BRITISH COLUMBIA

e-Newsletter

SENIORSBC.ca

Volume 4 / Issue 3 / October 2013

Inside this issue

	Click to view page
Message from the Minister	1-2
Grants for communities	3
Farmers' market coupons	4
Invest in your social circle	4
Consumer tips for seniors	5
More hours for seniors line	6
Val Murray- bridging generations	7
Fall prevention week	8
Pumpkin raisin muffins recipe	9



Message from Minister of Health



I was honoured to be appointed B.C.'s Minister of Health in June of this year. As Minister, the care and well-being of seniors is one of my top priorities and is a priority I share with my new Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors, Linda Larson. Together we will continue to work to improve the system of care for seniors and to support healthy, active and independent aging.

I am proud of the fact that British Columbians are living longer and our growing senior population is something to be celebrated. In fact, seniors (65+) currently make up almost 20 per cent of our province's population. This diverse group of people with varying needs and distinct interests must be recognized and represented.

We will continue to support B.C.'s seniors to be active members of our community by focusing on healthy living, managing chronic conditions and by providing a broad range of residential care options for those who need it. For the 95 per cent of seniors who live at home, we will continue to work with local governments and community partners to

provide innovative solutions that will support them to remain active and engaged in their community and close to their family, friends and neighbours.

Over the past year we have made significant progress on the actions set out in Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan. As part of that progress, we passed legislation to create a Seniors' Advocate. The advocate will monitor seniors' services, promote awareness, work collaboratively with policy makers, care providers, seniors, their families and others to identify solutions to systemic issues, and make recommendations to government to improve the welfare of older British Columbians.

I am now considering options for the appointment of the Advocate. Given the anticipated impact of this new role, it is important that appropriate time be taken to identify a suitable candidate. Once appointed, the Advocate will be the first of his or her kind in Canada.

I encourage all British Columbians to visit our SeniorsBC website at: www.SeniorsBC.ca to review the progress made in our seniors action plan and to access valuable resources and tools designed to assist families, seniors and their caregivers.

Seniors in British Columbia have dedicated their lives to making this province magnificent and I am committed to ensuring that those who cared for us will be cared for, respected and free to enjoy the province that they worked so hard to make great.

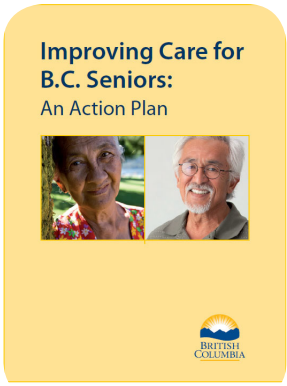


Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors Linda Larson, MLA

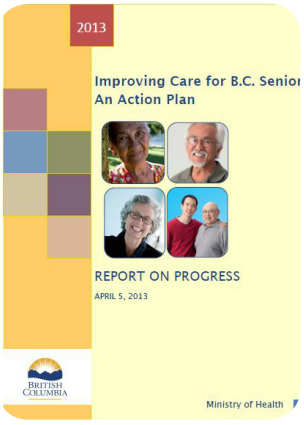
During my first few months as your Health Minister, I have visited a number of communities around the province, including recently attending and participating in the B.C. Seniors Games in my hometown of Kamloops. There, I was able to meet individuals from every region of the province and share in what was an amazing celebration of the athleticism and determination of B.C. seniors. In the months ahead, I am looking forward to meeting more seniors and their families from around the province as we work together to create an even better future for older British Columbians.

Sincerely,

Terry Lake
Minister of Health



www.gov.bc.ca/seniorsactionplan



www.gov.bc.ca/seniorsactionplanreport

New grant funding to help communities become more age-friendly

Sometimes all that prevents a senior from getting outside and enjoying their local park or community event is the lack of a bench to serve as a rest stop or affordable and accessible transportation that will accommodate a wheelchair or walker.

Local governments from across British Columbia can now apply for the 2014 round of Age-friendly Community Planning and Project grants to help seniors in their community keep active, healthy and socially engaged.

