-3680

Website: www.translink.ca/en/Rider-Guide/Accessible-Transit.aspx

HandyDART Service

HandyDART is a door-to-door, shared ride service for passengers with physical or cognitive disabilities who are unable to use conventional public transit without assistance.

BC Transit: To find HandyDART information on the BC Transit website, search for your community, or find it on the map, then click "Rider Info."

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 727-7811 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
Monday to Friday)



Phone (Other communities) in BC: 250 385-2551

(8 a.m. to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday)

Website: www.bctransit.com/victoria/riderinfo/handydart

TransLink: In Metro Vancouver, please contact your local community resources centre, call TransLink at the number below, or visit the TransLink website.

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 575-6600

(8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday)

Website: www.translink.ca/en/Rider-Guide/Accessible-Transit/HandyDART.aspx

HANDYCARD PROGRAM (TRANSLINK)

Concession Fares and Free Travel for an Attendant

HandyCard allows travel at Concession fare prices on the bus, SkyTrain, SeaBus, and West Coast Express, and an attendant to travel with you for free.

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 953-3333

(8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday and
8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday)

Taxi Saver Program

BC Transit: When HandyDART cannot accommodate your travel needs, you can use the Taxi Saver vouchers for one-time trips. The Taxi Saver vouchers are available to permanently registered HandyDART riders only. They provide a 50 per cent subsidy towards the cost of taxi rides. You will need to have a HandyPASS to use this program.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 995-5618

Email: taxi_saver@bctransit.com

TransLink (Metro Vancouver only)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 778 452-2860

Outside of Greater Victoria or Metro Vancouver, contact your local transit operator.

Website: www.bctransit.com



Taxi Bill of Rights

The Taxi Bill of Rights is a statement of principles, outlining expectations of both taxi drivers and passengers. The purpose of the Taxi Bill of Rights is to improve taxi service in Metro Vancouver. Taxi passengers have the right to:

- Be picked up and transported to their stated destination by any available on-duty taxi driver;
- Pay the posted rate by cash, accepted credit card, or Taxi Saver voucher;
- A courteous driver who provides assistance, if requested;
- Travel with an assistance dog or portable mobility aid;
- A taxi that is clean, smoke free and in good repair;
- Direct the route, or expect the most economical route;
- A quiet atmosphere, upon request; and
- A detailed receipt, when requested.

Further information regarding these rights can be found on the following website: www.taxirights.gov.bc.ca

FERRY TRAVEL FARES

BC Ferries

B.C. seniors age 65+ travel for free on most BC Ferries routes sailing Monday to Thursday (including Remembrance Day on November 11), except on holidays. This applies to passenger fares only.

Note: The free fare is not applicable on the northern routes where seniors receive one-third off the passenger fare for these routes.

Customer information and reservations are available by phone.

Phone (North America, toll-free): 1 888 BC FERRY
(1 888 223-3779)

Phone (cell phone on Rogers or TELUS Mobility Networks):
*BCF (*223)

Phone (outside North America): 1 800 223-3779

For more information, call BC Ferries or visit the BC Ferries website:

Website: www.bcferrys.com



Inland Ferries

Passage on inland ferries operated under contract with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is available to the public free of charge. This includes both passengers and vehicles. Route and schedule information, plus telephone numbers for individual routes, are available online.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “Inland Ferries” in Search)

Information is also available from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure’s Marine Branch, or through DriveBC.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 778 974-5387

Website: www.drivebc.ca



SENIOR DRIVERS

Seniors' Vehicle Insurance Savings

Effective September 1, 2019, seniors who are 65 or older, will receive basic insurance savings for up to 40 years of driving experience. Basic insurance covers owned or leased vehicles which are used six days in a calendar month for commuting, business or delivery.

Individuals who been approved for a fuel tax refund under the B.C. government Fuel Tax Refund Program for Persons with Disabilities may also qualify for an additional 25 per cent discount on their Basic Autoplan insurance. Please see your Autoplan broker for details.

For more information about these discounts, contact ICBC.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-3051

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 661-2800

Website: www.icbc.com

(enter "Discounts and savings" in Search)

Driver's Licenses

For seniors over the age of 65, fees for some services offered by ICBC driver licensing offices are reduced or free of charge.

Reduced fees apply to:

- Driver's license renewals
- Original British Columbia identification card

Free services include:

- Issuing a British Columbia identification card to individuals giving up driving and surrendering their driver's license; and
- Driver's road test examinations initiated by RoadSafetyBC.
- For more information, contact ICBC.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 950-1498

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 978-8300

Website: www.icbc.com (enter "driver licensing" in Search)



Senior Drivers' Toolkit

The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) Senior Drivers' Toolkit is an online resource portal designed to help older drivers assess their own driving skills, learn about changing abilities, and if needed, modify and improve their driving. Developed by the CAA with a team of medical and health experts, this online resource aims to help older drivers and their loved ones:

- Promote greater self-assessment and informed decision-making;
- Increase awareness of the physical changes related to aging and potential risks they may create for older drivers themselves, their passengers and other road users;
- Provide realistic solutions, options and alternatives to driving; and
- Foster a greater understanding of the direct (and indirect) benefits that can result from making responsible choices and decisions regarding their mobility needs.

Website: www.caa.ca/seniors/

Driver's Medical Examination Reports and Enhanced Road Assessments

Through British Columbia's Driver Medical Fitness program, drivers are assessed to determine that they are physically, cognitively and medically fit to drive:

- When they apply for a British Columbia driver's license;
- At regular intervals if they hold a commercial class driver's license;
- When a reliable report is received from a medical professional, police officer, concerned family member or other individual (doctors, registered psychologists and optometrists have a reporting obligation under the Motor Vehicle Act); and
- At regular intervals beginning at age 80, as medical conditions affecting driving are more common as people age.

Drivers meeting any of the criteria listed above will receive a Driver's Medical Examination Report (DMER) form by mail. The form must be completed by a doctor or nurse practitioner according to the detailed instructions on the back and sent to RoadSafety BC for review. Individuals will be notified in writing of changes to the status of their driver's license or if more information or assessment is needed to determine their fitness to drive.

Note that the requirement to complete the DMER does not always require an Enhanced Road Assessment (ERA); only a small percentage of drivers who complete a DMER are required to complete an ERA.



For more information or general inquiries about driver fitness and medical requirements, contact RoadSafetyBC.

Phone (toll-free): 1-855-387-7747

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-7747

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “driver medical fitness” in Search)

For more information on driver licensing and driver testing, contact ICBC.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 950-1498

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 978-8300

Website: www.icbc.com

(enter “driver licensing and testing” in Search)

License Plates for Veterans

Veteran specialty license plates are available to veterans who served:

- During wartime;
- In a post-war capacity, peace-keeping mission; or
- During a NATO or UN operation under command of the Canadian Armed Forces, including members of the RCMP, municipal police or Correctional Services of Canada.

To apply for a veteran specialty license plate, print the application form from ICBC’s website or pick up a copy from an Autoplan broker.

Website: www.icbc.com (enter “veteran plates” in Search)

For more information on the application process or eligibility requirements, please contact one of the following organizations:

British Columbia Veterans Commemorative Association

Website: www.bcveterans.org

Royal Canadian Legion/BC Yukon Command

Website: www.legionbcyukon.ca

Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association

Website: www.cpva.ca

**DriveBC.ca**

The DriveBC website is updated with the most current information on highway conditions for major highways in British Columbia. Visit the DriveBC website or call the toll-free number below to access weather information, travel advisories, road closures, webcams, U.S. – B.C. border traffic wait times, inland ferry schedules, BC Ferries schedules, TransLink, BC Transit, and other important links and travel information.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 550-4997

Website: www.drivebc.ca



NOTES

For information about government programs and services, visit:
www.SeniorsBC.ca

For information about healthy aging and to find services in
your community, visit:
www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1

Your Finances





FINANCES

Support for Seniors' Financial Needs

Seniors across Canada are living longer and are more active, more technology- literate and more financially secure than ever before. While many seniors fare well, others experience financial challenges and may need support.

Good financial planning can help maintain quality of life as one gets older. There are programs available to help low-income seniors supplement their income. These include the federal Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement programs, and the B.C. Senior's Supplement.

A senior may also be eligible for a variety of provincial and federal tax credits to reduce the amount of tax they pay. This section provides information about income security programs and tax credits.

The section on *Your Safety and Security* provides information about incapacity planning and how to appoint someone to make legal and financial decisions in case you're ever unable to make these decisions on your own, as well as consumer protection and investor education about scams and fraud.



FUNDING YOUR RETIREMENT

Old Age Security Pension

The Old Age Security (OAS) pension is a federally-funded base monthly pension paid to Canadian citizens and legal residents of Canada who have reached the age of 65 and meet the residency requirements.

Individuals who have lived or worked in another country that has a social security agreement with Canada, under this agreement you may be eligible for OAS benefits from Canada or from the other country.

OAS benefit rates are reviewed in January, April, July and October to reflect increases in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index. A person needs to apply at least six months before their 65th birthday or the date of their eligibility to receive OAS benefits if they did not receive a proactive enrolment letter. As of July 2013, a person can defer receiving an OAS pension for up to 60 months after the date they become eligible, in exchange for a higher monthly amount. For more information about the OAS and the various changes to the program, contact Service Canada, or visit their website.

Phone (Canada & USA, English, toll-free): 1 800 277-9914

Phone (Canada & USA, French, toll-free): 1 800 277-9915

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, toll-free): 1 800 255-4786

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “Old Age Security” in search)

Guaranteed Income Supplement

The Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) provides additional money, on top of the Old Age Security pension, to eligible low-income seniors living in Canada. Individuals must apply to receive the GIS, which is based on the annual income, or the combined income of a spouse or common-law partner that is reported in their annual income tax return.

GIS benefits are renewed automatically each year, if individuals remain eligible and file their annual income tax return on time. If a person does not file their income tax return on time, or if further information is needed, applicants will receive a renewal form in the mail. For more information about the GIS, contact Service Canada, or visit their website.

Phone (Canada & USA, English, toll-free): 1 800 277-9914

Phone (Canada & USA, French, toll-free): 1 800 277-9915

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, toll-free): 1 800 255-4786

Website: www.canada.ca/

(enter “Guaranteed Income Supplement” in search)



Income Assistance for Seniors Not Receiving Old Age Security Pension

Seniors who are 65 or over and not eligible for the Old Age Security pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, may be eligible for income assistance from the BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA) program. Eligibility is based on annual income, assets and other factors. For more information, please contact:

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 866-0800; press 2

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “B.C. Income Assistance for Seniors not receiving OAS” in Search)

Allowance/Allowance for the Survivor

Seniors who are a spouse or common-law partner of someone receiving both Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, may qualify for a benefit called the Allowance. The Allowance provides extra money to eligible low-income individuals aged 60 to 64. The benefit amount is based on the combined incomes of an individual and their spouse or common-law partner.

In the case where the spouse or common-law partner of a low-income senior, aged 60 to 64 years old, dies (or has died), the survivor may receive a benefit called the Allowance for the Survivor until they reach age 65. Please consult the Service Canada website for all the eligibility criteria.

One must apply to receive the Allowance or the Allowance for the Survivor. The benefits will be renewed automatically each year, if individuals remain eligible and files their annual income tax return on time.

If you do not file your return on time, or if further information is needed, you will receive a renewal form in the mail. As your annual income may change from year to year, you must provide your income each year either by completing an application form or by filing your income tax return.

For more information about the Allowance or about the Allowance for the Survivor, contact Service Canada, or visit their website.

Phone (Canada & USA, English, toll-free): 1 800 277-9914

Phone (Canada & USA, French, toll-free): 1 800 277-9915

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, toll-free): 1 800 255-4786

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “allowance for people aged 60-64” in search)

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “allowance for the survivor” in search)



Canada Pension Plan

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) provides a retirement pension and other benefits for those who have contributed to the plan through paid employment in Canada. The amount of CPP benefit is determined by the contributions you made during the time you were employed. The CPP is adjusted for inflation every January to keep up with increases in the cost of living. Individuals must apply to receive CPP benefits – retirement benefits do not begin automatically except for those who were in receipt of CPP disability benefits when they turned 65. Applications for CPP must be submitted at least six months before applicants want their CPP pension to begin.

If an individual applies for CPP retirement benefits to begin early (age 60-64), they will receive a reduced pension. If they apply after age 65 and as late as age 70, they will receive an increased pension. If they apply to have their pension begin at age 65, they will receive your full pension amount with no increase or reduction.

People who have lived or worked in another country that has a social security agreement with Canada, or if an individual is the surviving spouse or common-law partner of someone who has lived or worked in another country that has a social security agreement with Canada, they may be eligible for benefits from Canada or from the other country.

