

# BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Jurisdictional Profile

2023 Report

*A profile of governance, programs, and services for the aging population in British Columbia*

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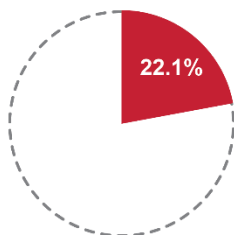
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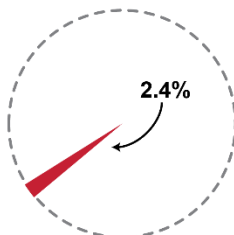
**Preamble:** British Columbia's two bodies responsible for seniors' policy and service delivery are the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

## British Columbia Seniors Demographics

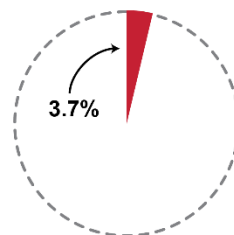
Residents aged 65 and older<sup>4</sup>



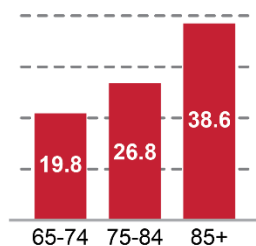
Residents aged 85 and older<sup>5</sup>



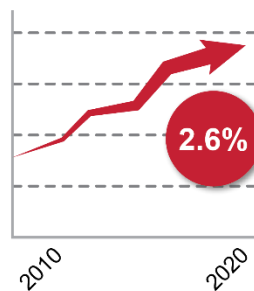
Multi-generational households<sup>4</sup>



Percentage of older adults living alone<sup>1,2,3</sup>



Increase in elder abuse cases<sup>6</sup>



1 Statistics Canada:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810013401&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.133&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1&pickMembers%5B2%5D=3.9&pickMembers%5B3%5D=4.1>

2 Statistics Canada:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810013401&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.133&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1&pickMembers%5B2%5D=3.10&pickMembers%5B3%5D=4.1>

3 Statistics Canada:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810013401&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.133&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1&pickMembers%5B2%5D=3.11&pickMembers%5B3%5D=4.1>

4 Statistics Canada: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810013801&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.133&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1>

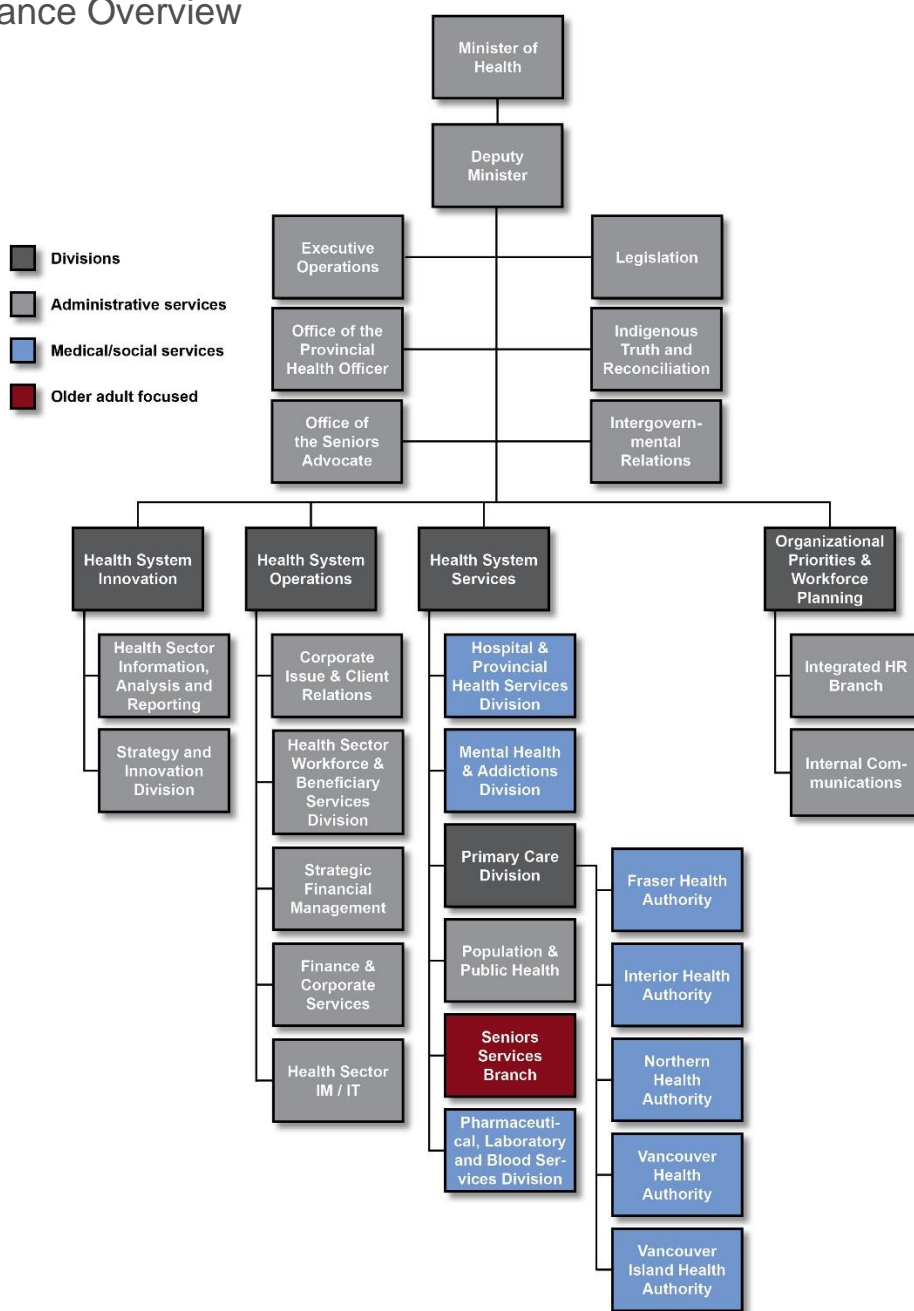
5 Statistics Canada: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810002001&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.141&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1>

