

## Home and Community Care Services

In this report, the Office of the Ombudsperson examined three types of health services for seniors that fall under Home and Community Care Services: home support, assisted living and residential care. Delivering the service is the responsibility of five regional health authorities and while there is legislation that regulates the provision of services, much of the actual operation is guided by policy. Each year, over 50,000 seniors in B.C. and their families are impacted by home and community care services.

### Our Role

The Ombudsperson is an independent officer of the legislature appointed pursuant to the *Ombudsperson Act*. In this investigation, we looked into the administrative actions of provincial authorities with the goal of ensuring they deal with people and deliver services in a fair and equitable manner.

### The Investigation

The seniors investigation was launched in 2008 and in 2009 the Ombudsperson released the results of the first part of the investigation with [The Best of Care \(Part 1\)](#). That report focussed on three residential care issues – residents' rights, public information, and the role of resident and family councils.

The second part of the investigation looked at general home and community care issues, home support, assisted living and residential care and the role of the authorities involved. Issues investigated include access to services, adequacy of information, standards of care, complaints processes, and monitoring and enforcement. The investigation resulted in a [report](#) that makes 143 findings and 176 recommendations. The report, issued in three volumes, can be viewed by selecting: [Overview](#) (summary), [Volume 1](#) (full report on home and community care, home support, assisted living) and [Volume 2](#) (full report on residential care).

## Authorities Involved with the Investigations

The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Housing, the Fraser Health, Interior Health, Northern Health, Vancouver Coastal and Vancouver Island Health authorities were involved in the investigation.

### Key Recommendations (R)

#### Home and Community Care

- Provide clear information to seniors and their families and track key home and community care data and report it publicly in an annual home and community care report (R) 1 to 5, 9 to 11 and 19
- Support seniors and families in navigating the home and community care system (R) 22
- Protect seniors through consistent standards for training, registration, and criminal records checks for all care aides and community health workers (R) 23 to 26
- Protect seniors through consistent reporting and tracking of abuse and neglect (R) 27 to 32
- Protect those who complain in good faith about home and community care services from any adverse consequences for doing so (R) 33

#### Home Support

- Assist seniors to continue to live at home by assessing the adequacy of current home support programs and analysing the benefits and costs of expansion (R) 34
- Ensure equal treatment by developing consistent and adequate time allotments for home support activities (R) 35
- Support seniors by establishing a set time frame within which seniors requiring home support will receive services (R) 36 to 38
- Enhance home support by including continuity of care as an underlying principle (R) 40
- Ensure objective and enforceable standards of care for home support services (R) 42 and 43

### Assisted Living

- Ensure the Office of the Assisted Living Registrar ceases to contract with the Health Employers Association for staff (R) 51
- Ensure fair and equal treatment by ensuring immediately that no seniors are charged extra for services and benefits that are included in the assessed client rate (R) 53
- Ensure there is a legal foundation for any expansion of services and a concurrent increase in the monitoring and enforcement powers of the registrar (R) 54 to 56
- Support Seniors by establishing a timeframe within which seniors requiring assisted living will receive service (R) 63 to 65
- Protect seniors by establishing a clear, consistent and fair process for assessing whether they are still able to live in assisted living (R) 59 to 61, 67
- Ensure objective and enforceable standards of care for assisted living (R) 69
- Provide legally enforceable tenancy rights to assisted living residents (R) 82 to 84
- Enhance protection of seniors by establishing a single, accessible process to respond to all complaints about assisted living (R) 75 to 81
- Enhance protection of seniors by improving reporting of serious incidents (R) 85 to 87
- Establish an active inspection, monitoring and enforcement program (R) 88 and 89

### Residential Care

- Ensure equal treatment, benefits and protection of seniors in residential care by establishing one legislative framework that applies to all residential care facilities (R) 94 to 96
- Provide choice and offer flexibility in moving into residential care (R) 100, 117, 119 and 120
- Act transparently by providing seniors and their families with the information they need to make decisions about placement (R) 102 to 107
- Enhance the transparency of the admissions process by establishing a standard admissions agreement and by bringing Part 3 of the *Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act* into force (R) 86-87
- Ensure fair treatment by not charging seniors involuntarily detained in residential care under the *Mental Health Act* fees (R) 130 to 132
- Ensure objective and enforceable standards of care for seniors in residential care (R) 133 and 134
- Establish consistent rules on the use of restraints (R) 135 to 137
- Ensure there are clear legal requirements that apply to obtaining consent for the administration of medication (R) 139 to 141 and 154
- Establish specific staffing standards for residential care facilities (R) 142 to 143
- Enhance dementia and end-of-life care services in residential care (R) 145 to 147
- Provide a simple and responsive complaints process (R) 148 and 149
- Improve the reporting of incidents, inspections, monitoring and enforcement practices (R) 152, 153, 156 to 167
- Establish more transparent and flexible processes for moves between facilities and moves on closure of facilities (R) 168 to 176

### Additional Notes on the Recommendations

Recommendations can also be accessed by selecting links to the following: [home and community care](#), [home support](#), [assisted living](#), [residential care](#), and by [region](#). The full list is available in the [Overview](#) and [Volume 2](#)