For individuals who have contributed to the CPP for the necessary number of years, the CPP also offers a one-time lump-sum death benefit to their estate upon death. Furthermore, an individual's spouse or common-law partner may be eligible to receive a monthly survivor pension. Dependent children up to the age of 25 may also be eligible for benefits (those between 18 and 25 must be attending school full-time).

Starting in 2019, the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) will be gradually enhanced. This means people will receive higher benefits in exchange for making higher contributions. The CPP enhancement will only affect individuals who are working and making contributions to the CPP as of 2019.

For more information about the CPP, contact Service Canada.

Phone (Canada & USA, English, toll-free): 1 800 277-9914

Phone (Canada & USA, French, toll-free): 1 800 277-9915

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, toll-free): 1 800 255-4786

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter "Canada Pension Plan" in search)

For more information, see Employed Seniors Receiving CPP under *Working Seniors* in this section of this guide.



Veterans Affairs Canada

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) provides a variety of services and benefits for eligible veterans, their families and caregivers, both at home and in community facilities. These include disability benefits, financial assistance for veterans and their families, health care, respite care, palliative care, special equipment, and support for home adaptations for veterans with special needs. VAC can also help bring together services offered by the community and the Province to meet the needs of veterans, and their families and caregivers. For more information, call Veterans Affairs Canada or visit their website.

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 522-2122

Website: www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/services

Senior's Supplement

The Senior's Supplement is a monthly payment to low-income seniors who are receiving federal Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement or federal Allowances. If the income level of an eligible senior falls below a level guaranteed by the Province, the supplement is provided to make up the difference. It is paid automatically to those who are eligible – seniors do not need to apply.

For more information, contact the Senior's Supplement call centre.

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 866-0800; press 2

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "Senior's Supplement Program" in Search)

Registered Retirement Savings Plans

A Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) is a retirement savings plan that provides immediate tax benefits at a time when an individual's income is generally higher and defers taxes to later years when their income is generally lower.

An RRSP is a retirement savings plan where eligible contributions can be deducted on your tax return to reduce your tax payable. Individuals have until December 31 of the year in which they turn 71 to contribute to their RRSP.

For more information about RRSPs, refer to your income tax guide or visit the CRA website:

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter "registered retirement savings plans" in Search)



WORKING SENIORS

Employment Insurance Benefits

Seniors who wish to continue working after age 65 are eligible for the same Employment Insurance (EI) benefits as other workers in Canada. You must meet the qualifying and entitlement conditions.

Individuals may receive a pension income and EI benefits at the same time. If someone returns to work and accumulates enough insurable hours to meet the entitlement conditions to set up a claim, their pension income will not be deducted from their EI benefits. Application for Employment Insurance benefits can be made online at:

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “Apply Employment Insurance benefits” in Search)

For more information, contact Service Canada:

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 206-7218

If you are self-employed, and registered for access to the EI program, you may be able to apply for EI special benefits. For more information about EI for self-employed Canadians, visit the Service Canada website.

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “Apply EI self-employed” in Search)

EI provides Compassionate Care Benefits to persons who must be away from work temporarily to provide care or support to a family member who is gravely ill with a significant risk of death. Visit the Service Canada website for more information, including who is eligible and how to apply.

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “caregiving benefits and leave” in Search)

EI provides Sickness Benefits to individuals who are unable to work because of sickness, injury, or quarantine. Visit the Service Canada website for more information, including who is eligible and how to apply.

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “EI sickness benefits” in Search)



Employed Seniors Receiving CPP Pensions and Benefits

Individuals who continue to work while receiving the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) retirement pension, and are under age 70, can continue to participate in the CPP. CPP contributions will go toward post-retirement benefits (PRB), which will increase an individual's retirement income. Individuals are eligible if they are:

- 60 to 70 years of age
- Working and contributing to the CPP
- Receiving a retirement pension from the CPP or the Quebec Pension Plan (QPP).
- To get this benefit, individuals and their employer must make CPP contributions. Individuals who are self-employed must pay both the employee and the employer portions of the CPP contributions.

CPP contributions are mandatory for working CPP retirement pension recipients under age 65. Starting at age 65, individuals can choose not to contribute to the CPP.

For more information on how to make this election, or on CPP contributions, refer to the income tax guide, call the Canada Revenue Agency, or visit the website below.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 959-8281

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter "CPP post-retirement benefit" in Search)

TAX CREDITS

The following information describes tax credits that may be available to individuals when they prepare and submit their annual income tax and benefit return.

Age Amount

In addition to the basic personal amount, individuals who turned 65 during the year (or are older), may be entitled to claim the age amount, which allows eligible seniors a non-refundable tax credit to reduce their income tax payable. The amount individuals can claim is based on their net income.

Pension Income Amount

Individuals receiving pension income, superannuation or annuity payments, may be able to claim the pension income amount. An individual's qualifying pension income amount will be used in determining the total non-refundable tax credits used to reduce their federal income tax.



Amounts Transferred from Spouse

Individuals may be able to transfer, to their spouse, benefit amounts that they qualify for, but do not need to use to reduce their federal income tax to zero. For example, a spouse may be able to transfer the age amount, pension income amount or the disability amount.

Pension Income Splitting

Individuals who meet the eligibility requirements may also want to explore the idea of splitting their eligible pension income with their spouse or common-law partner. Using income splitting, individuals may be able to transfer up to half of their pension income to their spouse or common-law partner for income tax purposes.

For more information about pension income splitting, please refer to your income tax guide, call the Canada Revenue Agency or visit canda.ca.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 959-8281

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “pension splitting” in Search)

Other Amounts

Individuals may also be able to claim an amount for medical expenses and expenses for an attendant or full-time care in a nursing home.

For more information, please refer to your income tax guide, call the Canada Revenue Agency or visit their website.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 959-8281

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “Medical expense tax credit” in Search)

Disability Tax Credit

Individuals with a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions, may be eligible to claim the disability tax credit. To determine eligibility, complete Form T2201, Disability Tax Credit Certificate and have it certified by a qualified practitioner. Once complete, send the certified original form to your tax centre.

For more information, refer to your income tax guide, call the Canada Revenue Agency or visit canada.ca.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 959-8281

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “disability tax credit” in Search)



Goods and services tax (GST) Credit

The GST credit is a tax-free quarterly payment that helps individuals and families with low and modest incomes to help offset all or part of the GST that they pay.

To receive GST credit payments, individuals must file their income tax return each year, even if they did not receive any income during the year. The Canada Revenue Agency uses the information from income tax and benefits returns to calculate credit payments and will advise those who are eligible to receive the credit.

If you have a spouse or common-law partner, only one of you can receive the credit. The credit will be paid to the person whose tax return is assessed first, and the amount will be the same regardless of who (in the couple) receives it.

For more information, refer to your income tax guide, call Canada Revenue Agency, or visit their website.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 387-1193

Website: www.canada.ca
(enter “GST credit” in Search)

Sales Tax Credit

Persons are eligible to claim the sales tax credit for a tax year if they were a resident of B.C. on December 31 of the tax year and any of the following applied to them:

- Are 19 years of age or older;
- Have a spouse or common-law partner; or
- Are a parent.

Persons can claim up to \$75 for themselves and \$75 for your cohabiting spouse or common-law partner. If they are single, the credit is reduced by two per cent of their net income over \$15,000. If they have a cohabiting spouse or common-law partner, the credit is reduced by two per cent of their family net income over \$18,000.

Individuals can claim the sales tax credit when they file their T1 income tax return, by using the British Columbia Credits form (BC479). The credit is refundable to the extent it exceeds and individual's income tax payable. Access the British Columbia Credits form on the following website:

Website: www.canada.ca
(enter “BC479” in search)



British Columbia climate action tax credit

The BC climate action tax credit is designed to help offset the costs of the provincial carbon tax for lower income British Columbia residents. The tax credit is combined with the quarterly federal GST/HST credit.

The maximum annual payment amount for the period July 2019 to June 2020 is \$154.50 for yourself, \$154.50 for your spouse or common-law partner, and \$45.50 per child (\$154.50 for the first child in a single parent family).

For single individuals with no children, the maximum credit is reduced by two per cent of their net income over \$34,876. For families, the maximum credit is reduced by two per cent of their adjusted family net income over \$40,689. The net income thresholds are indexed annually to provincial inflation.

For more information:

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 387-3332, press 2

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-3332, press 2

Email: ITBTaxQuestions@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “climate action tax” in Search)

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “BC climate action tax credit” in Search)

If You Move

Inform the Canada Revenue Agency immediately of any change of address, even if you use direct deposit and your bank account does not change. This will ensure that payments are not disrupted or stopped.

To change your address, go to:

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “How to change your address” in Search)

Individual Income Tax and Trust Enquiries – Canada Revenue Agency

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 959-8281

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “telephone numbers – CRA” in Search)



Virtual Tax Clinic Finder

This website provides in-depth information about taxes. The site also provides contact information for individuals who deliver free tax services to older adults.

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “free tax clinics” in Search)

POWER OF ATTORNEY

A power of attorney is a legal document that appoints another person(s), called an “attorney,” to deal with one’s business and property and to make financial and legal decisions on one’s behalf. It can be broad in scope or can be limited to specific matters. A “regular” (non-enduring) power of attorney ends if an individual becomes mentally incapable. If an individual wants the power of attorney to continue, even if they become mentally incapable of making financial decisions, they can choose to make an enduring power of attorney. For more information on planning in advance of incapacity, including enduring powers of attorney, please see the *Your Safety and Security* section of this guide. For further information and forms, visit the Public Guardian and Trustee website.

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca

(enter “Personal Planning” in Search)

Safety and Security





SAFETY AND SECURITY

Protection and Support When You Need it

With a rapidly growing seniors' population, British Columbia is committed to providing the information and services necessary to support the safety and security of older adults in the province.

This section of the guide provides information about the growing problem of elder abuse and neglect. Concerns that someone is abusing or neglecting a senior, and it is an emergency, can be reported to the police (dial 9-1-1 or your local emergency number). If it is not an emergency, refer to the contact information in this section under the heading *Preventing Elder Abuse and Neglect*.

Also available in this section is information about the legal options and resources that are available to assist capable adults to make plans in the event of future incapacity. This includes information on how to appoint someone to make legal and financial, or health and personal care decisions in case one becomes unable to make these decisions on their own. An advance care plan includes discussing and writing down personal beliefs, values, and wishes for health care. This section provides resources, such as *My Voice – Expressing My Wishes for Future Health Care Treatment*, which will help individuals make their own advance care plan to help ensure that any care is given according to their wishes.

Scams and fraud are also of increasing concern for seniors. This section provides information on organizations that can help seniors protect themselves from unfair business practices and investment fraud. As well, there is information on help and services available for victims of crime, and information and resources to help seniors and their families get prepared and stay safe in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.



PREVENTING ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Abuse and neglect in later life can affect an adult's health, independence and safety. Older adults may experience different kinds of harm, such as physical, emotional, or financial abuse or neglect, by people they rely on or trust.

Shoving, hitting, threatening, taking money or property, failing to provide adequate care, and withholding medication or giving it improperly, are all examples of abuse and neglect. Many of these are criminal offences.

Abuse of older adults can occur at home, in the community or in institutional settings. Those who abuse are most often family members, such as a person's spouse or children, but they may also be friends and caregivers.

Call 9-1-1- with concerns that a senior is being abused, taken advantage of or neglected, and is in immediate danger. In cases where there is no imminent danger, or for information about elder abuse and neglect, contact the Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL), or VictimLink BC. If the senior is unable to seek help on their own, concerns can be reported to the designated agencies in your health authority, to Providence Health Care, or, for individuals with a developmental disability, Community Living BC. If the mistreatment involves financial abuse or abuse by a substitute decision maker (e.g., under a power of attorney), the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia may be able to assist. Contact information for these organizations can be found below or in the *Directory* at the back of this guide.

Many of the phone numbers listed below offer TTY and language interpretation services. Please see the *Directory* at the back of this guide for details.

Seniors First BC Society

Seniors First BC Society (the "Society") is a non-profit organization delivering programs and services to prevent elder abuse.

Victim Services Program

This program provides information, support and referrals to people age 50+ who are victims of abuse, including family and sexual violence.

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres provide information on Elder Abuse awareness and prevention, including what local Friendship Centres are doing to raise awareness for Elder abuse and uplift Elders in your community.

Website: www.bcaafc.com
(enter "Elder Abuse" in Search)



LEGAL PROGRAMS

Elder Law Clinic (ELC)

Through this program the Society provides legal services to low income seniors and people who care about them, who cannot afford to hire a lawyer. The Society also provides legal consultations over the telephone for seniors and people who care about them, throughout the province.