6 Statistics Canada: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00011/tbl/tbl09-eng.htm>

## Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health is responsible for regulating and providing health services for British Columbia residents. Several branches within the Ministry of Health focus specifically on the health of older adults. These include the Seniors' Services Division, and the Office of the Seniors Advocate. Within the Seniors' Services Division, Community Care Supports is responsible for assisted living and community care licensing and rates, while the Seniors' Services Branch oversees the provision of government funded home care, long term care and assisted living services. Older adults also access a range of other services and benefits that are regulated by or provided through the Ministry of Health.

### Governance Overview





## Strategies / Action Plans

This section includes strategies, action plans, and other relevant reports from government that outline commitments and progress toward serving older adults.

- [2022/23-2024/25 Service Plan](#)
- [2020 Minister's Mandate Letter](#)
- [Health Human Resources Strategy](#)

## Legal Framework<sup>7</sup>

The legal framework consists of legislation passed in British Columbia that direct the Ministry of Health and/or any agencies or non-governmental entities under its purview. This list is not exhaustive, and contains only legislation related to older adult care in the province.

- Community Care and Assisted Living Act
- Drinking Water Protection Act
- E-Health (Personal Health Information Access and Protection of Privacy) Act
- Emergency and Health Services Act
- Food Safety Act
- Health Authorities Act
- Health Professions Act
- Hospital Act
- Laboratory Services Act
- Medicare Protection Act and Regulations
- Mental Health Act
- Patient Care Quality Review Board Act
- Pharmaceutical Services Act
- Public Health Act
- Societies Act
- [British Columbia Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nations Health Governance](#)

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<sup>7</sup> B.C. Laws: <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/content/complete/statreg/?xsl=/templates/browse.xsl>