This successful grant program is a partnership between the Government of British Columbia and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and allows local governments to apply for grants of up to $20,000 to help establish projects that support the needs of older residents.

One of last year's successful projects was Fort St. James' No Resident Left Behind seniors' transportation initiative aimed at developing a transportation system designed by seniors for seniors. The ultimate goal of this senior-led initiative was to engage local stakeholders and community partners to establish long-term transportation to help seniors access community events and programs regardless of how remote their residence is.

To date, Age-friendly Community Planning and Project grants have funded almost 200 projects in more than 100 communities throughout British Columbia. Along with the call for 2014 applicants, the Ministry of Health recently announced funding of $500,000 to continue to support this important program.

To learn more about Age-friendly B.C. and link to the grant application, please visit: www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly.

Local governments that apply for a grant will be notified of the status of their application by November 29, 2013.



Seniors are enjoying expanded farmers' market coupon program

All across the province, in 34 communities, lower-income seniors are participating in an innovative program that provides them with fresh fruit and vegetables from their local farmers markets.

In 2012 the BC Association of Farmers' Markets received $2-million in funding from the Provincial Health Services Authority to expand the Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program (FMNCP) across B.C. A recent additional investment of $2-million will support the expanded program until 2016. Through this program, local community partners will provide seniors with $15 in coupons over a 16 week period which can be used to purchase fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, dairy, herbs, nuts and eggs at their local farmers' market. The seniors also participate in food and nutrition skill building activities such as community kitchens, gardening, canning, and the Canadian Diabetes Association's Food Skills for Families workshops.

The community partners receive amazing feedback such as the following:

"One senior citizen who is a part of the program broke down into tears when she was given the option to join the program. This person has recently been diagnosed with cancer and has been told to eat healthy, with low sodium foods and lots of vegetables. The senior said she is very excited about being reconnected with the community, and being able to eat healthy local foods while she fights this illness."



Through the FMNCP, we are seeing seniors across B.C. improve their health and their connection to the community.

To find out more about the FMNCP please visit: www.bcfarmersmarket.org or call 604 734-9797.



Planning tip: Invest in your social portfolio for healthy aging

Get involved! Invest in your social portfolio. Having a confidante and the support of family and friends provides the best rate of return for a longer, healthier life.

Social isolation has been linked to an increased risk of premature death. Ideally, your social portfolio will include an intergenerational mix of young and old. You can achieve this through volunteering, taking a course, mentoring, or being engaged in your community. People with rich social networks tend to be more active, feel happier and maintain their cognitive function longer.

For more information and tools to help you plan for healthy aging please visit: www.gov.bc.ca/healthyaging.

Top five consumer tips before making a purchase

In today's world we receive many offers on the phone, TV, radio and online that promise us a great deal. Remember, if it seems too good to be true, it is.

Consumer Protection BC is a not-for-profit corporation that helps consumers make informed decisions on a wide variety of topics. In this issue they share their top five consumer tips to consider before making a purchase (especially a big one!).

1. Trust your gut; it can often help you identify a scam.

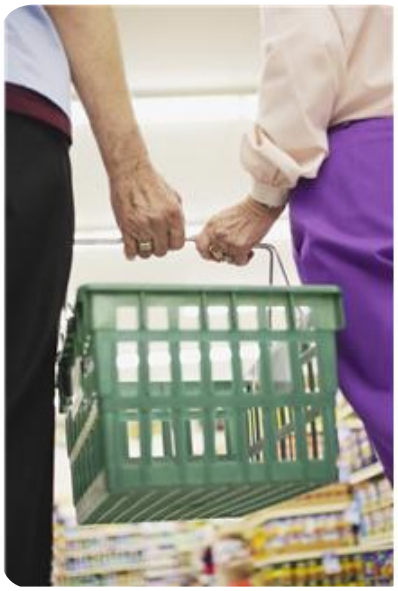
2. Read the fine print. It's important for consumers to read – and understand – all the terms and conditions and cancellation rights before signing on the dotted line. Consider having a friend or relative help you understand all the fine print before signing.

3. Know your rights. There are laws in B.C. that protect consumers. Whether it's travel services, expiry dates, gift cards or the cancellation of gym contracts (for example), you have rights you may not know about.

4. Do your homework. Shop around to compare the product, the cost, warranties and more. Find out how a company handles complaints. Ask for references and do a little research of your own - search for online reviews and check in with friends and family members to see if they have experiences to share.

5. Stick to a budget. Many ads can make us feel that we "need" a specific item but it's important to be realistic about what you can afford and determine if the purchase is really a "need" or a "want." If there are payment plans being offered, find out the real cost of the product once everything is paid for, including fees!

If you find yourself in a dispute with a business over a service or product, consider using Consumer Protection BC's Online Dispute Resolution self-help tool. Find out more about this free and easy to use tool at: www.resolveyourdispute.ca.



If you have questions about your rights and responsibilities as a consumer in British Columbia, or if you are not sure who to contact for help, please contact Consumer Protection BC toll-free at 1 888 564-9963 or visit: www.consumerprotectionbc.ca. You can also find more information about financial abuse affecting seniors at: www.gov.bc.ca/elderabuse.

Seniors Abuse and Information Line extends hours



604 437-1940 I 1 866 437-1940 (toll-free)

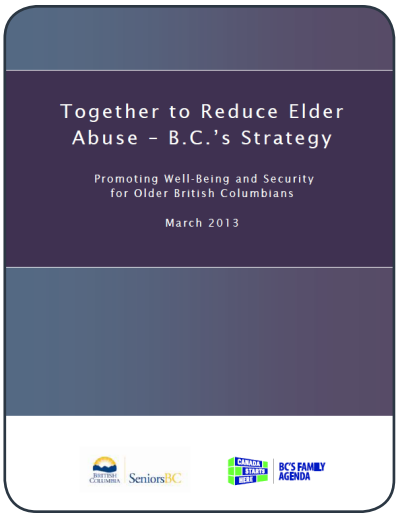
Now available 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily (excluding holidays)

If you are in immediate danger, call 9-1-1

The toll-free, province-wide Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL) is available longer since July 1 to provide services seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (excluding holidays).

SAIL, operated by the non-profit organization BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support (BCCEAS – www.bcceas.ca) 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.

SAIL staff and volunteers are trained to provide a listening, non-judgmental, and supportive ear. They refer eligible callers with a legal question or problem to one of their legal staff. Callers who are victims of abuse or a crime, and who need practical and emotional support may be referred to BCCEAS' Victim Services Program. Staff also provide information about services in the community that may help with the particular issue, and may refer a caller to the relevant health authority to report allegations of abuse.



Together to Reduce Elder Abuse – B.C.'s Strategy was launched on March 6, 2013. The strategy outlines measures to improve prevention, recognition and response, as well as coordination and collaboration, and serves as a challenge for all British Columbians to help reduce elder abuse. Expanding the hours and capacity of SAIL marks the completion of one of the key actions in the strategy.

The strategy and additional information about elder abuse prevention, recognition and response can be found at: www.gov.bc.ca/elderabuse.

Senior in the Spotlight

Meet Val Murray

Val Murray used to teach elementary education at the University of B.C. and the University of Victoria, and has always been interested in innovative programs. While supervising in the Cordova Bay School, Val was struck by the unique opportunities arising from having a seniors' centre located in the same building as the elementary school. Val was kind enough to answer a few of our questions.

Q: Can you tell us a little about the Cordova Bay School and 55 Plus Association's first intergenerational hobby and collectables fair?

Val: The school children were invited into the 55 Plus space to see a display of seniors' hobbies and collections and became inspired to participate in a joint "Hobbies and Collections fair" that would showcase items of collectable interest from both senior and student groups ages six through 80+.

Q: Have you held any other intergenerational events with the school?

Val: Seniors in the 55 Plus constantly participate in activities with the school children. We have special events and seasonal assemblies, performances, crafts, and a reading program together. I initiated Handy Grandies, where 55 Plus members work with students to make and sell beaded items. Since September 2007, we've raised over $7,000 for the Stephen Lewis Foundation, giving money to grandmothers in Africa raising a generation of children orphaned by AIDS.

Q: How have the 55 Plus members and the children benefited from these connections?

Val: Some seniors don't have grandchildren living close by, and some children don't have grandparents. The seniors benefit from the children's youthful curiosity, enthusiasm and



spark, and the children benefit from the experience, awareness, and calm settled energy of the seniors. We all benefit from trying new things and having fun. These projects engage seniors and children in innovative ways, generating connections and building relationships through mutual interests, which is the foundation of any community. We share ideas and continually learn which is inspiring for everyone. There is great support from both the school and the 55 Plus Association for these intergenerational connections. We enjoy mutual trust and respect and have good people working together for the benefit of all.

Every community is an ecosystem, and for any ecosystem to thrive, all parts need to be connected. Society tends to separate people into categories, particularly when it comes to seniors. Any community ecosystem needs a full range of human experience, from elders to children, and all ages in between. The more we feel connected to each other, the healthier our communities will be. We have so much to gain by getting to know all the members of our community and learning what each of us has to share.

A new survey for B.C. Seniors' Fall Prevention Awareness Week 2013



Did you know that falls are the leading cause of injury and loss of independence among seniors? Although the risk factors increase with age, falls are not an inevitable part of aging. Falls usually happen due to the combined effects of factors that can be prevented, and the more risk factors a person has, the greater their chances of falling. Many falls can be prevented, and there are many resources available to help seniors stay healthy and independent as long as possible.

To raise awareness about the importance of reducing falls and related injuries the Province of British Columbia annually proclaims the first week of November as Seniors' Fall Prevention Awareness Week. The seventh annual Seniors' Fall Prevention Awareness Week will be held November 4-10, 2013.

To find out if you or your family members are at risk of falls take the online interactive survey: Are You at Risk of Falling?



Here are some other key tips to help you or your loved ones reduce the risk of a fall:

- Increase physical activity and muscle strength
- Improve mobility and balance
- Ensure adequate levels of vitamin D and calcium, through diet and supplements
- Have regular vision check-ups and correct vision problems
- Review all medications with a doctor or pharmacist
- Reduce trip and slip hazards in the home or outdoors

For additional information, including suggestions and resources for these key ways to prevent falls, visit the SeniorsBC fall prevention website at: www.gov.bc.ca/fallprevention.

Eat Well, Age Well Recipe

Pumpkin Raisin Muffins



Source: Healthy Eating for Seniors handbook

To order a free copy of the Healthy Eating for Seniors handbook please call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 or download a copy from: www.gov.bc.ca/seniorshealthyeating.

Per Muffin:

Calories: 195 Protein: 4G
Fat: 6G Carbohydrate: 33G
Fibre: 2.3G Sodium: 132MGS
Calcium: 65MGS

Makes 12 muffins

Prep Time: 25 minutes
Baking Time: 20 minutes



Ingredients

1 cup (250 mL) whole wheat flour

¾ cup (175 mL) all-purpose flour

½ cup (125 mL) sugar

2 tsp (10 mL) baking powder

½ tsp (2 mL) baking soda

1 ½ tsp (7 mL) cinnamon

½ tsp (2 mL) nutmeg

½ tsp (2 mL) powdered ginger

¾ cup (175 mL) raisins

7 oz (200 mL) canned pumpkin puree (not pie filling)

¼ cup (60 mL) vegetable oil

1 cup (250 mL) buttermilk or sour milk *

2 eggs

* To make sour milk, add 2 tsp (10 mL) vinegar to 1 cup (250 mL) milk and let sit for five minutes

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190° C).
2. In a large bowl, combine flours, sugar, spices, baking powder, baking soda and raisins.
3. In a smaller bowl, beat eggs, then add pumpkin puree, oil, and buttermilk.
4. Make a large well in the centre of the dry ingredients, pour the pumpkin mixture into this well.
5. Gently fold wet and dry ingredients together until just combined. Do not beat.
6. Spoon batter into paper-lined or lightly greased muffin tins.
7. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes or until firm to touch.