Legal Advocacy Program (LAP)

Through this program the Society assists seniors to pursue their rights related to pensions, residential tenancy issues and debt. In the LAP the Society also assists seniors to assert their rights and find their way through governmental institutions.

Education and Outreach Program

This program offers free workshops on elder abuse awareness, financial literacy, bullying and residential tenancy for older adults and community groups.

Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL)

SAIL is a safe place for older adults, and those who care about them, to talk to someone about situations where they feel they are being abused or mistreated, or to receive information about elder abuse prevention.

For further information above the programs above, contact Seniors Abuse & Information Line.

Seniors Abuse & Information Line, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily (excluding holidays):

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 437-1940

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 437-1940

Phone (TTY): 1 855 306-1443, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,

Monday to Friday

Language interpretation available 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,

Monday to Friday

Email: info@seniorsfirstbc.ca

Website: www.seniorsfirstbc.ca



VictimLinkBC

VictimLink BC is a toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone service available across B.C. and the Yukon. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence, including victims of human trafficking exploited for labour or sexual services. VictimLinkBC provides service in more than 110 languages, including 17 North American Aboriginal languages.

Phone (toll-free in B.C. and Yukon): 1 800 563-0808
(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Victim Link BC” in Search)

Designated Agencies

The five regional health authorities, as well as Providence Health Care and Community Living BC, are designated agencies under the *Adult Guardianship Act*, with a responsibility to investigate reports of suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults. To report abuse, neglect or self-neglect, whether in a health facility or in the community, of an older adult who cannot seek support and assistance on their own, contact one of the designated agencies below:

Fraser Health

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 REACT-08 (1 877 732-2808)

Interior Health

Office for Vulnerable and Incapable Adults: 1 844 870-4754
Email: IHAdultguardianship@interiorhealth.ca

Island Health

Phone (South Island, toll-free): 1 888 533-2273
Phone (Central Island, toll-free): 1 877 734-4101
Phone (North Island, toll-free): 1 866 928-4988

Northern Health

Adult Protection Line Phone (toll-free): 1 844 465-7414
Phone (Prince George): 250 565-7414



Vancouver Coastal Health

ReAct Adult Protection Program Phone
(toll-free): 1 877 REACT-99 (1 877 732-2899)
Website: www.vchreact.ca

Providence Health Care Society

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 REACT-99 (1 877 732-2899)

Community Living BC (for individuals with a developmental disability)

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 660-2522

Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia

If you need to report financial abuse of a vulnerable adult or abuse by a substitute decision-maker (e.g., under a power of attorney or representation agreement), contact the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia.

Phone (Service BC, toll-free): 1 800 663-7867
(ask to be transferred to the Public Guardian and Trustee)
Website: www.trustee.bc.ca

Assisted Living Registry

If you believe someone is being abused or neglected in an assisted living facility, you can contact the Assisted Living Registry.

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9638 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9P1
Phone (toll-free): 1 866 714-3378
Phone (Greater Victoria): 778 974-4887
Email: hlth.assistedlivingregistry@gov.bc.ca
Website: www.gov.bc.ca
(enter “Assisted Living Registry” in Search)



BC Association of Community Response Networks

The BC Association of Community Response Networks builds community capacity to address and prevent adult abuse, neglect and self-neglect in communities across B.C. through the development of Community Response Networks. Each Community Response Network is a diverse group of concerned community members, agencies and service providers who come together to create a coordinated community response to adult abuse, neglect and self-neglect.

Website: www.bccrns.ca

Ministry of Health

For information and resources on elder abuse prevention, recognition and response, visit:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca
(enter “Elder Abuse” in Search)

HealthLink BC

Call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 any time of the day or night for confidential, non-emergency health information and support if you or someone you know is experiencing or concerned about elder abuse. Calls can remain anonymous by request. Translation services are available in over 130 languages.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 7-1-1

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca
(enter “Elder Abuse” in Search)



Office of the Seniors Advocate

The Office of the Seniors Advocate was established in 2014 as an independent office of the provincial government. It was the first office of its kind in Canada.

The advocate is responsible for monitoring seniors' services, promoting awareness of seniors' issues and supports, and working collaboratively to identify solutions and make recommendations to government about system-wide issues facing seniors in key areas: health care, personal care, housing, transportation and income support. The advocate issues regular reports, conducts surveys and travels around the province gathering feedback from seniors, stakeholders and the public. The office is a go-to resource for seniors' information and referral.

Office of the Seniors Advocate
6th Floor – 1405 Douglas Street
Victoria BC V8W 9P4
Phone (toll-free): 1 877 952-3181
Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 952-3181
Email: info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca
Website: www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca

PLANNING IN ADVANCE OF INCAPACITY

Planning for the future is important, especially if something unexpected happens and one becomes incapable of making their health care, personal care or financial decisions. Careful planning can help individuals and their family feel more at ease and manage a difficult time. There are several legal options and resources available in British Columbia to assist capable adults to make plans in the event of future incapacity. Although there is no requirement to visit a lawyer or notary public to use the forms and documents listed below, it is recommended that individuals seek legal and medical advice before completing them. For information about personal planning options, see:

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca
(Enter “financial management and personal decision making” in Search)

My Voice – Expressing My Wishes for Future Health Care Treatment (guide, workbook and video in English and other languages):

Website: www.gov.bc.ca
(enter “Advance Care Planning” in Search)

Speak Up BC is an online interactive workbook that helps individuals



complete an advance care plan that outlines their wishes about health care decisions in the event they are unable to do so.

Website: www.speak-upinbc.ca/get-started/

The HealthLink BC website also has resources on advance care planning.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca

(enter “Advance Care Planning” in Search)

The First Nations Health Authority has additional information on advanced care planning.

Website: www.fnha.ca

(enter “Advanced Care Planning” in Search)

For standard forms published by the Ministry of Attorney General to assist individuals to plan for possible future incapacity, see:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “incapacity planning” in Search)

Enduring Power of Attorney

An enduring power of attorney may appoint another person to make financial and legal decisions on your behalf. One must be mentally capable when making an enduring power of attorney. Unlike a “regular” (non-enduring) power of attorney, which ends if one become mentally incapable, an enduring power of attorney continues in effect if one becomes incapable. An enduring power of attorney can be broad in scope, or very specific.

Representation Agreement

A representation agreement appoints a representative to make decisions for individuals who become incapable of doing so on their own. There are two types of representation agreement – section 7 and section 9 – with different scopes of authority and different capability requirements to make them. A representative may be authorized to make personal and health care decisions, and in some cases, decisions about the routine management of an individual’s financial affairs (section 7).



Advance Directive

An advance directive directly provides health-care provider(s) with instructions about the health care treatments an individual wants to accept or refuse, including life-support and life-prolonging medical interventions. Generally, unless an individual has a representative, health care providers must follow an advance directive and won't seek a consent decision from anyone when the instructions in an advanced directive address the care that is needed at the time.

IF YOU HAVE NOT PLANNED IN ADVANCE OF INCAPACITY

Temporary Substitute Decision Maker

In specific circumstances and according to B.C. law, a health care provider may appoint a Temporary Substitute Decision Maker (TSDM). A TSDM may be appointed if an individual becomes incapable and needs a health care decision to be made and they do not have a court appointed guardian (committee of person) or representative with authority to make health care decisions for them, and they do not have an advance directive that applies to the health care decision. The TSDM must make their decisions based on an individual's known instructions or wishes expressed while they were capable, or if their wishes are unknown, in their best interests. A TSDM may not give consent for an adult's admission to a long-term care home. *My Voice – Expressing My Wishes for Future Health Care Treatment* advance care planning guide is available on the SeniorsBC website and provides more information and a form for making a contact list as part of an advanced care plan.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca
(enter "Advance Care Planning" in Search)

Guardianship (Committee ship)

If an individual becomes mentally incapable and they have not made a valid incapacity plan or the plan fails, an application may be made, most often by a family member or friend, to the B.C. Supreme Court for the appointment of a guardian, also called a committee, to make decisions on their behalf. A guardian (committee) may be appointed to make decisions about health care and personal affairs, and/or financial and legal affairs.

On occasion, the Public Guardian and Trustee may be appointed as guardian (committee of estate) by the court and may also become the statutory property guardian (committee of estate), responsible for the financial and legal affairs of an incapable adult if a certificate of incapability



is issued by a health authority designate. Find more information about this process on the Public Guardian and Trustee website.

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca (Enter “financial management and personal decision making” in Search)

The Guide to the Certificate of Incapability Process:
www.trustee.bc.ca (Enter “A Guide to the Certificate of Incapability Process” in Search)

Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry

The Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre is a non-profit, charitable organization. Nidus provides education and assistance with personal and legal planning such as paying bills or making health care decisions due to illness, injury or disability. The Nidus website provides information and forms for representation agreements, as well as information on enduring powers of attorney, advance directives and health care consent. The website also provides information on medical assistance in dying (MAiD) and on estate planning (for after death) including Wills.

Nidus operates a centralized registry for important information and documents that might be needed in a health crisis or disaster such as a wildfire or flood. For more information, please contact Nidus at:

Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry
1440 W. 12th Ave.
Vancouver BC V6H 1M8
Voicemail: 604 408-7414
Email: info@nidus.ca
Website: www.nidus.ca

People's Law School

The People's Law School is a non-profit society that works to improve access to justice for all British Columbians. The society's vision is a province where people have the knowledge, skills and confidence to resolve their everyday legal problems. They do not provide legal advice on individual legal problems; however, can suggest others who can help, and resources are available on their website. Tools on personal planning, written in easy-to-understand language are available:

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 331-5400
Email: info@peopleslawschool.ca
Website: www.peopleslawschool.ca

Booklets are available in print and digital formats; bulk orders at:
www.crownpub.bc.ca

Live classes: in communities around BC – see website



Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia

The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) of British Columbia provide help when a person cannot make legal, financial or health decisions themselves. The PGT is appointed to safeguard and uphold the legal and financial interests of children, manage the legal, financial and personal care interests of adults needing assistance in decision making, and administer the estates of deceased and missing persons.

The PGT serves the interests of seniors who require assistance in making decisions in the following ways:

Responding to Reports of Abuse

The PGT collaborates with designated agencies (regional health authorities, Providence Health Care and Community Living BC) in responding to allegations of abuse, neglect and self-neglect of vulnerable adults.

When an allegation of financial abuse is made, the PGT may conduct an investigation where there is an immediate risk of harm to the adult's assets, there is reason to believe that the adult is not capable of managing his or her financial or legal affairs, and no other suitable person (family or friend) has the authority or is willing and able to act on the individual's behalf.

Specifically, the PGT may be able to assist by:

- Investigating actions of trustees, representatives or attorneys under enduring powers of attorney when the adult is incapable and concerns about financial management have been raised;
- Involving a designated agency if the adult is experiencing abuse or neglect, and is not able to get help on their own;
- Exercising protective measures, including temporarily restricting access to bank accounts or preventing property transfers;
- Consulting on complex situations of abuse, neglect or self-neglect; and
- Providing information on the options available.



Authorizing or Acting as a Temporary Substitute Decision Maker for Health Care Decisions

In situations where an adult is incapable of consenting or refusing consent to health care and has no legal representative, family or friend from the list in the legislation who is authorized and qualified to provide substitute consent as a Temporary Substitute Decision Maker (TSDM), the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) may authorize a TSDM to make a health care decision for the adult. If necessary, the PGT itself can act as the TSDM of last resort.

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca (click on Reports and Publications and see “Information for Temporary Substitute Decision Makers Authorized by the PGT” under Adult Guardianship)

See *If You Have Not Planned in Advance of Incapacity* earlier in this section of the guide for more information on Temporary Substitute Decision Makers.

Acting as Committee to make Substitute Financial Decisions

Where there is reason to believe an adult is incapable of managing his or her financial affairs, the adult has assets which require management, and no other suitable person is available to manage the adult's affairs, the PGT may act as committee for the adult to make substitute decisions on behalf of the adult and to manage the adult's affairs. See *If You Have Not Planned in Advance of Incapacity* in this section of the guide for more information on personal guardianship/committee ship.

In some cases, the court may also appoint the PGT to make health and personal care decisions for the adult if there is no other suitable person available to act.

Public Guardian and Trustee Resources: How You Can Help

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca (enter “Personal Planning” in Search)

When the PGT is Committee

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca

(enter “When the PGT is committee” in Search)



Estate and Personal Trust Services

The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) can administer an estate when the executor, interstate successor, beneficiary or other eligible person is not able or willing to do so.