## Programs and Services

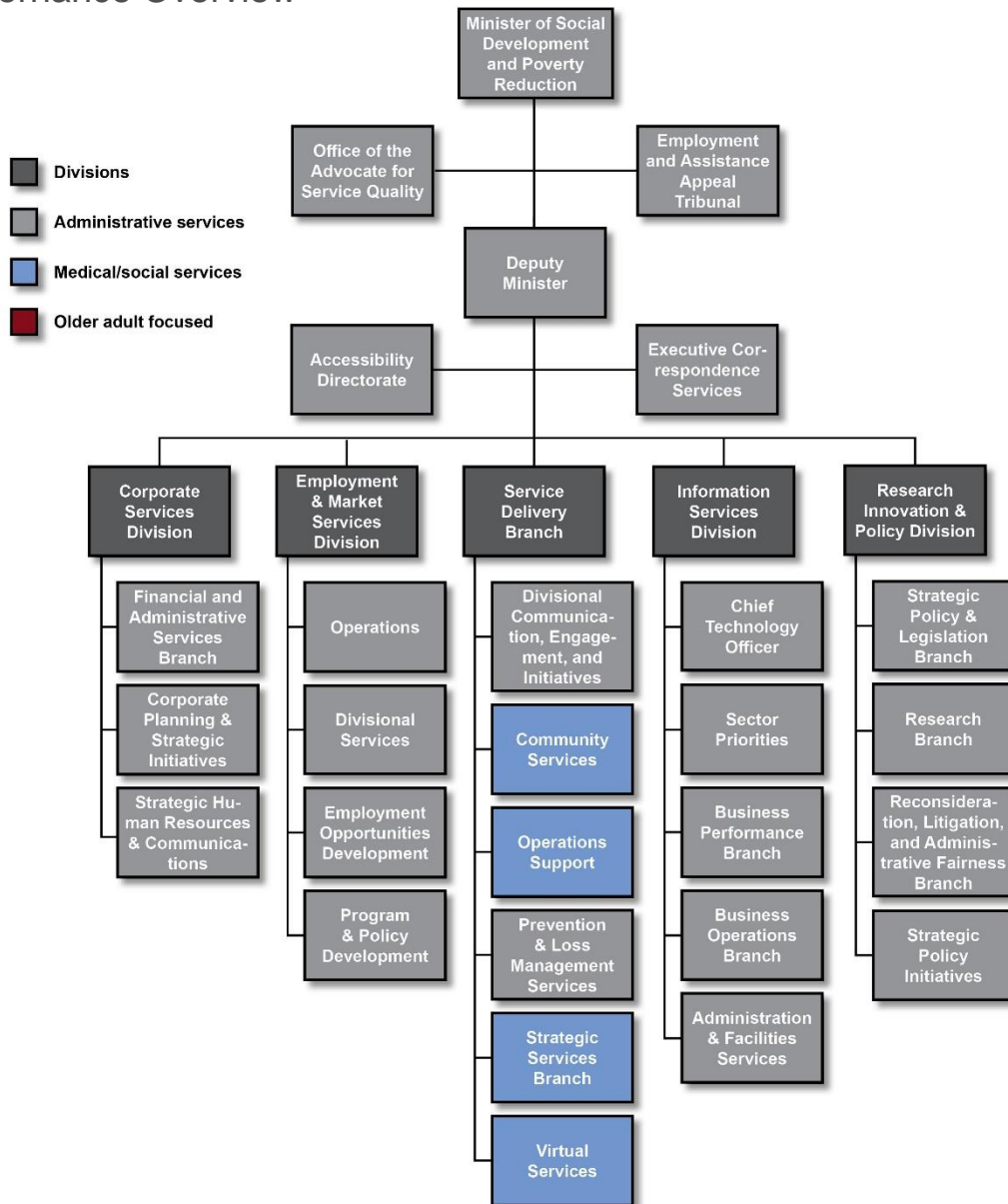
The following list provides an overview of some of the relevant and available programs and services for older adults.

- [Medical Services Plan](#)
  - [HealthLink BC](#)
  - [BC Cancer](#)
  - [BC Renal](#)
  - [BC Surgical Patient Registry](#)
  - [BC Transplant](#)
  - [Cardiac Services BC](#)
  - [Provincial Retinal Disease Treatment](#)
  - [Trauma Services BC](#)
  - [PharmaCare](#)
  - [Fair PharmaCare](#)
  - [BC Emergency Health Services](#)
  - [BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services](#)
  - [BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre](#)
  - [Indigenous Health](#)
  - [Stroke Services BC](#)
  - [Seniors BC](#)
- 
- Provided through Regional Health Authorities
  - [Family Doctors and Primary Care](#)
  - [Home Care](#)
  - [Assistive Devices and Disability Support](#)
  - [Retirement Homes, Nursing, Homes, and Care Homes](#)
  - [Hospitals and Health Clinics](#)
  - [End-of-Life Care](#)

## Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

The Ministry for Social Development and Poverty Reduction provides programs and financial supports to assist British Columbians who have low incomes or live with physical or cognitive incapacities. Some supports and programs, such as the B.C. Seniors Supplement, are provided specifically for older adults. Older adults are also eligible for many supports and programs provided for people facing physical or cognitive challenges, including accessing Health Supplements and programs provided through the B.C. Employment and Assistance Program.

### Governance Overview



## Strategies / Action Plans

This section includes strategies, action plans, and other relevant reports from government that outline commitments and progress toward serving older adults.

- [2022/23-2024/25 Service Plan](#)
- [TogetherBC: BC's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#)
- [2020 Mandate Letter](#)
- [StrongerBC Economic Recovery Plan](#)

## Legal Framework

The legal framework consists of legislation passed in British Columbia that direct the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and/or any agencies or non-governmental entities under its purview. This list is not exhaustive, and contains only legislation related to older adult care in the province <sup>8</sup>.

- Employment and Assistance Act, 2002
  - Employment and Assistance Regulation, 2002
- Community Living Authority Act, 2004
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Act, 2018
- Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act, 2002
  - Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Regulation, 2002
- Accessible British Columbia Act, 2021

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<sup>8</sup> B.C. Laws: <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/content/complete/statreg/?xsl=/templates/browse.xsl>



## Programs and Services

The following list provides an overview of some of the relevant and available programs and services for older adults.

- [BC Employment and Assistance Program](#)
- [Health Supplements and Programs](#)
- [BC Senior's Supplement](#)
- [BC Bus Pass Program](#)
- [Disability Assistance Program](#)
- [PST Exemptions for People with Disabilities](#)

## Government of British Columbia Agencies

This section lists bodies that may have influence over policy or practice that impacts the delivery of services and supports to older adults <sup>9,10,11,12</sup>.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Office of the Seniors Advocate</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An independent office that monitors and analyzes older adult services</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Health Insurance B.C.</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Administers medical and drug coverage for British Columbians</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">WorkBC</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The agency delivers provincial employment and benefits programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Assisted Living Registry</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The agency provides registration and regulates assisted living facilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Living BC</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This Crown corporation funds supports and services for adults with developmental disabilities or who have significant difficulties doing things on their own</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|---|--|

<sup>9</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2022/sp/pdf/ministry/hlth.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/orqanizational-structure/ministries-orqanizations/ministries/social-development-poverty-reduction>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2022/sp/pdf/ministry/sdpr.pdf>

## Provincial Priorities/New Initiatives/Announcements

The following section comprises a review of recent government announcements and budgets that have dedicated resources and action to improving programs, policy, and services offered to older adults in British Columbia. These priorities span both government departments highlighted above.

### Financial Supports

- As part of the 2019 TogetherBC Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Ministry of Health introduced the Fair Pharmacare Program, which included eliminating drug co-payments for older adults born before 1940 earning a net annual income of \$14,000 or less.<sup>13</sup>
- In the 2020 Mandate Letter to the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the Minister was directed to build on the province's Poverty Reduction Plan.<sup>14</sup>
- The 2021 budget announced \$1.6 billion to provide supports for people receiving income and disability assistance – including low-income older adults.<sup>15</sup>
  - o The B.C. Senior's Supplement increased by \$50/month and an estimated additional 20,000 older adults would become eligible.<sup>16,17</sup>

### Housing

- The 2019 TogetherBC Poverty Reduction Strategy announced investment of \$1.9 billion over 10 years for B.C. Housing to construct 14,000 affordable rental homes, including some for older adults.<sup>18</sup>
  - o B.C. Housing also increased the monthly payment through the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program by \$78 to \$265/month.
- The 2021 Budget announced increased funding for new affordable housing units, which includes units for older adults.<sup>19</sup>
  - o The Home Owner Grant program was increased by \$275 for people over age 65.

### Healthcare Human Resources

- The 2020 Mandate Letter to the Minister of Health directed the Minister to aim to hire 7000 staff in long-term care and assisted living through the Health Career Access Program.<sup>20</sup>
  - o The 2022/23-2024/25 Service Plan drafted by the Ministry of Health set out the goal of funding individual LTC homes to reach minimum 3.36 direct care hours per day for each resident.<sup>21</sup>

13 2019 TogetherBC Poverty Reduction Strategy: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/initiatives-plans-strategies/poverty-reduction-strategy/togetherbc.pdf>

14 2020 Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Mandate Letter: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/SDPR-Simons-mandate.pdf>

15 Budget and Fiscal Plan: 2021/22-2023/4: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021\\_Budget%20and%20Fiscal%20Plan.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021_Budget%20and%20Fiscal%20Plan.pdf)

16 2022/23-2024/25 Service Plan: <https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2022/sp/pdf/ministry/sdpr.pdf>

17 StrongerBC: Economic Recovery Plan: [https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/StrongerBC\\_Economic\\_Plan\\_2022.pdf](https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/StrongerBC_Economic_Plan_2022.pdf)

18 2019 TogetherBC Poverty Reduction Strategy: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/initiatives-plans-strategies/poverty-reduction-strategy/togetherbc.pdf>

19 Budget and Fiscal Plan: 2021/22-2023/4: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021\\_Budget%20and%20Fiscal%20Plan.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021_Budget%20and%20Fiscal%20Plan.pdf)

20 2020 Minister of Health Mandate Letter: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/HLTH-Dix-mandate.pdf>

21 2022/23-2024/25 Ministry of Health Service Plan: <https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2022/sp/pdf/ministry/hlth.pdf>

- The 2021/22 – 2023/24 budget announced funding of \$68 million over 3 years to increase staffing for home care.<sup>22</sup>
  - o It also allocated \$585 million for recruiting, training, and hiring 3000 health care workers for long-term care and assisted living.
  - o The funding for hiring and training was accompanied by legislative changes to care home working conditions and repealed legislation that promoted workforce privatization.<sup>23</sup>
- The 2022 Healthcare Human Resources Strategy identified older adults' health as a priority.<sup>24</sup>
  - o It highlighted allocating since 2017 over \$1 billion to health care workers.
    - Those allocations include hiring over 7000 staff for older adults' health care, including more than 3500 Health Care Assistants who were participants in the Health Care Access Program implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, Health Authorities, WorkBC, Indigenous organizations, health sector unions and other groups. The Strategy stated that the Ministry of Health expects there will be 9000 Health Care Access Program participants by April 2024.

### Healthcare Infrastructure

- The 2020 Mandate letter and 2022/23-2024/25 Service Plan for the Ministry of Health directed the Ministry to work toward eliminating multi-bed rooms in health-authority owned long-term care facilities.<sup>25,26</sup>
  - o The Ministry of Health also plans to build more public care homes with additional beds, and increase accountability of publicly funded private long-term care facilities.
- The 2021 Budget announced \$12 million to support a Home Health Monitoring Initiative.<sup>27</sup>

### Health Service Delivery

- In the 2022/23-2024/25 Service Plan, the Ministry of Health set several service delivery improvement goals. These include:
  - o Improving the range of supports for people in LTC
  - o Expanding community-based care models and digital solutions, such as the CareConnect electronic health record system
  - o Improving integrated team and community-based care for older adults with complex needs
  - o Improving access to end-of-life care
  - o Engaging with community and Indigenous partners to provide supports for older adults in the community.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Budget and Fiscal Plan: 2021/22-2023/4: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021\\_Budget%20and%20Fiscal%20Plan.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021_Budget%20and%20Fiscal%20Plan.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Budget 2021: Strategic Plan: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021\\_Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021_Strategic_Plan.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> 2022 Health Human resources Strategy: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BCHealthHumanResourcesStrategy-Sept2022.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> 2020 Minister of Health Mandate Letter: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/HLTH-Dix-mandate.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> 2022/23-2024/25 Ministry of Health Service Plan: <https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2022/sp/pdf/ministry/hlth.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Budget and Fiscal Plan: 2021/22-2023/4: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021\\_Budget%20and%20Fiscal%20Plan.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021_Budget%20and%20Fiscal%20Plan.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> 2022/23-2024/25 Ministry of Health Service Plan: <https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2022/sp/pdf/ministry/hlth.pdf>