The PGT may also agree to be appointed executor in a will in appropriate circumstances.

When a person dies and leaves a will, the executor named in the will has the first right to handle funeral arrangements and administer the estate. If the executor is unwilling, or unable to act and there is no one else (an alternate executor or a beneficiary) willing and able to administer the estate, the PGT may provide this service. An adult may also choose to name the PGT as executor in his or her will. Adults who are planning to name the PGT as their executor should contact the PGT for consultation before preparing their will.

If a person in B.C. dies without a will, B.C. law specifies those who have the right to make funeral arrangements and administer the estate. The PGT may also be asked to provide this service if family members cannot be located or are not available to act. For more information, contact the PGT.

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-4444

Phone (Victoria): 250 356-8160

Phone (Kelowna): 250 712-7576

Phone (Service BC, toll-free from all other areas of B.C.):

1 800 663-7867 (ask to be transferred to the

Public Guardian and Trustee at 604 660-4444)

Email: mail@trustee.bc.ca

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca

VICTIM SERVICES AND CRIME PREVENTION

The B.C. Government supports more than 160 victim service programs across the province that provide information, referrals, emotional support and practical assistance to victims of crime.

The B.C. Government also supports over 250 programs across B.C., which provide assistance to women and children impacted by violence. These programs include Stopping the Violence Counselling, PEACE (Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment) programs, Outreach Services and Multicultural Outreach services. To find a program in your area, please contact VictimLinkBC at the number below.

VictimLinkBC is a toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone service available across B.C. and the Yukon 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and



immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence, including victims of human trafficking exploited for labour or sexual services. VictimLinkBC provides service in more than 110 languages, including 17 North American Indigenous languages. If you, or someone you know, is a victim or a witness of crime or violence, contact VictimLinkBC at the number below to find a victim service program in your area.

VictimLinkBC; available 24/7

Phone (toll-free in B.C. and Yukon): 1 800 563-0808

Website: www.victimlinkbc.ca

Victims of certain crimes may be eligible for financial assistance and benefits through the provincial government's Crime Victim Assistance Program, (CVAP). CVAP assists victims, immediate family members and some witnesses in coping with the effects of violent crime. It provides financial benefits to help offset financial losses and assist in recovery from the impacts of crime. For more information about financial assistance and benefits for victims of crime, please visit the website below.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "Crime Victim Assistance Program" in Search)

To learn more about victim services and preventing crime in your community, contact the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General using the information below.

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-5199

Email: VictimServices@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "victim services or crime prevention" in Search)

Personal Safety Tips

There are many things people of all ages, including seniors, can do to maintain their personal safety. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in British Columbia provides tips on a webpage called "Ageless Wisdom: Personal Safety".

Website: www.rcmp.ca

(enter "Ageless Wisdom: Personal Safety" in Search)



Taxpayer Rights

Taxpayers have rights, including rights related to service, which are outlined in the Taxpayer Bill of Rights. These govern interactions with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). For example, taxpayers have the right to be treated professionally, courteously, and fairly. As well, they have the right to complete, accurate, clear, and timely information from the CRA. Contact the Office of the Taxpayers' Ombudsman with concerns pertaining to taxpayers' rights.

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter "Office of the Taxpayers' Ombudsman" in Search)

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 586-3839

Legal Services Society

Legal Services Society covers certain legal problems for individuals who meet specific financial guidelines and are eligible for legal aid. The Legal Services Society helps people with:

- serious family problems;
- child protection matters;
- criminal law issues; and
- some immigration, mental health and prison law issues.

Legal aid services include:

- Legal information so people can work through problems independently;
- Legal advice from a lawyer to assist people in working through their problem; and/or
- Legal representation (a lawyer acting for an individual) in court when an individual has a serious legal problem and no other way to solve it.

To find out more, contact your local legal aid office (listings are on the Legal Services Society website) or the society's call centre.

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 577-2525

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 408-2172

Website: www.lss.bc.ca



CONSUMER PROTECTION

Consumer Protection BC

British Columbia has laws to protect consumers. Consumer Protection BC is the not-for-profit corporation, operating at an arm's length from government, which regulates the travel industry, motion pictures, debt collection industry, pay-day lenders, home-inspectors and segments of the telemarketing industry, as well as the cremation, interment and funeral services industry.

It focuses on educating British Columbian consumers and stakeholders to make sure consumer transactions respect the laws that govern them. When the consumer protection laws are violated, Consumer Protection BC can take enforcement action.

It is also responsible for the administration of the Travel Assurance Fund. This fund is a last resort, which provides a potential source of compensation for travel services paid for, but not received, when those services are obtained from a licensed B.C. travel agency.

Consumer Protection BC's website and toll-free telephone line provide consumers and business owners with information on their rights and responsibilities under B.C.'s laws.

If you, or a member of your family, have a complaint about a consumer transaction, Consumer Protection BC offers complaint resolution and referrals through a toll-free inquiry centre. For more information, contact them at:

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 564-9963

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 320-1667

Website: www.consumerprotectionbc.ca

Email: info@consumerprotectionbc.ca

Vehicle Sales Authority of British Columbia

The Vehicle Sales Authority (VSA) of British Columbia is a not-for-profit independent agency created by legislation to administer the *Motor Dealer Act*, prescribed sections of the *Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act* and related regulations under those acts.

The VSA licenses and regulates motor dealers and sales professionals. The VSA also provides mandatory certification courses and continuing education for all dealership staff who deal directly with retail vehicle buyers in British Columbia.

The VSA oversees consumer protection legislation for licensed motor dealers, including complaint resolution, consumer protection, industry standard setting and enforcement. The goal is a respected motor dealer industry



serving an informed and confident public.

There are many things that a consumer should know before buying a new or used vehicle, and the VSA provides the tools and information to help the consumer make an informed buying decision.

For more information, please visit their website or call the numbers listed below.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 294-9889

Email: consumer.services@mvsabc.com

Website: <https://mvsabc.com/>

Investor Education Helps Seniors Avoid Scams – BC Securities Commission

Many investors have lost their life savings to risky or fraudulent investments because they did not understand the risks, ask the right questions, do independent research, or get a second opinion when looking to invest.

To help educate people on how to protect themselves from fraud, the BC Securities Commission (BCSC) has a suite of tools and resources on its investor education website [InvestRight.org](https://investright.org). Individuals can learn about the warning signs of fraud, how to spot investment scams, and how to conduct a background check on an investment advisor.

The BCSC can help answer questions about investment planning, unsuitable investments and scams. [InvestRight.org](https://investright.org) is a one-stop resource for investors to educate themselves on how to make informed investment decisions.

Website: www.investright.org

Whether you are a senior, a family member, or a caregiver, you can act and protect people from investment fraud. Be vigilant and bring suspicious activity to the attention of securities regulators. Your care and attention may save a friend, family member or member of your community from falling victim to a scam artist.

To report a scam, contact the BCSC or submit a tip on their website.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 373-6393

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 899-6854

Website: www.investright.org
(enter “Submit a Tip” in Search)



EMERGENCY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

An important part of provincial emergency preparedness is personal preparedness. Everyone has a responsibility to know what to do in an emergency to protect themselves and their loved ones. There are more than 50 identified hazards in B.C., including forest fires, earthquakes, tsunamis and floods. Being prepared can reduce the impact of extreme events such as these and can also help during less severe events like power outages or snowstorms.

There are many simple actions one can take to be prepared for an emergency. The federal government recommends being prepared for at least 72 hours however, some authorities, such as the Capital Regional District (covering Greater Victoria and the southern gulf islands), now recommend being prepared for a minimum of seven days. Filling out the Personal Record and Emergency Numbers page in the Key Contacts section at the beginning of this guide as a first step towards preparedness. Be sure to include:

- Family and friends – phone numbers and addresses, including an out-of-area (ideally an out-of-province) contact;
- Family physician – phone number and address;
- Any other medical contacts such as specialists, suppliers of specialty equipment, physiotherapists, nearest walk-in clinic, etc.;
- Non-emergency numbers and addresses for the nearest two hospitals;
- Your municipality and local emergency management contacts;
- BC Hydro, FortisBC and TELUS contact information;
- BC Drug and Poison Information Centre phone numbers;
- Pharmacy contact information;
- Veterinarian contact information (if applicable); and
- Insurance agent contact information.

Also important in preparing for any emergency is discussing and coordinating your needs with family and friends, as well as any people involved in your care (e.g., your family physician, home care providers or long-term care home providers). Discuss any specific medical needs with your family physician. To simple steps help you get prepared:

- Create an emergency contact list and talk to everyone on that list about how you would try to get a hold of them during an emergency or where you would try to meet them if you would have to leave your building;
- Pack an emergency kit for your home and a 'grab-and-go' kit with essentials you can easily take with you.



An emergency kit should contain the following items:

- ☐ Water: Four liters per person, per day, for a minimum of three days for hydration and sanitation
- ☐ Non-perishable food that you like to eat and that is appropriate for any dietary restrictions you may have
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Copies of your most recent prescriptions
- ☐ A spare pair of glasses
- ☐ Flashlight and spare batteries, or a hand crank or wind-up flashlight
- ☐ AM/FM radio and spare batteries or a hand crank or wind-up radio
- ☐ Seasonal clothing, footwear and hygiene items
- ☐ Local maps with designated family meeting places indicated
- ☐ Cash in small bills
- ☐ Basic tools and a whistle to signal for help
- ☐ Copies of important documents such as birth certificates and financial/insurance information
- ☐ Pet preparedness items

A ‘grab-and-go’ kit should be a backpack or small rolling suitcase containing essentials in case you have to quickly evacuate. It should be kept either near the door, or in a vehicle. Considering adding the following items:

- ☐ Bottled water
- ☐ Non-perishable food items
- ☐ Essential medications
- ☐ Copies of prescriptions
- ☐ Copies of essential paperwork, such as driver’s license, insurance policies and birth certificate
- ☐ Cash in small bills
- ☐ Spare house and car keys
- ☐ Essentials for pets, if applicable
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Sturdy shoes

Store the ‘grab-and-go’ kit close to a door, for example in the entrance closet, or in your vehicle. Regularly check and update the contents of the emergency and ‘grab-and- go’ kits and replace expired food and medications.



Have a plan in the event of an emergency. Know the evacuation routes out of your house or building and be sure you know who to call in the event of incidents.

The following programs provide information and resources to help individuals prepare for emergencies. For specific information regarding emergency programs in your area, contact your local emergency program through your municipal government. Many municipalities provide emergency preparedness brochures specific to your region and regularly conduct emergency preparedness sessions free of charge. It may even be possible to arrange for a designated preparedness session, for example if a whole strata complex is interested in attending.

Emergency Management BC

Emergency Management BC (EMBC) works to enhance public safety before, during, and after emergencies or disasters. EMBC provides information to British Columbians about hazards in B.C., general emergency preparedness, and hazard-specific emergency preparedness. They have many publications and resources that can help you get prepared for emergencies according to your needs.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “emergency preparedness, response & recovery” in Search)

Information about emergency preparedness for people with disabilities

This section of the Emergency Management BC website provides preparedness information for those who may have hearing, mobility, speech, cognitive or other challenges

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Preparedness for People with a Disability” in Search)

Emergency Info BC

Emergency Info BC provides up-to-date information regarding emergency events in British Columbia. You can access emergency updates in your region, listen to advisories, and access emergency preparedness information and resources.

Website: www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca



ShakeOut BC

ShakeOut BC is the annual earthquake drill occurring on the third Thursday of every October. Knowing what to do if you feel an earthquake is very important to help prevent injuries. Wherever you are, Drop! Cover! Hold On!

Website: www.shakeoutbc.ca

Get Prepared (Federal Government)

72 Hours: Is Your Family Prepared? is a collaboration between Public Safety Canada, the Canadian Red Cross, St. John Ambulance and The Salvation Army to enhance emergency preparedness. This campaign provides information about emergency preparedness, as well as resources such as preparedness guides. The general *Your Emergency Preparedness Guide* and the *Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs* are both helpful resources for seniors. These guides contain practical information about preparing for an emergency.

Website: www.getprepared.ca

Access the Your Emergency Preparedness Guide online.

Website: www.getprepared.gc.ca

(enter “Your Emergency Preparedness Guide” in Search)

Access the Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs online.

Website: www.getprepared.gc.ca

(enter “Disabilities/Special Needs” in search)

Directory



DIRECTORY

Following is an alphabetical listing of services described in this guide or available to seniors.

A

Ability411

Website: www.ability411.ca

Aboriginal Elders Transportation

(see Elders Transportation Program)

Acute, Home and Community Care Services

Check the HealthLink BC directory to find services in your community or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1. You can find more information about home and community care services in the Your Health section of this guide.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, toll-free TTY): 7-1-1

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/find

Adult Upgrading

Adult upgrading is offered across the province through public post-secondary institutions, school district, adult learning centres, and online. Adult Upgrading courses help students improve their literacy, numeracy and academic skills. Website: www.upgradebc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “adult education” in Search)

Affordable Child Care Benefit

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 338-6622

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD): 711 (Across B.C.)

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “affordable child care benefit” in Search)

Affordable Housing for Seniors

(see BC Housing)

After a Death: What to Do When Someone Dies

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “After a Death” in Search)

Age-friendly BC (Age-friendly Communities)

Email: AgefriendlyBC@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “age-friendly” in Search)

Al-Anon Family Groups BC/Yukon

Al-Anon offers self-help programs for families and friends of alcoholics, with- in a policy of anonymity.

Website: www.bcyukon-al-anon.org

Alcoholics Anonymous BC/Yukon

This website describes the Alcoholics Anonymous program and philosophy and provides contact information for local support groups.

Website: www.bcyukonaa.org

Allowance/Allowance for the Survivor

Phone (Canada & USA, English, toll-free): 1 800 277-9914

Phone (Canada & USA, French, toll-free): 1 800 277-9915

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, toll-free): 1 800 255-4786

Websites: www.canada.ca

(enter “allowance for people aged 60-64” in Search)

www.canada.ca

(enter “allowance for the survivor” in Search)

Alzheimer Society of B.C.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 667-3742

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 681-6530

Email: info@alzheimercbc.org

Website: www.alzheimer.ca/en/bc

Ambulance

(see BC Emergency Health Services)

Arthritis Answers Line

For every question, there is an answer. The Arthritis Answers Line is here as your source of help and hope.

10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday Phone (toll-free):

1 800 321-1433

Phone (interpreter services, toll-free): 1 877 228-2557

Arthritis Society

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 414-7766

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 714-5550

Email: info@bc.arthritis.ca

Website: www.arthritis.ca/bc

Assisted Living Registry

Mailing Address:

PO Box 9638 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9P1

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 714-3378

Phone (Greater Victoria): 778 974-4887

Email: Hlth.assistedlivingregistry@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “Assisted Living Registry” in Search)

Automobile Insurance Discounts

(see Seniors’ Vehicle Insurance Discounts)

B

BC Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Line

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-1441

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-9382

BC Ambulance Service

(see BC Emergency Health Services)

BC Association of Community Response Networks

Email: info@bccrns.ca

Website: www.bccrns.ca

BC Brain Injury Association

c/o Sea to Sky Meeting and Association Management Inc.

Suite 206, 201 Bewicke Ave.

North Vancouver BC V7M 3M7

Email: info@brainstreams.ca

Website: www.brainstreams.ca

BC Cancer Agency

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-3333

Website: www.bccancer.bc.ca

BC Care Providers Association

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 736-4233

Email: info@bccare.ca

Website: www.bccare.ca

BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 707-2400

Website: www.bccdc.ca/our-services

BC Dental Association

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 396-9888

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 736-7202

Email: info@yourdentalhealth.ca

Website: www.yourdentalhealth.ca

BC Emergency Health Services

BC Emergency Health Services oversees the BC Ambulance Service and the BC Patient Transfer Services

In a medical emergency:

Call 9-1-1

Areas where 9-1-1 is not available, call toll free: 1 800 461-9911

Cellphone/SAT Phone from Outside BC: 250-374-5937

Website: www.bcehs.ca

For ambulance billing, contact:

British Columbia Ambulance Service Ambulance

Billing Department

PO Box 9676 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9P7

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 665-7199

Website: www.bcehs.ca

(enter “pay your ambulance bill” in Search)

BC Ferries

B.C. seniors age 65+ travel for free on most BC Ferries routes sailing Monday through Thursday (including Remembrance Day on November 11), except on holidays. On northern routes, seniors age 65+ receive one-third off on the passenger fares for all travel. This applies to passenger fares only.

Customer Information and Reservations:

Phone (toll-free in North America): 1 888 BC-FERRY
(1 888 223-3779)

Phone (outside North America): 1 800 223-3779

Phone (cell phone on Rogers or TELUS Mobility networks):
*BCF (*223)

Website: www.bcferries.com

B.C. Health Care System

Phone (Service BC, toll-free): 1 800 663-7867

BC Healthy Communities Society

The BC Healthy Communities Society is a province wide, not-for-profit organization that promotes and supports healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 590-8442

Email: bchc@bchealthycommunities.ca

website: www.bchealthycommunities.ca

B.C. Hospice Palliative Care Association

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 410-6297

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 267-7024

Email: office@bchpca.org

Website: www.bchpca.org

BC Housing and the Housing Registry

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 257-7756

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Website: www.bchousing.org (enter “housing registry for housing providers” in Search)

Lower Mainland Directly Managed Office

Phone: 604 609-7024

Vancouver Island Regional Office

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 787-2807

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 475-7550

Interior Regional Office

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 834-7149

Phone (Penticton): 250 493-0301

Northern Regional Office

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 667-1235

Phone (Prince George): 250 562-9251

BC Hydro

For electric service or energy-efficiency information:

Website: www.bchydro.com

To report a power outage or downed wires:

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224-9376)

B.C. Low Income Climate Action Tax Credit

Websites: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “low income climate tax” in Search)

BC Mental Health Information Line

Phone 310-6789 (no area code required)

BC Palliative Care Benefits

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “who we cover PharmaCare” in Search)

BC Parks – Campsite Fee Discount

Website: www.bcparks.ca/fees/senior.html

BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 661-2121

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 669-7600

Email: bcpartners@heretohelp.bc.ca

Website: www.heretohelp.bc.ca

B.C. Recreation and Parks Association

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 929-0965

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 629-0965

Website: www.bcrpa.bc.ca

BC Securities Commission

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 373-6393

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 899-6854

Email: inquiries@bcsc.bc.ca

Website: www.bcsc.bc.ca

B.C. Seniors' Community Parks

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "Seniors Community Parks" in Search)

BC Seniors Games Society (55+ BC Games)

Phone (Greater Victoria): 778 426-2940

Email: info@55plusbcgames.org

Website: www.55plusbcgames.org

BC Services Card

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "services card id" in Search)

BC Transit

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 382-6161; elsewhere in B.C.,
contact your local transit operator

Email: transitinfo@bctransit.com

Website: www.bctransit.com

(see *TransLink* for Metro Vancouver transit information)

Better at Home

This program, which is managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, provides non-medical home support services for seniors in many communities throughout the province.

Phone: 604-268-1312 (General Inquiries)

Website: www.betterathome.ca

Bounce Back: Reclaim Your Health

Speak with your health care provider about this program for those with depression and anxiety.

Website: www.bouncebackbc.ca

Brain Health for Seniors

Five easy steps to help you promote your brain health.

Website: www.alzheimer.ca (enter “brain health” in Search)

Risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease and what you can do to help reduce those risks, visit:

Website: www.alzheimer.ca (enter “risk factors” in Search)

Building a Better B.C. for People with Disabilities

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “accessibility” in Search)

Bus Fare Discount for Seniors

(see Transit Seniors’ Fare Discounts and Bus Pass Program)

Bus Pass Program

Phone (toll-free): 1 866-866-0800

- Option 1 – If you are receiving Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction services*, input your Personal Identification Number and PIN, or your Social Insurance Number, then press option 1.
- Option 2 – If you are receiving Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction services* and do not have a Personal Identification Number or Social Insurance Number, or for all general inquiries, enter your 10-digit phone number, then press option 2.

* See eligibility criteria at the website below.

Email: SDSIBUSPA@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “bus pass program” in Search)

C

Canada Pension Plan

Phone (Canada & USA, English, toll-free): 1 800 277-9914

Phone (Canada & USA, French, toll-free): 1 800 277-9915

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, toll-free): 1 800 255-4786

Website: www.canada.ca (enter “Canada Pension Plan” in Search)

Canada Revenue Agency

Phone (individual income tax and trust enquiries, toll-free):
1 800 959-8281

Website: www.canada.ca (enter “revenue agency” in Search)

French is www.canada.ca (enter “agency revenue” in Search)

Canadian Coalition for Seniors’ Mental Health

Working to promote and enhance seniors’ mental health. Check out the information and tools available on this site:

Website: www.ccsmh.ca

Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 408-7753

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 472-5445

Email: cisur@uvic.ca

Website: www.uvic.ca (enter “cisur” in Search)

Choice in Supports for Independent Living (CSIL)

Speak with your health care provider for more information.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “supports independent living” in Search)

Choose to Move

A free 6-month physical activity program with 1-on-1 coaching support.

Phone: 604 875-4111 ext. 21787

Email: contact@choosetomove.info

Website: www.choosetomove.info

Chronic Disease Self-Management Program

(see Self-Management BC)

Civil Resolution Tribunal

(CRT) now offers a way to resolve strata disputes.

Phone (toll-free in Canada): 1 844 322-2292

Email:

Website: www.civilresolutionbc.ca

Cocaine Anonymous – British Columbia Area

This website describes the Cocaine Anonymous program and philosophy and provides contact information for local support groups.

Website: www.ca-bc.org

Community Centres and Other Community Services Agencies

Look for local community centre listings in your phone book or visit the WelcomeBC website for tips on finding community organization information online.

Website: www.welcomebc.ca

Community Response Networks

(see BC Association of Community Response Networks)

Community Travel Training Program

Phone BC Transit at 250 382-6161 and press 0 or call your local transit provider to learn about travel training in your area. In Victoria, Kelowna, Prince George and Vernon, contact:

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 385-2551

Website: <https://bctransit.com/travel-training-victoria/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training>

Phone (Kelowna): 250 860-8121

Website: <https://bctransit.com/kelowna-travel-training/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training>

Phone (Prince George): 250 563-0011

Website: <https://bctransit.com/prince-george-travel-training/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training>

Phone (Vernon): 250 545-7221

Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

For information about the Community Volunteer Income Tax program, to find out how to become a volunteer or to find a participating community organization in your area, visit the Canada Revenue Agency website.

Website: www.canada.ca (enter “free tax clinics” in Search)

French: www.canada.ca (enter “comptoirs d’impôts gratuits” in Search)

Compassionate Care Benefits

(see Employment Insurance [EI] Benefits – Compassionate Care)

Congratulatory Messages

Congratulatory messages may be requested for a significant birthday or wedding anniversary. For more information, contact the provincial government’s Office of Protocol.

Phone (Service BC, toll-free): 1 800 663-7867

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-1616

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “congratulatory messages” in Search)

Connecting with technology (Canadian Institute for the Blind)

This initiative will deliver basic digital skills training across Canada. Trainings will be held in-person and through teleconference and will introduce participants with sight loss to assistive and adaptive technologies to increase knowledge, skills, critical thinking, and information management in the world of digital literacy. Participants will learn how to use apps, email, social media, search engines and other communication tools safely and effectively to participate in the digital economy and their communities.

Email: info@cnib.ca

Consular Services

(see Foreign Country Services)

Consumer Protection BC

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 564-9963

Website: www.consumerprotectionbc.ca

Crime Prevention and Community Policing

Contact your local police department or RCMP detachment.

(also see Victim Services)

Crisis Line Association of BC

For mental health crisis support:

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 784-2433 (1 800 SUICIDE)

For mental health support and information:

Phone (toll-free): 310-6789 (no area code needed)

For more information about crisis lines in B.C., visit the following website:

Website: www.crisislines.bc.ca

D

Dementia Helpline (First Link®)

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 936-6033, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday

South Asian Dementia Helpline: 1 833 674-5003

Website: www.alzheimerbc.org

(also see Alzheimer Society of B.C. and First Link® Dementia Helpline)

Diabetes Association Canada

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 226-8464

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 732-1331

Email: info@diabetes.ca

Website: www.diabetes.ca

Disability Alliance BC

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-1278

Website: www.disabilityalliancebc.org

Disability Tax Credit

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 959-8281

Website: www.canada.ca/disability

Domestic Violence Helpline (VictimLink BC)

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 563-0808, 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Website: www.domesticviolencebc.ca

DriveBC

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 550- 4997

Website: www.drivebc.ca

Driver's Medical Examination Reports and Enhanced Road Test Assessments (RoadSafetyBC)

Phone (toll-free): 1 855-387-7747,

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-7747

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "driver medical fitness" in Search)

Driver's Licenses (ICBC)

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 950-1498

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 978-8300

Website: www.icbc.com/driver-licensing

Driving – CAA Senior Drivers' Toolkit

Information to help senior drivers and those who support them assess driving skills, learn about changing abilities and, if needed, modify driving habits.

Website: www.caa.ca/seniors

E

Elder Abuse Prevention

In an emergency, always call 9-1-1, or the emergency number listed in the front of your phone book. You can read more about elder abuse prevention in the *Your Safety and Security* section of this guide.

For information, referrals, and support:

Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL)

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 437-1940

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 437-1940

Website: www.seniorsfirstbc.ca

VictimLink BC

Phone (toll-free in B.C. and Yukon): 1 800 563-0808, 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY]): 604 875-0885 (to call collect, please dial the TELUS Relay Service at 7-1-1)

Text: 604 836-6381

Email: VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “VictimLink BC” in Search)

(also see BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support, Public Guardian and Trustee, and Seniors Abuse & Information Line listings in this directory)

Elders Transportation Program

B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 388-5522

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 990-2432

Email: frontdesk@bcaafc.com

Website: www.bcaafc.com/help/elders

Emergency Info BC

Emergency Info BC provides up-to-date information regarding emergency events in British Columbia.

Website: www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca

Emergency Management BC

Emergency Management BC works to enhance public safety before, during, and after emergencies or disasters.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “Emergency Management BC” in Search)

Employment Insurance (EI) Benefits

Phone (Service Canada, toll-free): 1 800 206-7218

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “employment insurance benefits” in Search)

EI Compassionate Care Benefits

EI provides compassionate care benefits to persons who must be away from work temporarily to provide care or support to a family member who is gravely ill with a significant risk of death.

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “Caregiving benefits and leave” in Search)

EI Sickness Benefits

EI provides sickness benefits to individuals who are unable to work because of sickness, injury, or quarantine.

Website: www.canada.ca (enter “sickness benefits” in Search)

Employment Standards Branch

This branch administers the *Employment Standards Act and Regulation*, which sets minimum standards of wages and working conditions in most workplaces.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-3316

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “employment standards” in Search)

Employment Support for Older Workers

(see *Older Workers Program and WorkBC*)

English Language Training

Free English language instruction, funded by the Government of Canada, is available to adult newcomers to B.C. who are permanent residents or protected persons. Public post-secondary institutions also offer tuition-free English Language Learning.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Learn English” in Search)

F

Fair PharmaCare Plan

(see *PharmaCare*)

Fall Prevention

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “fall prevention” in Search)

Website: <https://findingbalancebc.ca/>

Family Caregivers of British Columbia

Caregiver Support Line Phone (toll-free): 1 877 520- 3267

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 384-0408

Website: www.familycaregiversbc.ca

Federal and Provincial Non-refundable Tax Credits

Federal

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 959-8281

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “Provincial and territorial tax and credits” in Search)

Provincial

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “British Columbia income tax credit” in Search)

Federal Programs

For information on any Government of Canada program or service, contact Service Canada.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232)

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY]): 1 800 926-9105

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Seniors Canada On-Line

Website: www.canada.ca (enter “programs and services for seniors” in Search)

Ferries

Information on BC Ferries and Inland Ferries in B.C. is available in the *Getting Around* section of this guide.

(also see BC Ferries and Inland Ferries in this directory)

First Link® Dementia Helpline

Website: www.alzheimerbc.org

(also see Alzheimer Society of B.C. and First Link® Dementia Helpline)

Fishing (Angling) and Hunting Licenses for Seniors

For information on fishing (angling) licenses:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “fishing license” in Search)

For information on hunting licenses:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “hunting license” in Search)

Foreign Country Services

The B.C. Office of Protocol provides contact information for over 70 countries represented by consular officers in the province.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “office of protocol” in Search)

For information on all other countries, which can be contacted through their embassies and high commissions based in Ottawa, refer to the following website.

Website: www.international.gc.ca/protocol-protocole

G

Gluu Digital Coaching Network

This initiative will deliver basic digital skills training to older adults across British Columbia. Gluu Technology Society will recruit and support a network of ‘digital peer coaches’ able to offer digital skills training and support to seniors in their community. Participants will learn a variety of skills including how to safely use public WIFI, securely browse the internet, manage online accounts, identify fraudulent emails, use video calling, understand social media, and access online government services. Available in English and French.

Email: hello@gluusociety.org

Phone (toll free): 1 855 458-8622

Phone: 604 343-4946

Goods and Services Tax (GST) Credit

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 387-1193

Website: www.canada.ca (enter “gst” in Search)

Government Agents

(see Service BC Centres)

Government of Canada

Retirement and public pensions:

Website: www.canada.ca (enter “public pensions” in Search)

Seniors Canada On-Line:

Website: www.canada.ca
(enter “programs and services for seniors” in Search)

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Line

Phone (toll-free): 1 855 474-9777
10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday
Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 558-4740
Website: www.parentsupportbc.ca/grandparents-raising-grandchildren/

Grants for Age-friendly Communities

Email: AgefriendlyBC@gov.bc.ca
Website: www.ubcm.ca
 (“age-friendly communities grants” in the Search)

Guaranteed Income Supplement

Information about the Guaranteed Income Supplement is available in the *Your Money* section of this guide.

Phone (English, toll-free): 1 800 277-9914
Phone (French, toll-free): 1 800 277-9915
Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, toll-free): 1 800 255-4786
Website: www.canada.ca
(enter “Guaranteed Income Supplement” in Search)

H

HandyDART Custom Transit

BC Transit (Greater Victoria and the rest of B.C. outside Metro Vancouver)

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 727-7811
Monday to Friday - 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
Website: www.bctransit.com/Victoria/riderinfo/handydart/register

TransLink (Metro Vancouver only)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 575-6600

Phone (toll-free): 1 844 475-6600

Website: www.translink.ca/en/Rider-Guide/Accessible-Transit/HandyDART.aspx

Health Authorities**Fraser Health**

Phone (toll-free):

1 877 935-5669

Phone (Metro Vancouver):

604 587-4600

Website:

www.fraserhealth.ca

Vancouver Coastal Health

Phone (toll-free):

1 866 884-0888

Phone (Metro Vancouver):

604 736-2033

Website:

www.vch.ca

Interior Health

Phone (Kelowna):

250 862-4200

Website:

www.interiorhealth.ca

**Provincial Health Services
Authority**

Phone (Metro Vancouver):

604 675-7400

Website:

www.phsa.ca

Island Health

Phone (toll-free):

1 877 370-8699

Phone (Greater Victoria):

250 370-8699

Website:

www.islandhealth.ca

First Nations Health Authority

Phone (toll-free):

1 866 913-0033

Phone (Metro Vancouver):

604 693-6500

Website:

www.fnha.ca

Northern Health

Phone (toll-free):

1 866 565-2999

Phone (Prince George):

250 565-2649

Website:

www.northernhealth.ca

Health Connections

Health Connections provides access to transportation for patients who must travel for non-emergency medical appointments.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “health connections” in Search)

Northern Health

Service provided through Northern Health Connections. Please have your BC Services Card number and appointment information ready.

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 647-4997 (7 days a week, 8 am to 5 pm)

Website: www.nhconnections.ca

Interior Health

Service provided through BC Transit. For more information about Health Connections in the B.C. Interior, contact your local BC Transit office, or check your local BC Transit website (click on schedules and maps and see the Health Connections link on the right side of the page).

Website: www.bctransit.com

Vancouver Coastal Health

Medical Travel Tickets are provided through Bella Coola Valley Health Services. Service focuses on the Central Coast and Bella Coola Valley.

Phone (Bella Coola Valley Health Services): 250 799-5311

(also see Travel Assistance Program)

HealthLink BC

HealthLink BC provides non-emergency health, nutrition, physical activity, medication and health service information.

Visit the HealthLink BC website or contact HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 any time of the day or night.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 7-1-1

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca

Health Promotion Workshops

(Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of B.C.)

Website: www.coscobc.org/index.php/cosco-workshops

Healthy Eating for Seniors

Refer to the *Your Lifestyle* section of this guide for healthy eating information, including ordering information for the *Healthy Eating for Seniors* handbook and information on Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “seniors healthy eating” in Search)

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 7-1-1

Heart & Stroke Foundation, B.C. and Yukon

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 473-4636

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 778 372-8000

Website: www.heartandstroke.ca

HeretoHelp

HeretoHelp provides information to help people prevent and manage mental health and substance use problems and live healthier lives.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 661-2121

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 669-7600

Email: bcpartners@heretohelp.bc.ca

Website: www.heretohelp.bc.ca

Home Adaptations for Independence Program

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 257-7756

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Website: www.bchousing.org (enter “HAFI” in Search)

Home Energy Rebate Offer

The Home Energy Rebate Offer gives homeowners incentives for home energy upgrades that will help to reduce ongoing energy costs and improve the comfort of their homes.

Website: www.bchydro.com (enter “home rebates” in Search)

Homeowner Grant for Seniors

For more information about the homeowner grant, including who qualifies and how to apply, visit:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Homeowner Grant” in Search)

If you have questions, contact your municipality.

Website: www.civicinfo.bc.ca/11.asp

If you're in a rural area, contact the Surveyor of Taxes:

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 355-2700

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-0555

Email: ruraltax@gov.bc.ca

Low Income Grant Supplement for Seniors

For more information about the low-income grant supplement including who qualifies and how to apply, visit:

Phone (toll-free): 1 888-355-2700

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-0555

Email: hogadmin@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “low income grant supplement for seniors” in Search)

Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities is a refundable personal income tax credit to assist with the cost of permanent home modifications that improve accessibility or help a senior be more functional or mobile at home.

Mailing Address:

Income Taxation Branch

PO Box 9444 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9W8

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 387-3332

Email: ITBTaxQuestions@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “seniors home renovations” in Search)

Home accessibility tax credit (HATC)

Renovations that make homes safer or more accessible for seniors or a Person with Disabilities may qualify for a tax credit.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 387-3332

Website: www.canada.ca (enter “HATC” in Search)

Housing Registry

Individuals searching for subsidized housing can apply form to BC Housing to be considered for any available housing units in developments managed by the Housing Registry members.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 257-7756; press 1

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218; press 1

Website: www.bchousing.org

(enter “subsidized housing” in Search)

Hunting and Angling (Fishing) Licenses for Seniors

For information on hunting licenses:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “hunting license” in Search)

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “fishing license” in Search)

/

iCON – interCultural Online Health Network, University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine Digital Emergency Medicine

iCON provides culturally and linguistically appropriate health resources online and in-person about chronic disease management to Chinese, South Asian, and Indigenous patients, families and caregivers throughout British Columbia.

Phone (toll-free): 1-877-357-7611

Email: iconsupport@ubc.ca

Website: www.iconproject.org

Immigrant Services

Website: www.canada.ca

(enter “free newcomer services” in Search)

Immunization Services

Contact your health care provider or local public health unit under “Health Authorities” in the blue pages of your phone book.

Website: www.immunizebc.ca

Insurance Corporation of B.C. (ICBC)

The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) is a provincial Crown corporation responsible for licensing and insuring B.C. drivers and vehicles across the province.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-3051

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 661-2800

Website: www.icbc.com

Income Assistance for Seniors Not Receiving Old Age Security

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 866-0800;

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Access Income & Disability Assistance Services” in Search)

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Apply for Assistance” in Search)

Inland Ferries

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Inland Ferries” in Search)

InspireHealth Supportive Cancer Care

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 734-7125

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 734-7125

Website: www.inspirehealth.ca

Investor Education – BC Securities Commission

Investor education is offered through InvestRight and the BC Securities Commission. Call to book a free group seminar or ask an investment-related question.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 373-6393

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 899-6854

Email: inquiries@bcsc.bc.ca

Website: www.investright.org

K

Kidney Foundation of Canada

B.C. and Yukon Branch Office
 200 - 4940 Canada Way
 Burnaby BC V5G 4K6
 Phone (toll-free): 1 800 567-8112
 Phone: (Metro Vancouver): 604 736-9775
 Email: info.bcy@kidney.ca
 Website: www.kidney.ca/BCHome

L

Land Title and Survey Authority of B.C.

Corporate Office

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 410-0600

Land Title Office and Districts

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 577-LTSA (5872)
 Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 630-9630
 Website: www.ltsa.ca

Legal Services Society

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 577-2525
 Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 408-2172
 Website: www.lss.bc.ca

License Plates for Veterans

(see Veteran Specialty License Plates)

Licensing and Consumer Services

Phone (toll-free): 1 800-407-7757
 Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 646-7050
 Website: www.bchousing.org
 (enter “licensing and consumer services” in Search)

M

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “Medical Assistance in Dying” in Search)

Medical Employment Insurance (EI) Benefits

(see Employment Insurance (EI) Benefits – Sickness Benefit)

Medical Services Only

Low-income seniors who have left provincial income assistance for federal income support may be eligible to receive coverage for costs associated with the Medical Services Plan, PharmaCare, basic dental, optical and other approved medical supports.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “medical services only” in Search)

Medical Services Plan (MSP)

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7100

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Medical Services Plan” in Search)

Medical Services Plan Billing (Revenue Services of B.C.)

Mailing Address:

PO Box 9401 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria, BC V8W 9S6

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 405-4909

Phone (Collections, toll-free): 1 866 361-5050

Email: RevenueServicesBC@gov.bc.ca

Medication Coverage

Health Insurance BC (HIBC) administers PharmaCare (and MSP) on behalf of the Ministry of Health. For more information about PharmaCare or to register contact HIBC:

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7100

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Pharmacare” in the Search)

Medication Information (Pharmacist Services at HealthLink BC)

If you have questions about over-the-counter or prescribed medications, call 8-1-1 to talk to a pharmacist. HealthLink BC pharmacists are available every night from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. when your local community pharmacist may be unavailable. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 7-1-1

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/medications

Mental Health Act – Guide

The Guide to the *Mental Health Act* provides information about British Columbia's *Mental Health Act*. The *Mental Health Act* has significant implications for those whose lives it touches – those who receive involuntary treatment under the act, their families, the public and those who use the act.

Website: www.health.gov.bc.ca (enter “*Mental Health Act*” in Search)

Mental Health: Self-Help Strategies to Improve Mental Health

Bounce Back is an evidence-based program for adults experiencing symptoms of mild to moderate depression, low mood, or stress, with or without anxiety. Speak with your health care provider about this program.

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 639-0522

Website: www.cmha.bc.ca (enter “bounce back” in Search)

Move for Life! DVD

Move for Life! can be downloaded from the SeniorsBC website or call 8 -1-1 to speak to a physical activity specialist

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “Move for Life DVD” in the Search)

Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

National Office

Phone (toll-free):

1 800 268-7582

Website: www.mssociety.ca

Lower Mainland Chapter Office

Phone (Metro Vancouver):

604 689-3144

Email: info.bc@mssociety.ca

N

Narcotics Anonymous (B.C. Region)

This website describes the program and provides a list of meetings throughout British Columbia.

Website: www.bcrna.ca

National Indian Residential School Crisis Line

(see Residential School Survivor Services)

New Horizons for Seniors Program (Government of Canada)

Community-based and Pan-Canadian project funding for seniors.

Website: www.canada.ca (enter “new horizons” in Search)

Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry

Voicemail: 604 408-7414

Website: www.nidus.ca

Non-medical Home Support

(see Better at Home)

Nutrition Information**Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC**

If you have any questions about healthy eating, food or nutrition, call 8-1-1. A health service navigator can connect you with a registered dietitian, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages.

Phone (toll-free in B.C.): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 7-1-1

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca (enter “dietitian” in Search)

HealthLink BC dietitian can also answer your question by email through the website:

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca

(enter “email a HealthLink BC dietitian” in Search)

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca (enter “healthy eating” in Search)

0

Old Age Security (OAS) Pension

Phone (English, toll-free): 1 800 277-9914

Phone (French, toll-free): 1 800 277-9915

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, toll-free): 1 800 255-4786

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca

(enter “Old Age Security Pension” in search)

Older Workers Program

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 952-6914

Phone: 250 952-6914

Website: www.workbc.ca (enter “mature workers” in the Search)

Ombudsperson, Office of the

If you think a provincial government ministry, public agency, or local government has treated you unfairly, contact the B.C. Office of the Ombudsperson.

Address:

2nd floor, 947 Fort St. Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Mailing Address:

PO Box 9039 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9A5

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday

Phone (toll-free in B.C.): 1 800 567-3247

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-5855

Fax (Greater Victoria): 250 387-0198

Website: www.bcombudsperson.ca

Order of British Columbia

The Order of British Columbia recognizes people who have served with the greatest distinction and excelled in any field of endeavor benefiting the people of the province or elsewhere.

Email: bchonoursandawards@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.orderofbc.gov.bc.ca

Osteoporosis Society of Canada (B.C. Division)

Phone (English, toll-free): 1 800 463-6842

Phone (French, toll-free): 1 800 977-1778

Website: www.osteoporosis.ca

P

Pain BC

Pain BC provides information and resources for people with chronic pain including: a telephone-based Pain Support Line, Live Plan Be online self-management resource, Coaching for Health telephone support, and Pain Waves podcasts.

Website: www.painbc.ca

Phone (toll-free): 1 844-430-0818

Pain Support Line: 1 844 880-PAIN (7246)

Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) BC

Information and support for parents, families and friends with questions about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender.

Website: www.pflagcanada.ca/pflag-chapters/british-columbia/

Parkinson Society British Columbia

Parkinson Society British Columbia is a not for profit charitable organization that aims to ease the burden for those affected by Parkinson's disease through advocacy, education, support services and contributions to research.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 668-3330

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 662-3240

Website: www.parkinson.bc.ca

Patient Care Quality Offices

(see the Patient Care Quality Offices information in the Your Health section of this guide)

Patient Voices Network

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 282-1919

Email: pvn@bcpsqc.ca

Website: www.patientvoicesbc.ca

People's Law School

Phone: 604 331-5400

Email: info@peopleslawschool.ca

Website: www.peopleslawschool.ca

Personal Income Tax Information Services

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 387-3332

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “personal income tax” in Search)

Personal Safety Tips from the RCMP

Website: www.bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca (enter “safety tips” in Search)

PharmaCare

Health Insurance BC (HIBC) administers PharmaCare (and MSP) on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

For more information about PharmaCare or to register contact HIBC:

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7100

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Pharmacare” in the Search)

Physical Activity

Getting and staying active benefits our bodies, helps us stay engaged in life, improves our mood and mental health, and gives us opportunities to meet new people. For more information, refer to the *Your Lifestyle* section of this guide, or visit the HealthLinkBC website.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca (enter “physical activity” in Search)

Physical Activity Services

For every age and health level, there's a free physical activity plan that works. Just connect with B.C.'s Physical Activity Services at HealthLink BC, you'll find qualified exercise professionals to provide you with custom physical activity plans that meet your needs.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1 (or 7-1-1 for the hearing impaired)

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca

(enter “physical activity services” in Search)

Poison Control Centre

If you suspect someone has been poisoned by a medicine, chemical, or other substance, call the Poison Control Centre at the number below.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 567-8911 (24 – hour line)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 682-5050

Website: www.dpic.org

Power Outages and Repairs

To report a power outage or downed wires, call BC Hydro, or submit a report on their website.

Phone (toll-free): 1 888-BCHYDRO (1 888 224-9376)

Phone (from your cell phone): *HYDRO (*49376)

Website: www.bchydro.com/outages

PridelineBC

Peer support, information, and referrals for anyone in British Columbia.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 566-1170

Phone (Lower Mainland): 604 684-6869

Monday to Friday, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Problem Gambling

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 795-6111,

24 hours a day, seven days a week

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-5311

Email: info@bcresponsiblegambling.ca

Website: www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca

Property Assessment

Contact your local B.C. Assessment office at the phone number or address written on the front of your assessment notice.

Website: www.bcassessment.ca

Property Tax Deferment Program

Contact the tax collector's office or Service BC Centre (government agent) where you pay your property taxes or contact the Tax Deferment Office at the numbers below.

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 355-2700

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-0555

Email: taxdeferment@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "property tax deferment" in Search)

Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia

Phone (Service BC, toll-free): 1 800 663-7867

(ask to be transferred to the Public Guardian and Trustee)

Phone (Service BC, toll-free from Victoria): 250 387-6121

(ask to be transferred to the Public Guardian and Trustee)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-4444

Email: clientservice@trustee.bc.ca

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca

Public Health Alerts

Health alerts such as outbreaks, boil water advisories and product recalls can come from various trusted sources throughout British Columbia, in your local health authority area, and right across Canada. HealthLink BC provides a streamlined, single location for all alerts – available on the HealthLink BC website or by calling 8-1-1.

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 7-1-1

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca

(enter "public health alerts" in Search)

(also see Nutrition Information and Immunization Services in this directory)

Q

QMUNITY

Older adults program serves Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, and 2-Spirit seniors 55+

Phone: 604 684-5307

Email: reception@qmunity.ca

Website: www.qmunity.ca/

QuitNow

(see Tobacco Cessation)

R

Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) – Canada Revenue Agency Residential School Survivor Services

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support program provides mental health and emotional support to eligible former residential school students and their families before, during and after their participation in settlement agreement processes.

FNHA Indian Residential Schools Information Line:

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 477-0775

National Indian Residential School Survivor Support Line:

Provides emotional support and crisis referral services for former residential school students, 24 hours a day.

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 925-4419

Residential Tenancy Branch

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 665-8779

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-1020

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-1602

Email: HSRTO@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “residential tenancies” in Search)

Revenue Services of BC

(see Medical Services Plan)

Royal BC Museum

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 447-7977

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-7226

Email: reception@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

Website: www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

Rural Property Tax Office

Contact the local tax collector's office or Service BC Centre (government agent) where you pay your property taxes or contact the Rural Property Tax Office using the information below.

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 355-2700

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-0555

Email: Ruraltax@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter "rural property tax" in Search)

S

Sales Tax Credit

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter "BC479 sales tax credit" in the Search)

SAFER

(See Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters)

Scams and Fraud (information from the RCMP)

Website: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/scams-fraudes

Self-Management BC, University of Victoria

The University of Victoria Centre on Aging provides patient education programs for people with chronic health conditions.

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 902-3767

Email: selfmgmt@uvic.ca

Website: www.selfmanagementbc.ca

Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL)

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 437-1940

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 437-1940

Website: www.seniorsfirstbc.ca

(also see Seniors First BC Society)

Seniors Advocate, Office of the

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 952-3181

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 952-3181

Email: info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca

Website: www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca

Seniors Canada On-Line

(see Government of Canada – Seniors Canada On-Line)

Seniors First BC**Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL)**

8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (excluding statutory holidays)

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 437-1940

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 437-1940

Phone (TTY): 1 855 306-1443; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,

Monday to Friday

Language interpretation available 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,

Monday to Friday

Email: info@seniorsfirstbc.ca

Website: www.seniorsfirstbc.ca/programs/sail/

Seniors' Health Information (HealthLink BC)

Phone (toll-free): 8-1-1

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 7-1-1

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca (enter “seniors health information” in Search)

Seniors Services Society (Metro Vancouver only)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 520-6621

Email: info@seniorsservicessociety.ca

Website: www.seniorsservicessociety.ca

Senior's Supplement Program

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 866-0800

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “Senior's Supplement Program” in Search)

Seniors' Supportive Housing

Lower Mainland (Outside City of Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Phone (Vancouver Island Region [toll free]): 1 800 787-2807

Phone (Interior Region [toll free]): 1 800 834-7149

Phone (Northern Region [toll free]): 1 800 667-1235

Email: shr@bchousing.org

Website: www.bchousing.org

(enter "seniors' supportive housing" in Search)

(also see BC Housing)

Seniors Website

(see Government of Canada – Seniors Canada On-Line and SeniorsBC.ca)

SeniorsBC.ca

Website: www.SeniorsBC.ca

Service BC

Call for information on any Government of British Columbia service or program.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7867

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-2421

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-6121

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD): 711 (Across B.C.)

Website: www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca

Service BC Centres

100 Mile House

300 South Highway 97

Box 1600

100 Mile House BC

V0K 2E0

Phone: 250 395-7832

Ashcroft

318 Railway Ave

Box 189

Ashcroft BC

V0K 1A0

Phone: 250 453-2412

Atlin

3rd Street, Box 100
Atlin BC
V0W 1A0
Phone: 250 651-7595

Bella Coola

636 Cliff St, Box 185
Bella Coola BC
V0T 1C0
Phone: 250 799-5361

Burnaby

1 800 -663-7867

Burns Lake

161 Highway 16
Box 3500
Burns Lake BC
V0J 1E0
Phone: 250 692-2528

Campbell River

115 – 1180 Ironwood Rd
Campbell River BC
V9W 5P7
Phone: 250 286-7555

Chetwynd

4744 – 52nd St, Box 105
Chetwynd BC
V0C 1J0
Phone: 250 788-2239

Chilliwack

Suite 1 – 45467 Yale Rd W
Chilliwack BC
V2R 3Z8
Phone: 604 795-8415

Clinton

1423 Cariboo Highway
Box 70
Clinton BC
V0K 1K0
Phone: 250 459-2268

Courtenay

2500 Cliffe Ave
Courtenay BC
V9N 5M6
Phone: 250 897-7500

Cranbrook

100 Cranbrook St N
Cranbrook BC
V1C 3P9
Phone: 250 426-1211

Creston

1404 Canyon St
Box 1190
Creston BC
V0B 1G0
Phone: 250 428-3211

Dawson Creek

1201 – 103rd Ave
Dawson Creek BC
V1G 4J2
Phone: 250 784-2224

Dease Lake

Block D, Highway 37
Bag 2000
Dease Lake BC
V0C 1L0
Phone: 250 771-3700

Duncan

5785 Duncan St
Duncan BC
V9L 3W6
Phone: 250 746-1400

Fernie

401 – 4th Ave, Box 1769
Fernie BC
V0M 1M0
Phone: 250 423-6845

Fort Nelson

5319 – 50th Ave S, Bag 1000
Fort Nelson BC
V0C 1R0
Phone: 250 774-6945

Fort St. James

470 Stuart Dr, Box 1328
Fort St. James BC
V0J 1P0
Phone: 250 996-7585

Fort St. John

10600 – 100th St
Fort St. John BC
V1J 4L6
Phone: 250 787-3350

Ganges (Salt Spring Island)

343 Lower Ganges Rd
Salt Spring Island BC
V8K 2V4
Phone: 250 537-5414

Golden

837 Park Dr, Box 39
Golden BC
V0A 1H0
Phone: 250 344-7550

Grand Forks

7290 – 2nd St, Box 850
Grand Forks BC
V0H 1H0
Phone: 250 442-4306

Hazelton

2210 Highway 62
PO Box 380
Hazelton BC
V0J 1Y0
Phone: 250 842-7624

Houston

3400 – 11th St, Bag 2000
Houston BC
V0J 1Z0
Phone: 250 845-5828

Invermere

625 – 4th St, Box 265
Invermere BC
V0A 1K0
Phone: 250 342-4

Kamloops

250 – 455 Columbia St
Kamloops BC
V2C 6K4
Phone: 250 828-4540

Kaslo

312 – 4th St, Box 580
Kaslo BC
V0G 1M0
Phone: 250 353-2219

Kelowna

305 – 478 Bernard Ave
Kelowna BC
V1Y 6N7
Phone: 250 861-7500

Kitimat

795 Lahakas Blvd
Kitimat BC
V8C 1G2
Phone: 250 632-6188

Lillooet

Suite A – 639 Main St
Bag 700
Lillooet BC
V0K 1V0
Phone: 250 256-7548

Mackenzie

64 Centennial Dr
PO Box 2400
Mackenzie BC
V0J 2C0
Phone: 250 997-4270

Maple Ridge

175 – 22470 Dewdney
Trunk Rd
Maple Ridge BC
V2X 5Z6
Phone: 604 466-7470

Masset (Haida Gwaii)

1666 Orr St, Box 226
Masset BC
V0T 1M0
Phone: 250 626-5278

Merritt

2194 Coutlee Ave,
Box 4400, STN MAIN
Merritt BC
V1K 1B8
Phone: 250 378-9343

Nakusp

204 – 6th Ave, PO Box 128
Nakusp BC
V0G 1R0
Phone: 250 265-4865

Port Alberni

4070 8th Ave
Port Alberni BC
V9Y 4S4
Phone: 250 720-2040

Port Hardy

8785 Gray St, Bag 11000
Port Hardy BC
V0N 2P0
Phone: 250 949-6323

Powell River

6953 Alberni St
Powell River BC
V8A 2B8
Phone: 604 485-3622

Prince George

1044 – 5th Ave
Prince George BC
V2L 5G4
Phone: 250 565-4488

Prince Rupert

201 – 3rd Ave W.
Prince Rupert BC
V8J 1L2
Phone: 250 624-7415

Princeton

10 – 135 Tapton Ave
PO Box 9
Princeton BC
V0X 1W0
Phone: 250 295-4600

**Queen Charlotte City (Haida
Gwaii)**

216 Oceanview Dr, Box 309
Queen Charlotte City BC
V0T 1S0
Phone: 250 559-4452

Quesnel

102 – 350 Barlow Ave
Quesnel BC
V2J 2C2
Phone: 250 992-4313

Revelstoke

Room 104 Court House
1123 Second St W., Box 380
Revelstoke BC
V0E 2S0
Phone: 250 837-6981

Salmon Arm

850A – 16th St NE, Bag 100
Salmon Arm BC
V1E 4S4
Phone: 250 832-1611

Sechelt

102 – 5710 Teredo St
Box 950
Sechelt BC
V0N 3A0
Phone: 604 885-5187

Smithers

1020 Murray St, Bag 5000
Smithers BC
V0J 2N0
Phone: 250 847-7207

Sparwood

96 Greenwood Shopping
Mall, Box 1086
Sparwood BC
V0B 2G0
Phone: 250 425-6890

Squamish

360 Pemberton Ave
Box 1008
Squamish BC
V8B 0A7
Phone: 604 892-2400

Terrace

101 – 3220 Eby St
Terrace BC
V8G 5K8
Phone: 250 638-6515

Trail

1050 Eldorado St
Trail BC
V1R 3V7
Phone: 250 364-0591

Ucluelet

5 –1636 Peninsula Rd
Box 609
Ucluelet BC
V0R 3A0
Phone: 250 726-7025

Valemount

1300 4th Ave
Box 657
Valemount BC
V0E 2Z0
Phone: 250 566-4448

Vanderhoof

189 East Stewart St
Box 1459
Vanderhoof BC
V0J 3A0
Phone: 250 567-6301

Vernon

3201 – 30th St
Vernon BC
V1T 9G3
Phone: 250 549-5511

Victoria

403 – 771 Vernon Ave
Victoria BC
V8W 9R5
Phone: 250 952-4111

Williams Lake

540 Borland St
Williams Lake BC
V2G 1R8
Phone: 250 398-421

Service Canada

For information on any Government of Canada program or service.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800-O Canada (1 800 622-6232)

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Sexually transmitted infections are some of the most widespread infections in the world. Preventing a sexually transmitted infection is easier than treating an infection once it has occurred.

Website: www.bccdc.ca

(enter “sexually transmitted diseases” in Search)

Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters Program

The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program provides monthly cash payments to subsidize rents for eligible B.C. residents who are age 60 or over and who pay rent for their homes.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 257-7756

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Website: www.bchousing.org (enter “SAFER” in Search)

Sickness Benefits

(see Employment Insurance (EI) Benefits – Sickness Benefits)

SPARC

Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia. Contact SPARC to obtain a parking permit for a person with a disability.

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 718-7794

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 718-7744

(Parking permit inquiries)

Website: www.sparc.bc.ca

Strata Housing

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “Strata Housing” in Search)

(see Civil Resolution Tribunal to resolve strata disputes)

Subsidized Housing

(see BC Housing)

T

Taxi Bill of Rights

Website: www.taxirights.gov.bc.ca

Taxi Saver Program

BC Transit

(Greater Victoria and the rest of B.C. outside Metro Vancouver)

Outside of Victoria, contact your local transit operator.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 995-5618

Website: www.bctransit.com

TransLink

(Metro Vancouver only)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 778 452-2860

Website: www.translink.ca

Taxpayer Services Information Line (Province of B.C.)

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 387-3332

Teach a Parent (ABC Life Literacy Canada)

In partnership with Youth Empowering Parents, this initiative will engage and teach youth to improve the digital literacy levels of their parents, other adults and seniors in their communities. Youth trainers will develop their skills through online downloadable tutor guides and will provide personalized instruction to adults on topics such as keyboard typing, Internet browsing, online safety and password protection, and accessing e-services. Available in many languages.

Email: info@abclifeliteracy.ca

Telephone Device for the Deaf (Service BC)

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD): 711 (Across B.C.)

Temporary Premium Assistance (Medical Services Plan)

Temporary Premium Assistance provides a short-term period of MSP premium waiver for qualifying individuals and families.

Mailing Address:

PO Box 9627 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9P1

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7100

Phone (Lower Mainland): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “temporary premium assistance” in Search)

Tenant Resource Advisory Centre

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 665-1185

Website: www.tenants.bc.ca

Tobacco Cessation (resources to help you quit smoking)

QuitNow Program

Phone (toll-free):

1 877 455-2233

Website: www.quitnow.ca

BC Smoking Cessation Program

Phone: 8-1-1

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “pharmacare
cessation” in Search)

Trans Lifeline

Trans Lifeline is a new Transgender Crisis Hotline, which has recently opened a toll-free line in Canada. Their goal is to assist anyone who may be struggling with their gender identity and connect them with services that can assist them in their journey.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 565-8860

Transcare BC (PHSA)

Transcare provides various types of resources for gender-affirming care and the following related issues: legal/advocacy, immigrant and refugee, partners and spouses, caregiver and family.

Website: www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/care-support

Transit Seniors’ Fare Discounts

TransLink

(Metro Vancouver only)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 953-3333

Website: www.translink.ca

BC Transit

(Greater Victoria and the rest of B.C. outside Metro Vancouver)

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 382-6161

Website: www.bctransit.com

Travel Assistance Program (for medical travel)

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-7100

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “travel assistance program” in Search)

U

**University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine
interCultural Online (iCON) Health Network**

(see iCON)

V

Vehicle Sales Authority of British Columbia

The Vehicle Sales Authority (VSA) of British Columbia is a not-for-profit agency authorized by the provincial government to administer the *Motor Dealer Act* and sections of the *Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act*. The VSA provides consumer information about the purchase, lease and consigning of vehicles. Dispute resolution between consumers and licensed dealers is also available.

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 574-5050

Website: www.mvsabc.com

Veteran Specialty License Plates

To apply for a veteran specialty plate, print the application form from ICBC's website or pick up a copy from your Autoplan broker. For further information, please contact one of the organizations listed below.

Website: www.icbc.com (enter "Veteran plates" in Search)

British Columbia Veterans Commemorative Association

Website: www.bcveterans.org

BC Yukon Command, Royal Canadian Legion

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 575-8840

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 261-2211

Website: www.legionbcyukon.ca

Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association

Website: www.cpva.ca

Veterans Affairs Canada

Phone (toll-free, English): 1 866 522-2122

Phone (toll-free, French): 1 866-522-2022

Website: www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/services

VictimLink BC

VictimLink BC is a toll-free, confidential telephone service available across B.C. and Yukon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. VictimLink BC provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence. VictimLink BC provides service in more than 110 languages, including 17 North American Indigenous languages.

Phone (toll-free in B.C. and Yukon): 1 800 563-0808

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY]): 604 875-0885

(to call collect, please dial the TELUS Relay Service at 7-1-1)

Website: www.victimlinkbc.ca

Victim Services

The Province supports more than 400 programs across B.C. to assist victims of crime, and women and children impacted by violence.

Phone (toll-free in B.C. and Yukon): 1 800 563-0808

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “victim services” in Search)

Virtual Tax Clinic Finder

This website provides in-depth information about taxes. The site also provides contact information for individuals who deliver tax services to older adults free of charge.

Website: www.canada.ca (enter “free tax clinics” in Search)

Volunteer BC

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 379-2311

Email: info@volunteerbc.bc.ca

Website: www.volunteerbc.bc.ca

Volunteer Canada

Website: www.volunteer.ca

W

WelcomeBC

WelcomeBC provides information about programs, services and resources for newcomers to British Columbia, and publishes the BC Newcomers' Guide. For assistance, call or visit:

Website: www.WelcomeBC.ca

WorkBC

WorkBC is a provincial website to help all British Columbians navigate BC's labour market, including information, programs and services for mature workers.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 952-6914

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 952-6914

Website (general): www.workbc.ca

Website (mature workers): www.workbc.ca/Resources-for/Mature-Workers.aspx

WorkSafeBC

WorkSafeBC is dedicated to promoting workplace health and safety for B.C. workers and employers.

Employer and Small Business Inquiries

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 922-2768

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 244-6181

Claims or rehabilitation (Claims Call Centre)

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 967-5377

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 231-8888

Website: www.worksafebc.com/en

To report unsafe working conditions or an emergency:

Phone (toll-free, during business hours): 1 888 621-7233

Phone (toll-free, after hours): 1 866 922-4357

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604-276-3100



Ministry of
Health



For information about government programs and services, visit
www.SeniorsBC.ca.

For information about healthy aging, visit www.HealthyFamiliesBC.ca

For health-related information, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.

To order additional copies of this Guide call:
Phone (toll-free in B.C.): 1 877 952-3181
Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 952-3181