- The 2022 Health Human Resources Strategy includes the goal of enabling older adults to age in their homes and communities; important supports are integrated primary care and community-based services. Four areas of focus related to older adults' health include:
  - o 1. promoting healthy living supports for older adults
  - o 2. Access to team-based primary care
  - o 3. Access to home health services
  - o 4. Strengthening the quality of long-term care.<sup>29</sup>

### COVID-19 Control

- The Ministry of Health 2020 Mandate letter directed the Minister to continue with COVID-19 measures to protect older adults.<sup>30</sup>
- The 2021 Budget announced an additional \$900 million for COVID-19 control measures.<sup>31</sup> There Include:
  - o Ongoing screening of staff at long-term care.<sup>32</sup>
  - o Prioritized vaccination of older adults and staff in care homes.
- Between April and December 2020, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction provided a \$300/month COVID-19 Crisis Supplement to B.C. residents who received income assistance or the B.C. Seniors' Supplement.<sup>33</sup>
- The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction 2020 Mandate Letter directed the Minister to respond to challenges presented by COVID-19 and support inclusive recovery.<sup>34</sup>
  - o The Crisis Supplement was discontinued after December 2020. However, a permanent \$50/month increase was made to the B.C. Seniors' Supplement.

### Mental Health and Addictions Supports

- The 2020 Mandate Letter to the Minister of Health directed the Minister to work with government and community partners to develop a Silver Alert system to help locate missing older adults, especially those with dementia or Alzheimer's disease.<sup>35</sup>
- The 2021 Budget announced \$39 million for mental health and addictions supports, including for older adults.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> 2022 Health Human resources Strategy: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BCHealthHumanResourcesStrategy-Sept2022.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> 2020 Minister of Health Mandate Letter: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/HLTH-Dix-mandate.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Budget 2021: Strategic Plan: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021\\_Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021_Strategic_Plan.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Budget 2021 Highlights: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021\\_Highlights.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021_Highlights.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> 2020 TogetherBC Annual Report: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/social-development-poverty-reduction/togetherbc-report-2020.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> 2020 Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Mandate Letter: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/SDPR-Simons-mandate.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> 2020 Minister of Health Mandate Letter: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/HLTH-Dix-mandate.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Budget and Fiscal Plan: 2021/22-2023/4: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021\\_Budget%20and%20Fiscal%20Plan.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2021/pdf/2021_Budget%20and%20Fiscal%20Plan.pdf)

## Key Stakeholders in British Columbia

This section lists bodies that may have influence over policy or practice that impacts the delivery of services and supports to older adults.

- Alzheimer Society of British Columbia  
<https://alzheimer.ca/bc/en>
- Arthritis Society <http://www.arthritis.ca/bc>
- B.C. Association of Community Response Networks <http://www.bccrns.ca/>
- B.C. Brain Injury Association  
<http://www.bccrns.ca/>
- B.C. Care Providers Association  
<http://www.bccare.ca/>
- B.C. Hospice Palliative Care Association  
<http://www.bchpca.org/>
- Osteoporosis Society of Canada  
<http://www.osteoporosis.ca/>
- Parkinson Society of British Columbia  
<http://www.parkinson.bc.ca/>
- Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health <http://www.ccsmh.ca/en/default.cfm>
- Family Caregivers of British Columbia  
<https://www.familycaregiversbc.ca/>
- Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C. <https://coscobc.org/>
- British Columbia Old Age Pensioners' Organization <http://www.bcoapo.org/>
- Senior Citizens Association of B.C.  
<https://seniorsofbc.com/>
- Seniors Helping Seniors  
<https://seniorshelpingseniors.ca/>
- Council to Reduce Elder Abuse B.C.  
<http://www.reduceelderabusebc.ca/>
- United Way British Columbia  
<https://uwbc.ca/>
- Seniors First B.C. <https://seniorsfirstbc.ca/>
- B.C. Healthy Communities Society  
<http://bchealthycommunities.ca/>
- March of Dimes Canada  
<https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca>