

BC Seniors' Guide



SeniorsBC

11th Edition

Message from the B.C. Government

As the population of British Columbia continues to grow, and grow older, we need to support seniors to be as healthy and as independent as possible. We know that older adults prefer to age in their own homes and communities, and may need access to appropriate services and supports in order to do so. The Government of B.C. is committed to promoting healthy, active aging, and providing information and resources about the services seniors and their families and caregivers need to make good decisions about their health, care, and overall well-being.

The BC Seniors' Guide is a prime example of this commitment. While more and more seniors are accessing resources online, many seniors tell us that they would rather receive information that they can hold in their hands. With the BC Seniors' Guide, we make a wealth of useful information available in print and online, in Chinese, English, French, and Punjabi, to reach as many B.C. seniors as we can. In addition, government partnered with the First Nations Health Authority in 2014 to adapt the BC Seniors' Guide into a new BC Elders' Guide for First Nations and Aboriginal older adults. You can find the BC Seniors' Guide and the BC Elders' Guide online at www.gov.bc.ca/seniorsguide.

In this guide, you will find information and resources on benefits, healthy living, health services, housing, transportation, personal security, finances, and other services. In addition, there is a listing directory at the end of the guide, and questions in each section to consider as you plan to remain as healthy and independent as possible as you grow older. We hope the BC Seniors' Guide will help you find what you're looking for.

For more information on government support for seniors, visit the SeniorsBC website at www.SeniorsBC.ca.

The 11th edition of the British Columbia Seniors' Guide was printed in 2015. Information may change from the time of publication. Visit www.gov.bc.ca/seniorsguide for periodic updates to this guide, as well as translated versions available in Chinese, French and Punjabi.

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Key Contacts





A Personal Record & Emergency Numbers

My Personal Information

Name	
Address	
City	
Postal Code	
Telephone	
Mobile Phone	
BC Services Card Number	
Old Age Security Number	



Key names & telephone numbers

	Name	Telephone #
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 Contacts

The following key contacts can help you find information about healthy living, health care, and government programs and services for B.C. seniors.

HEALTHLINK BC

If you are looking for information or support for your health, nutrition or medical care, visit the HealthLink BC website or contact HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 any time of the day or night. HealthLink BC health service representatives can provide you with information and support on accessing health services or connect you with a nurse, dietitian or pharmacist.

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 your 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 referral. Members of the public are encouraged to call, email or visit the website for information and resources for seniors. The Office of the Seniors Advocate would like to be aware of overarching issues or concerns relating to seniors, so individuals are encouraged to contact the office directly.

Office of the Seniors Advocate

1-2 1515 Blanshard St.

Victoria BC V8W 3C8

Phone (toll-free in B.C.): 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.

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-2421

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-6121

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TDD], toll-free): 1 800 661-8773

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TDD], Metro Vancouver): 604 775-0303

Website: www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

If you think a provincial government ministry, public agency, or local government has treated you unfairly, the Office of the Ombudsperson may be able to help. As an independent statutory office of the provincial legislature, the Office of the Ombudsperson impartially investigates individual complaints about unfair administrative actions of more than 2,800 B.C. public authorities. In addition to resolving individual problems, the investigation of any one 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., Monday to Friday.

Office of the Ombudsperson

2nd Floor 947 Fort St.

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.

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

Website: www.welcomebc.ca



Your
Benefits



Notes

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



Your Benefits and Services Checklist

This is a checklist of some of the benefits and services covered in this guide. As you read through the material, check off the benefits and services for which you may be eligible, or sections you want to refer to later.

PROGRAMS MARKED WITH A STAR (*) ARE SPECIFICALLY FOR SENIORS WITH LOWER INCOMES.

Visit the *Your Lifestyle* section of this guide for information on the following:

- ☐ Child Care Subsidy Program*

Visit the *Your Health* section of this guide for information on the following:

- ☐ Assisted Living
- ☐ BC Services Card
- ☐ Fair PharmaCare*
- ☐ Home and Community Care
- ☐ Medical Services Plan (MSP) Premium Assistance*
- ☐ Patient Care Quality Offices
- ☐ Residential Care
- ☐ Travel Assistance Program (medical)

Visit the *Your Home* section of this guide for information on the following:

- ☐ B.C. Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit*
- ☐ Home Adaptations for Independence Program*
- ☐ Home Owner Grant for Seniors
- ☐ Property Tax Deferral
- ☐ Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) Program*



Visit the *Getting Around* section of this guide for information on the following:

- ☐ BC Ferries Discounts
- ☐ Bus Pass Program*
- ☐ Seniors' Vehicle Insurance Discounts
- ☐ Transit Seniors' Fare Discounts
- ☐ Taxi Saver Program

Visit the *Your Money* section of this guide for information on the following:

- ☐ Allowance/Allowance for the Survivor Benefits*
- ☐ Canada Pension Plan (CPP)
- ☐ Employment Insurance (EI), including EI Compassionate Care and EI Sickness Benefits
- ☐ Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)*
- ☐ Income Assistance for Seniors Not Receiving Old Age Security*
- ☐ Old Age Security (OAS) pension
- ☐ Senior's Supplement*
- ☐ Veterans Affairs Canada Benefits

Visit the *Safety & Security* section of this guide for information on the following:

- ☐ Advance Care Planning
- ☐ Avoiding Scams
- ☐ Emergency and Disaster Preparedness
- ☐ Public Guardian and Trustee of BC
- ☐ Reporting Elder Abuse and Neglect
- ☐ Substitute Decision Makers

Your
Lifestyle





YOUR THOUGHTS AS YOU PLAN FOR HEALTHY AGING

USE THIS SPACE TO RECORD YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS.



How do you plan to stay physically active as you get older?

How will you stay connected with your friends, family and community?

Have you considered sharing your skills and knowledge as a volunteer for an organization or cause that's important to you?

Have you thought about lifelong learning and what new skills or knowledge you want to gain?

What recreational opportunities do you enjoy that can help you stay active and engaged in your community?

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



Your Lifestyle

Seniors Redefine the Concept of Aging

By 2031, more than 1.3 million British Columbians will be over 65 – almost a quarter of the population. Today's seniors enjoy increased life expectancy and generally better health than ever before. They are more physically active and more involved in groups and activities in their communities. They also have better access to information than any previous generation of seniors.

It's all about living a healthy lifestyle, and staying active is the key. The decisions you make every day affect how you age. Only about 30 per cent of the way you age can be explained by biology and genetics. You can actually reduce your risk of chronic disease and disability by staying physically active, eating a healthy diet, living smoke-free, avoiding falls and related injuries, and remaining socially engaged.

In this section of the *BC Seniors' Guide*, you will find 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 BC Seniors' Community Parks across the province.

You can also find information in this section for older volunteers and older workers. Volunteering is a natural fit for seniors interested in staying active and giving back to their communities. Working, even part-time, is another good way to stay active and engaged. The Targeted Initiative for Older Workers program supports unemployed older workers to return to the workforce. The skills and experience that older volunteers and older workers have to share are highly valued.

Taking advantage of lifelong learning and recreational opportunities contributes to a healthy, active lifestyle. This section of the guide can direct you to 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 to support your healthy lifestyle choices.



The following program in this section of the BC Seniors' Guide may be of particular interest to seniors with lower incomes:

☐ Child Care Subsidy Program

HEALTHY LIVING AND WELLNESS

The older we get, the more concerned we tend to be about our health. Healthy living – which includes both healthy eating and regular physical activity – can help you feel great and slow the aging process.

Getting active and staying active benefits more than just our bodies. It helps us stay engaged in life, improves our mood and mental health, and gives us opportunities to meet new people. It also boosts our confidence and self-esteem – and some studies show that physical activity can reduce the risk of health issues like dementia by keeping our minds in good condition.

Together, healthy eating and regular physical activity can help support an independent lifestyle. Healthy eating can give you the energy you need to stay active and do the things you want to do – like working or volunteering, playing with your grandchildren or enjoying a walk around the block.

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 and Punjabi, as well as the BC Elders' Guide, which has been culturally adapted for First Nations and Aboriginal older adults.

Website: www.seniorsbc.ca



Healthy Families BC

Learn more about healthy eating and physical activity, discover some healthy recipes, and take part in our online blogs. Healthy Families BC features programs ranging from new physician-supported lifestyle planning to dietitian and physical activity call services, and more.

Website: www.HealthyFamiliesBC.ca

Physical Activity Line

For every age and health level, there's a free physical activity plan that works. Just connect with B.C.'s Physical Activity Line, where qualified exercise professionals will provide you with custom physical activity plans that meet your needs. Call or go online and get active today!

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 725-1149

Website: www.physicalactivityline.com

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 to use, 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.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/healthy-aging

Move for Life! DVD

Move for Life!, a physical activity DVD for older people, 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



people and demonstrates how physical activity can improve their lives. Move for Life! can be downloaded from the SeniorsBC website.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 725-1149

Website: www.seniorsbc.ca

(click on Health & Safety > Active Aging > Move for Life DVD)

Healthy Eating for Seniors

Healthy Eating for Seniors Handbook

The *Healthy Eating for Seniors* handbook provides information about food, meals, and supplements. It gives tips on how to eat to prevent or manage common chronic diseases, as well as providing advice on simple ways to eat with less sodium, how to read labels and how to maintain a healthy body weight. Several delicious recipes are included in portion sizes for one or two people. The handbook has been culturally adapted and translated into Chinese, Punjabi and French. You can find the handbook online, or order a free printed copy by calling HealthLink BC.

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

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

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/seniorshealthyeating

Order Form: www.healthlinkbc.ca/servicesresources/resourceorderform

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

(click on Health & Safety > Active Aging > Healthy Eating)

For more healthy eating information, see HealthLink BC's online fact sheet on *Healthy Eating and Healthy Aging for Adults*.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile68j.stm

Contact a Registered Dietitian

For free nutrition information you can trust, 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/healthyeating/emaildietitian.html

First Nations Health Authority – Eating Healthy and Being Active

The First Nations Health Authority provides information and links to a variety of resources for First Nations and Aboriginal 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

Brain Health for Seniors

Actively keeping your brain in good shape will help you stay mentally sharp as you age. Research shows there are three areas to consider when you plan to maintain and improve the health of your brain: your mind, your body and your spirit.

There are many healthy behaviours that you can easily incorporate into your daily routine that may reduce your risk of some forms of dementia. For example, you can promote your brain health by not smoking, by preventing or managing type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure (particularly in midlife), and by engaging in physical activity and healthy eating.

See the Your Brain Matters website for five easy steps to help you promote your brain health.

Website: www.yourbrainmatters.org.au

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

Website: www.alzheimer.ca/en/bc/About-dementia/Alzheimer-s-disease/Risk-factors



The Parkinson Society British Columbia is a non-profit organization serving as the voice of British Columbians living with Parkinson's. The purpose of the society is to ease the burden and find a cure for Parkinson's disease through advocacy, education, research and support services.

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 is committed to offering support, sharing reliable information and raising funds for programs and research.

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
Email: info@parkinson.bc.ca
Website: www.parkinson.bc.ca

Health Promotion Workshops

The Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of British Columbia (COSCO) Seniors' Health & Wellness Institute Society delivers provincewide health and safety promotion workshops intended to improve older people's health through peer-led education workshops. The workshops are 90 minutes long and offered free of charge to any seniors' group. 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.coscobc.ca/cosco-workshops

It's Never Too Late to Quit Smoking

It's Never Too Late to Quit Smoking is a brochure featuring Pamela Wray, a B.C. senior who smoked for over 50 years and quit at age 72. She wanted to inspire others and share the message that it is never too late to quit smoking



and adopt a healthier lifestyle. The brochure, as well as information about programs like QuitNow, is available on the SeniorsBC website.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/nevertoolatetoquit

If you use tobacco and want to quit, there are several supports available to help you. You may wish to talk with your doctor, counsellor, pharmacist, dentist or another health professional to discuss the health benefits of stopping tobacco use. As well, the following two programs provide support to people who are trying to quit smoking or tobacco use.

QuitNow

Free support for quitting smoking is available online: www.quitnow.ca

Do you have questions or concerns? Do you need a quit coach to help you quit smoking? Call or email the BC Lung Association:

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 731-5864

Email: quitnow@bc.lung.ca

BC Smoking Cessation Program

Information on access to prescription drugs and nicotine replacement therapies is available online. Visit www.health.gov.bc.ca and search for “pharmacare cessation”.

For key resources and information for health care professionals, injury prevention experts and the public, please visit www.health.gov.bc.ca and enter “smoking and tobacco use” in the Search field.

Alcohol and Aging: Know the Facts

Many of us enjoy a drink when socializing, relaxing or celebrating. But did you know that as we get older, our bodies process alcohol more slowly and we become more sensitive to the effects of alcohol?

The *Alcohol and Aging: Know the Facts* brochure provides low-risk drinking guidelines for older adults. It explains why older people are more sensitive to



the effects of alcohol and highlights how alcohol-related problems in older adults can be mistaken for physical, social or emotional conditions associated with aging, such as depression, insomnia, poor nutrition or frequent falls. The brochure is available online, along with further information on how alcohol affects older adults.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/alcoholandaging

With age, we tend to lose lean body mass, resulting in more body fat and less water in the body to dilute alcohol. This means that the same amount of alcohol will produce a 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 we get older also puts an extra burden on the liver. For more information on how to protect your liver, visit the Canadian Liver Foundation website.

Website: www.liver.ca/liver-health/liver-disease-prevention/tips-for-healthy-liver/alcohol-consumption.aspx

The amount that's safe for you to drink varies depending on your age, sex, 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.

Website: www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/2012-Canada-Low-Risk-Alcohol-Drinking-Guidelines-Brochure-en.pdf

When taking medications, avoid alcohol unless you have first checked with your doctor or pharmacist about whether or not it is safe to drink.

If you are concerned about your own or a friend's alcohol use, talk to your doctor, or see Mental Health and Substance Use Services in the *Your Health* section of this guide for information on available services.

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 stay fall and injury free. Falls are not an inevitable part of aging.



To learn how to prevent falls, visit the website below. You will find the “Are You at Risk of Falling?” assessment tool, brochures and other information.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/fallprevention

The Professional Resources section of this website provides resources for health care professionals, including those working with seniors in the community, assisted living, or residential care.

You can find out about local fall prevention programs, such as mobile clinics, by calling your local public health unit. For information on how to reach your local public health unit, contact your regional health authority (see Health Authorities in British Columbia under *Your Health* in this guide for contact information). You can also use the BC Health Service Locator App, which allows 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.

B.C. Brain Injury Association
c/o Sea to Sky Meeting Management Inc.
Suite 206, 201 Bewicke Ave.
North Vancouver BC V7M 3M7
Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 984-1212
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. Accessibility 2024 is a 10 year plan that lays the road map for making B.C. the most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities by 2024. The Accessibility website includes:

- Information about Accessibility 2024 and its commitments;
- Useful links to make it easier to find information about disability resources and services from across government; and
- Answers to frequently asked questions to help British Columbians with disabilities and their families better understand the programs, services and resources that are available.

Email: accessibility@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/accessibility

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

Healthy communities make it easier for residents to make healthier choices that will help them achieve and maintain their best possible health and well-being over the long-term. In turn, communities tend to prosper when the people who live there are active and healthy. The following resources promote healthy communities and families by supporting communities to become more age-friendly, and helping seniors and other British Columbians access the services they need to remain healthy and independent, and to participate fully in their communities.

Age-friendly BC

British Columbia provides tools, resources, and supports to help local governments, communities and businesses plan and adapt to become more accessible and inclusive for older persons. The SeniorsBC website includes information on how to make your community or business more age-friendly. For example, the community section outlines the steps to becoming an age-friendly community and the business section features a guide on creating an age-friendly business.

Email: AgefriendlyBC@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly



Non-medical Home Support: Better at Home

Under Better at Home, B.C.'s non-medical home support program, a growing number of seniors are getting access to services, such as transportation to appointments, light housekeeping, light yard work, snow shovelling, minor home repairs, grocery shopping and friendly visiting, to help them age in place. This program, which is managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland (UWLM), provides non-medical home support services for seniors in many communities throughout the province. For more information, contact the UWLM.

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 294-8929

Website: www.betterathome.ca

BC Healthy Communities Society

The BC Healthy Communities Society (BCHC) is a provincewide, not-for-profit organization that promotes and supports healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities. As part of the international Healthy Communities/Healthy Cities movement, BCHC takes a collaborative learning approach, enhancing existing community capacity to support optimal health, well-being and human development.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-0876

Email: bchc@bchealthycommunities.ca

Healthy Families BC Communities

The Province is partnering with employers, schools and communities to create environments that encourage people to make healthier choices in all areas of their lives. This supports improved quality of life for residents and encourages British Columbians to lead healthier lives where they live, work, learn and play.

Website: www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/your-community



Service BC

Government services are available in person, online and over the telephone.

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 transfer 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, toll-free): 1 800 661-8773

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, Metro Vancouver): 604 775-0303

Email: ServiceBC@gov.bc.ca

Service BC Centres (formerly Government Agents)

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.

Visit your local Service BC Centre for information and services, including



permits, fishing licences, and Medical Services Plan information and payments. 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 above.

For a listing of office locations, please refer to the *Directory* at the back of this guide. These offices are also listed under Governments – British Columbia in the blue pages of your telephone book.

Website: www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca

Elders Transportation Program

The Elders Transportation program provides partial funding towards travel costs for First Nations and Aboriginal 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/programs/firstcitizensfund/30-eldertransportationassistance

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

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

WelcomeBC.ca

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.

You can order a free copy of the B.C. Newcomers' Guide (available in 11 languages) for delivery to your home, or watch videos in several languages on the website.

Website: www.WelcomeBC.ca

Immigrant Services

Citizenship and Immigration Canada provides services and support to help 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.

At the link below, select British Columbia and use the interactive map to help you search for services in your area.

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

Foreign Country Contacts

Over 80 countries are represented by consular officers resident 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.protocol.gov.bc.ca/protocol/prgs/consular/consular.htm

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

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

Child Care Subsidy Program

The Child Care Subsidy is a monthly payment to assist eligible British Columbia families with the cost of child care. Monthly subsidy payments vary depending on the family's circumstances.

A parent, including a person with whom a child resides and who stands in place of a parent of the child, must submit a Child Care Subsidy application to determine eligibility for this program. There are five eligibility criteria that must be met to determine an applicant's eligibility: citizenship, residency, eligible care provider, income and reason for needing child care.



Please contact the Child Care Subsidy Service Centre with any questions you may have related to the Child Care Subsidy. Translation services are available on request.

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 775-0303

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-6501

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 1 800 661-8773

Website: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/subsidy

The following local organizations may be available in your community to assist with completing the forms and provide general information about the Child Care Subsidy:

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

VOLUNTEERING

Healthy communities are about more than physical activity and access to services; they require the engagement of people of all ages. 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. Visit the SeniorsBC website for more information.

Website: www.seniorsbc.ca

(click on Health & Safety > Active Aging > Volunteering)



Volunteer BC

Volunteer BC is a provincial organization that promotes the impact and value of volunteerism in B.C. You can find contact information for your local volunteer centre on the Volunteer BC website.

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

Website: www.volunteer.ca/older-adults

EMPLOYMENT

WorkBC.ca – Mature Workers

If you are seeking employment, the WorkBC.ca website provides information about specialized job-search services that can help you 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

(click on Job Seekers > Build Your Career > Advice for Specialized Groups > Mature Workers)

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



Targeted Initiative for Older Workers

The Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) is a federal/provincial/territorial initiative to support Canada's unemployed older workers. Over the past seven years, the TIOW 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 TIOW is to prepare participants for new and immediate employment and the initiative has helped unemployed older workers remain active and productive participants in the labour market. Currently, TIOW projects funded throughout B.C. provide 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, send an email to the following address, or visit the following website.

Email: LabourMarketProgramsBr@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.workbc.ca

(click on Job Seekers > Build Your Career > Starting and Planning Your Career > B.C. Labour Market Programs)

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 website.

Website: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/find_an_institution/welcome.htm



English Language Training

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

Website: www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/after-education-language.asp

Website: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/esl/welcome.htm

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, and numerous volunteers of all ages, from communities across British Columbia. Participants qualify through regional zone playoffs. The games and zone activities promote physical, social and creative achievement through participation in 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 or zone competitions, contact the BC Seniors Games Society. Regional contact information is available on the Zones pages of the 55+ BC Games website.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 778 426-2940

Email: bcsogs@shaw.ca

Website: www.55plusbcgames.org



Hunting and Angling (Fishing) Licences for Seniors

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

For information on hunting licences, visit:

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/hunting/resident/#hunting

For information on angling (fishing) licences, visit:

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/licences

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

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

Website: www.fishing.gov.bc.ca

More information about hunting and angling (fishing) licences may 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.

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.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/fees



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 as museum hosts. Seniors interested in volunteering can contact the Royal BC Museum Volunteer Services.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-7902



Your Lifestyle

Your
Health



YOUR THOUGHTS AS YOU PLAN FOR HEALTHY AGING

USE THIS SPACE TO RECORD YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS.



Do you schedule regular dental and medical check-ups?

Do you prepare for your medical appointments (e.g., prepare a list of questions beforehand)?

Have you thought about how you would manage if you were diagnosed with a chronic condition?

Have you thought about what would happen in a medical crisis if you were not able to make important health care decisions for yourself?

Did you know that you don't need to pay the full cost of your MSP premium if you earn less than \$30,000 a year?

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

Your Health

Offering You the Best in Both Patient Care and Health Services

If you are a senior living in British Columbia, you 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 2011 census, 15.7 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 your needs, and the needs of all seniors. Government is committed to making it easier for you 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. If you are looking for information about managing disease or disability, assisted living resources, or planning for the inevitability of the 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 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 for you in case you're ever unable to make those decisions on your own. Representation agreements and advance care planning can help ensure that any care you receive is given according to your wishes.

The following programs in this section of the BC Seniors' Guide may be of particular interest to seniors with lower incomes:

- ☐ Medical Services Plan (MSP) Premium Assistance
- ☐ Fair PharmaCare

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 for assistance.

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-2421

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-6121

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, toll-free): 1 800 661-8773

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, Metro Vancouver): 604 775-0303

HEALTH AUTHORITIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Fraser Health

Suite 400 – Central City Tower 13450 102nd Ave.

Surrey BC V3T 0H1

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 935-5669
Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 587-4600
Fax: 604 587-4666
Website: www.fraserhealth.ca

Interior Health

220 – 1815 Kirschner Rd.
Kelowna BC V1Y 4N7
Phone (Kelowna): 250 862-4200
Fax: 250 862-4201
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
Fax: 250 370-8750
Website: www.viha.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
Fax: 250 565-2640
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
Fax: 604 875-4750
Website: www.vch.ca

Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)

700 – 1380 Burrard St.

Vancouver BC V6Z 2H3

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 675-7400

Fax: 604 708-2700

Website: www.phsa.ca

First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)

501 - 100 Park Royal South

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/what-we-do/mental-wellness-and-substance-use/
residential-schools](http://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/mental-wellness-and-substance-use/residential-schools)

HEALTHLINK BC

HealthLink BC is the gateway to access non-emergency health information and services in British Columbia. HealthLink BC helps you learn about health topics, check your symptoms, and find health services and resources that you need for healthy living. Any time of the day or night, every day of the year, British Columbians have trusted health information at their fingertips, just a phone call or a click away with HealthLink BC.

HealthLink BC 8-1-1

You can call 8-1-1 toll-free to speak with a health service representative who can connect you with a nurse any time of the day or night, a dietitian 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

If you are concerned 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 medically-approved information on more than 5,000 health, nutrition, medication and medical test topics. You can also find public health and safety topics, and search for health services you need, closest to where you live. HealthLink BC's website also offers an interactive Check Your Symptoms tool.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca

BC HealthGuide Handbook

HealthLink BC has written the book on how to recognize and cope with common health concerns. You can find topics of interest to seniors, including a chapter on healthy aging. Preventing illness, home treatment, and when to see a health professional – it is all in the free BC HealthGuide Handbook.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/servicesresources/bchealthguidehandbook

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. Users can find walk-in clinics, hospitals, emergency rooms, immunization clinics and

pharmacies nearby. Users can filter the results to view wheelchair-accessible locations, or find details about hours of service, contact information and addresses. Users can also 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 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 and pay a monthly premium. The First Nations Health Authority pays premiums on behalf of Status Indians and Inuit residents in British Columbia.

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 of arrival, plus two months. To allow time for your application to be processed, you should apply for MSP coverage immediately upon arrival in B.C., rather than at the end of the waiting period.

If your income is low and you are a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant (permanent resident) who has held that status and lived in Canada for the last 12 consecutive months, you may be eligible to receive assistance with premium payments.

Regular Premium Assistance

This program offers subsidies ranging from 20 to 100 per cent, based on an individual's net income (or a couple's combined net income) for the preceding tax year, less deductions for age, family size, disability and any reported Universal Child Care Benefit and Registered Disability Savings Plan income, if applicable.

To apply for premium assistance, you must complete and return an application form to Health Insurance BC. Forms are available on the Ministry of Health website, at a Service BC Centre (government agent), or by contacting Health Insurance BC.

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/premiumassistance

Temporary Premium Assistance

This program offers a short-term period of premium waiver to qualifying individuals and families. To be eligible you must meet all the following criteria:

- You are experiencing unexpected financial hardship for which you could not reasonably have budgeted;
- You are billed directly for your own MSP premiums;
- You (and your spouse, if applicable) have filed the previous year's income tax return with the Canada Revenue Agency; and
- The essential living cost for your household exceeds the total income of you and your spouse. Essential living cost does not include consumer debt or loan payments.

For more information, or to receive an application package, contact Health Insurance BC or visit the following website.

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Mailing Address: PO Box 9035 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E3

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/temporarypremiumassistance

Medical Benefits

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

Supplementary Benefits

MSP contributes towards supplementary benefits for eligible beneficiaries. For MSP beneficiaries receiving 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 benefit for those 18 years of age and under, or 65 years of age and older. Medically required eye examinations are a benefit for all beneficiaries. MSP contributes \$46.17 towards each eye examination provided by an optometrist. 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 of these 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/medicalservicesplan

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.

For more information, visit your Service BC Centre. Check the blue pages of your phone book to see if an office is located in your community, or refer to the *Directory* at the back of this guide for a listing of Service BC Centres in B.C.

BC Services Card

The BC Services Card replaces the CareCard and Gold CareCard. The BC Services Card can be combined with your driver's licence if you have one, and also acts as your 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 required to renew enrolment in MSP and get a photo BC Services Card by going to an ICBC driver licensing office by 2018.

Adults over 75 do not have to renew enrolment in MSP, but should still get a BC Services Card at a driver licensing office by 2018.

For more information on applying for a BC Services Card, visit www.health.gov.bc.ca and enter "bc services card id" in the Search field.

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:

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

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 Innovation website.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/meia/online_resource/health_supplements_and_programs/mso

Dental Care

Routine dental care and professional examinations can help to prevent and detect chronic health conditions. Good oral health also enables you to choose from a greater variety of foods while you age, which can positively impact your health and decrease your risk for malnutrition. Lastly, good oral health can help you to maintain an overall better quality of life by minimizing your risk for oral health problems such as dental decay, tooth loss, gum disease, inflammation and oral cancer.

For more information, visit the BC Dental Association website.

Website: www.bcdental.org

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. You must 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 you have obtained a completed TAP form 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/travelassistanceprogram

You may also contact your health authority (you can find health authority contact information at the beginning of this section of the guide) to see if you qualify for other travel assistance, including regional Health Connections programs described below.

Health Connections

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

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/healthconnections

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 Grande Prairie.

Check the Northern Health Connections bus schedule on the website, and call the toll-free number below to reserve your seat. Please have your Care Card/BC Services Card number and appointment information ready.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 647-4997

Website: www.nhconnections.ca

Interior Health

Interior Health's Health Connections partners with regional districts and BC Transit to link residents of small communities with the regional/tertiary hospitals in the following four health service areas: Okanagan (links to Kelowna and Penticton), Thompson Cariboo Shuswap (links to Kamloops and Vernon), Kootenay Boundary (links to Trail) and East Kootenay (links to Cranbrook).

For more information about Health Connections in the B.C. Interior, contact your local BC Transit office or check www.bctransit.com (click on schedules and maps and see the Health Connections link on the right hand side of the page).

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 kilometres one way.

Phone (Comox): 250 338-0196

Website: www.wheelsforwellness.com

Vancouver Coastal Health

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

Phone (Bella Coola): 250 799-5311

PHARMACARE

PharmaCare subsidizes eligible prescription drugs and eligible medical supplies/devices. PharmaCare assists British Columbians through Fair PharmaCare and other specialty plans.

Fair PharmaCare Plan

B.C.'s Fair PharmaCare Plan focuses assistance on those who need it most, based on their net income. It requires a one-time registration.

Registering for Fair PharmaCare

You can register for Fair PharmaCare by telephone or online. There is no charge to register and there are no premiums to pay. See the contact information below for the phone number and website address.

Here's what you need to register your family for Fair PharmaCare:

For all family members:

- Personal Health Number (found on your Care Card/BC Services Card)
- Birth dates

For you and your spouse:

- Social Insurance Numbers;
- Net income from Line 236 of your income tax return from two years ago;
- The amount of any Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) payments you received two years ago. This amount is reported on Line 117 of your income tax return; and
- Any income from a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) you received two years ago. This amount is reported on Line 125 of your income tax return.

UCCB payments and RDSP income are deducted from your net income when calculating your level of Fair PharmaCare coverage.

After you register, PharmaCare will mail you a consent form. Remember to sign and return the consent form.

PharmaCare bases your coverage on your family net income from two years earlier (for example, coverage for 2015 is based on income information from 2013). If you have experienced a significant decrease in family net income (10 per cent or more) since that year, you may apply to have your coverage based on more recent income information.

What's covered?

You can find out the particular drugs covered by Fair PharmaCare and other PharmaCare plans using the online formulary search.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacaredrugsearch

If you are a patient taking a drug PharmaCare is considering for coverage you can add your voice to the BC PharmaCare drug review process. PharmaCare also welcomes input from caregivers and patient groups. For more information, visit the Your Voice section of the Ministry of Health website.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/bcyourvoice

Increased Assistance

You may qualify for increased coverage if:

- Your income has dropped by 10 per cent or more; or
- Your spouse has recently moved permanently into residential care and including his or her income in the calculation of your coverage is a hardship.

For more information, including information in multiple languages, visit the website below.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare

Monthly Deductible Payment Option

British Columbians with the lowest incomes do not have a deductible and receive immediate coverage of eligible prescriptions and eligible medical supplies/devices under the Fair PharmaCare Plan.

All other families have a deductible that is based on their family net income. PharmaCare offers a payment option to help these individuals and families.

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/pharmacare

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.

For more information about the PharmaCare program or to register for the Fair PharmaCare Plan, you can 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/pharmacare

BC EMERGENCY HEALTH SERVICES

BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) is responsible for the delivery, co-ordination and governance of appropriate and effective out-of-hospital and inter-hospital health services throughout B.C.

BCEHS oversees the BC Ambulance Service and the BC Patient Transfer Network. The BC Ambulance Service provides both ground and air ambulance services to residents of British Columbia. BC Ambulance 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 Care Card/BC Services Card who are covered by the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP). When an emergency medical problem requires that you be transported by ambulance, you will be billed a user fee of \$80. If the fee poses a financial problem, the Ministry of Health's revenue section will work out a payment schedule to accommodate you.

If an ambulance is called by the patient, the patient's family, or a care facility, and the patient is not transported to hospital, there will be a \$50 fee for patients covered by MSP.

In a medical emergency:

- Call 9-1-1, where available; or
- Call the EMERGENCY phone number listed on the inside cover of your telephone book; or
- If a telephone book is not available, call the operator by dialing 0.

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: bcehs.phsa.ca/about/billing/fee

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)

If you are registered with the Medical Services Plan, and have a valid BC CareCard/BC Services Card, you 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).

When you are admitted into an acute care hospital in B.C. for inpatient care, you 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 laboratory or diagnostic tests and X-rays, prescription medications,

most 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, if you request a private or semi-private hospital room, you will be required to pay a room charge (some third-party health care plans cover this cost) unless that is the standard for the unit or it has been determined by your physician that such a room is medically required. As a patient, you may also be charged for certain non-standard medical devices, but only if you have given your consent to purchase these items in advance and your physician has not stated the items are medically necessary.

Items for use in the community, including private residences and residential care facilities, are generally the responsibility of the patient. You will not be charged if the item is a vital part of the treatment you received in the hospital and you should not leave the hospital without it (e.g., certain neck braces). You are responsible for paying for medical equipment, 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 support for eligible British Columbians who have acute, chronic, palliative or rehabilitative health care needs.

These services:

- Support clients to remain independent and in their own homes for as long as possible;
- Provide assisted living and residential care services to clients who can no longer be supported in their own homes;

- Support clients to avoid, reduce or delay the need for hospital or residential care services; and
- Support clients who are nearing the end of their life and their families with palliative care services at home, in an assisted living residence, or in a residential care facility.

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for publicly subsidized services, such as community nursing or community rehabilitation (physiotherapy or occupational therapy), clients must:

- be a Canadian Citizen or have permanent resident status (landed immigrant or on a minister's permit approved by the Ministry of Health Medical Advisory Committee);
- be a resident of British Columbia; 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 services, such as home support, assisted living, adult day care, case management, residential care, and/or end-of-life care, clients must:

- be 19 years of age or older;
- have lived in British Columbia for the required period of time (this depends on the service; contact your local health authority for current information);
- be a Canadian citizen or have permanent resident status (landed immigrant or on a minister's permit approved by the Ministry of Health Medical Advisory Committee); and
- be unable to function independently because of chronic, health-related problems, or require 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 a client's behalf.

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

Case Management and Care Co-ordination

To complete an assessment, a health professional (often referred to as a case manager) – such as a community nurse, physiotherapist 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 residential 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 clients 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.

Family members who provide care and assistance may be eligible to be paid under this program. 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 co-ordinating your 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 non-emergency, in-home nursing care and rehabilitation therapy as needed to assist adults with acute or chronic illnesses, 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 residential care facility on a short-term basis.

Assisted Living

Assisted living services provide housing, hospitality and personal care services for adults who can live independently, but require regular assistance with daily activities – usually due to age, illness or disability.

There are private and publicly subsidized assisted living residences, ranging from a high-rise apartment complex to a customized private home. Units can vary from one room to private, self-contained apartments. Services may include help with bathing, grooming, dressing and mobility. Meals,

housekeeping, laundry, social and recreational opportunities, and a 24-hour response system are also provided.

A health professional or case manager can provide information on the residences in your area, the process for admission to a residential care facility, what services are provided and applicable costs.

For information about the Province of B.C.'s Independent Living BC (assisted living) program, refer to the *Your Home* section of this guide, or visit the BC Housing website.

Website: www.bchousing.org/Initiatives/Creating/ILBC

Assisted Living Registrar

The Assisted Living Registrar was established to 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 complaints pertaining to assisted living health and safety standards that are not being met. A member of the public may contact the registry with concerns about registered assisted living residences by phone (toll-free) or email.

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 952-1369

Mailing Address: PO Box 9638 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9P1

Email: info@alregistrar.bc.ca

Website: www.health.gov.bc.ca/assisted

Residential Care

Residential 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, residential care facilities provide a protective, supportive care environment. B.C. has both private and publicly subsidized residential care facilities.

Clients with the highest need and urgency have priority for placement in publicly subsidized residential care facilities. A health professional or case manager can provide information on the facilities in your area, the process for admission to a facility, what services are provided, and applicable costs.

Residential care facilities in British Columbia must be licensed. Your regional health authority websites provide information on publicly subsidized residential care facilities in your area. More information about licensed residential care facilities, including recent inspection reports, can be found online.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “residential care facilities” in the Search field)

Group Homes

Adults with disabilities can often live independently in their community in publicly funded group homes. Group homes are safe, affordable homes, usually accommodating four to six residents. They offer short- or long-term accommodation, providing clients with care and support to maximize their independence, and to support their responsibility in areas such as household management, vocational pursuits and social relationships.

Family Care Homes

Family care homes are single-family residences that provide residents with a home-like atmosphere. Services include meals, housekeeping services and assistance with daily activities for up to two clients. Family care homes are most common in rural areas, where they allow residents to stay in their own communities.

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 are provided to clients in their own homes and in home-like settings, assisted living residences, and residential care facilities, which can include palliative care.

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 Program

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 the search field)

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/your-stay/submit-feedback-about-your-care/patient-care-quality-office/

Interior Health Patient Care Quality Office

220 - 1815 Kirschner Rd.

Kelowna BC V1Y 4N7

Phone (toll-free) 1 877 442-2001

Fax (Kelowna): 250 870-4670

Email: patient.concerns@interiorhealth.ca

Website: www.interiorhealth.ca/YourCare/PatientCareQualityOffice/Pages/default.aspx

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.viha.ca/patientcarequalityoffice

Northern Health Patient Care Quality Office

6th Floor Jubilee Hospital Memorial Pavilion

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/OurServices/PatientCareQualityOffice.aspx

Vancouver Coastal Health Patient Care Quality Office

Room CP-380 855 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/your_stay/patient_care_quality_office/patient-care-quality-office

Provincial Health Services Authority Patient Care Quality Office

(includes provincial agencies and services such as BC Ambulance Services, BC Cancer Agency, BC Renal Agency, BC Transplant, and BC Women's and Children's Hospital)

4th Floor Room F404

Women's Health Centre

4500 Oak St.

Vancouver BC V6H 3N1

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 875-3256

Fax (Metro Vancouver): 604 875-3813

Email: pcqo@phsa.ca

Website: www.phsa.ca/AboutPHSA/PHSA-Patient-Care-Quality-Office/default.htm

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. After finishing a review, the board may make recommendations to the health authority or the Minister of Health to try to resolve the complaint or to improve quality of care.

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 from 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 Centre on Aging to provide a variety of six-week patient education programs for people with chronic health conditions such as arthritis, diabetes and chronic pain. Programs include:

- Chronic Disease Self-Management in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Punjabi, and offered in English to youth and First Nations communities;
- Self-management programs for chronic pain, diabetes, active choices and balance/fall reduction; and
- An online Chronic Disease Self-Management program.

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

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

Website: www.selfmanagementbc.ca

Bounce Back: Reclaim Your Health

Bounce Back is a 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 *Living Life to the Full*. Both the coaching component of Bounce Back and the DVD can be accessed by a referral through family physicians' offices everywhere in British Columbia. The DVD is available in English, Mandarin, and Cantonese, and coaching is available in English and Cantonese. To find out more about Bounce Back, seniors are encouraged to talk to their family doctor.

Bounce Back is delivered through the B.C. division of the Canadian Mental Health Association with funding from the B.C. Ministry of Health.

Website: www.cmha.bc.ca/how-we-can-help/adults/bounceback

Family Caregivers of British Columbia

(formerly the Family Caregivers' Network Society)

The Family Caregivers of British Columbia is a not-for-profit society established in 1989. This society is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees, 60 per cent of whom are, or have been, family caregivers themselves, and promotes the importance of the family caregiver's role and contribution in the health care system. Their mission is to inform, support and educate on issues of concern to family caregivers. Services include information on community resources, health system information, a caregiver wellness booklet, online educational opportunities, peer supports and a monthly newsletter.

The Ministry of Health provides partial funding to the society.

Family Caregivers of British Columbia

6 – 3318 Oak St.

Victoria BC V8X 1R1

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 520-FCNS (3267)

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 384-0408

Email: caregiversupport@fcns.ca

Website: www.familycaregiversbc.ca

University of British Columbia, Faculty of Medicine eHealth Strategy Office's interCultural Online Health Network (iCON)

iCON provides culturally and linguistically appropriate health resources on chronic disease management to Chinese, South Asian, and Aboriginal patients, families and caregivers throughout British Columbia. iCON has both online 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, mental wellness and others.

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, or pain related to injury. Their integrated approach focuses on three strategic priorities:

- Education, promoting skills, and building hope and confidence among people in pain and their families;
- Providing health care providers with the education, tools, and skills they need to improve the lives of people in pain; and
- Facilitating the development and implementation of innovation and improvements in the health care system.

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

Patients as Partners | Patient Voices Network

Patients as Partners | Patient Voices Network is a community of more than 1,700 B.C. patients, families, caregivers and others who are using their experiences to influence change in B.C.'s health care system at the individual, community and system level. At the core of the Patients as Partners | Patient Voices Network is the belief that patients affected by health care decisions should be involved in the process of reaching those decisions.

Patients as Partners | Patient Voices Network is a Ministry of Health program administered by ImpactBC, a not-for-profit organization. For more information about the network, including information on how to get involved, contact ImpactBC.

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 742-1772

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 742-1772

Email: connect@patientvoices.ca

Website: www.patientsaspartners.ca/network

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 in 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 some other physical health problem. 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.

Although seniors have developed long-standing coping skills to manage their day-to-day stresses, they are as prone as the rest of society to suffering from the effects of mental illness and substance use. Of particular concern are issues surrounding depression, anxiety, problematic substance use, such as alcohol and other drug misuse, and dementia.

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.

For other ideas about ways to engage in your community to help avoid loneliness and increase your social connections, refer to the Loneliness entry in the *Directory* at the back of this guide.

To find mental health and substance use services in your local health authority, visit:

Website: www.health.gov.bc.ca
(enter “find services near you” in the Search field)

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 on specific mental health and substance use assessment and treatment services.

Alzheimer Society

In 1981, a group of caregivers gathered to discuss the challenges of caring for a person diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. Out of their compassion and determination, the society was ultimately founded. From those humble roots, the society has blossomed into an organization active in communities across the province.

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 681-6530

Email: info@alzheimerbc.org

Website: www.alzheimerbc.org

First Link©

First Link® is an early intervention service designed to connect individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's disease or another dementia with services and support as soon as possible after diagnosis. Formal referral from physicians and health professionals allows for proactive contact with individuals and families. Individuals and families may also self-refer.

First Link© Dementia Help Line:
Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Phone (toll-free): 1 800 936-6033
Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 681-8651

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 can refer you to counselling and resources in your community. Call for 24-hour services.

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

Website: www.heretohelp.bc.ca

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 Indian 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

Problem Gambling

The Problem Gambling Help Line is a confidential, toll-free service available to all British Columbians. The help line provides counselling 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 counselling services around the province.

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

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

Website: www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca

PUBLIC HEALTH

Public health units across British Columbia offer a variety of health services, including nutrition resources and immunization. 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 your health care provider or local public health office in the blue pages of your telephone book.

For your 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 in your area.

You can also call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 for information on vaccinations, And information about local public health units and pharmacies.



Your
Home



YOUR THOUGHTS AS YOU PLAN FOR HEALTHY AGING

USE THIS SPACE TO RECORD YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS.



Have you thought about how your housing needs may change as you age? (e.g., Do you need to downsize?)

Do you want to be closer to shops, public transportation, medical facilities, and other services you may need in case there comes a time when driving is no longer an option?

Can your current home be adapted to suit your future needs?

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



YOUR HOME

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 seniors population by providing a wide variety of programs, services and housing alternatives.

In this section, you will find information about programs and services for older British Columbians who own their own home, including home owner grants for seniors, property assessment and property tax deferment. Whether you own or rent your home, you or your landlord may be eligible to receive assistance to make your 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. You can find more information about these programs in this section.

You will also find information about subsidized assisted living for seniors who require some support. More than 4,000 affordable assisted living units have been created through partnerships between the Province and various non-profit and private care providers. These units include accommodation, meals, housekeeping, laundry, 24-hour response, recreational opportunities and personal care services for low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

The following programs in this section of the BC Seniors' Guide may be of particular interest to seniors with lower incomes:

- ☐ Home Owner Grant for Seniors
- ☐ Property Tax Deferment
- ☐ B.C. Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit
- ☐ Home Adaptations for Independence (HAFI) Program
- ☐ Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) Program
- ☐ Affordable Housing for Seniors
- ☐ Seniors' Supportive Housing
- ☐ Subsidized Assisted Living

SENIOR HOME OWNERS

Home Owner Grant for Seniors

The home owner grant for seniors reduces the amount of property taxes you pay each year on your principal residence. By applying for the grant as a senior, your property taxes may be reduced up to \$845, or if your property is located in a northern and rural area, up to \$1,045.

The grant is applied to the amount of property taxes over \$100. Having a minimum tax amount ensures all home owners contribute toward the funding of local programs and services, such as road maintenance and hospitals.

Home Owner Grant Low Income Supplement

If the grant amount you qualified for was reduced because of the high assessed value of your principal residence and you have a qualifying low income, you



can also apply to receive a supplement for all or part of the amount your grant was decreased.

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

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/homeownergrant

If you still have questions about the home owner grant, 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): 1 800 663-7867

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-0555

Email: ruraltax@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. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information on your assessment notice, please contact your local BC Assessment office by January 31 at the phone number or address written on the front of your assessment notice.

Website: www.bcassessment.ca

Property Tax Deferment

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

If your application is approved, the Province pays your municipal or provincial property taxes directly to the taxing authority on your 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/propertytaxdeferment

If you still have questions, contact the office where you pay your property taxes or the Tax Deferment Office:

Tax Deferment Office

Ministry of Finance

PO Box 9475 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9W6

Phone (Service BC Contact Centre, toll-free): 1 800 663-7867;
if you call toll-free, ask to be transferred to 250 356-8121.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-8121

Email: taxdeferment@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/propertytaxdeferment

HOME ADAPTATIONS

B.C. Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit

The B.C. Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit 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 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 1,



2012. The credit is a refundable tax credit, which means if the credit is higher than the taxes you owe, you'll receive the difference as a refund. For more information, contact the BC Income Taxation Branch.

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

Mailing Address: PO Box 9444 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9W8

Email: ITBTaxQuestions@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.health.gov.bc.ca

(enter "seniors renovation credit" in the Search field)

Home Adaptations for Independence Program

The Home Adaptations for Independence program helps low-income seniors and people with disabilities finance home modifications for accessible, safe and independent living. Eligible home owners and landlords with eligible tenants can receive up to \$20,000 per home in the form of a forgivable loan. The exact amount is based on the cost of materials and labour necessary for the required adaptations.

For full details about the program, including eligibility requirements and an application form, 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

Email: hafi@bchousing.org

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.

You may be eligible for SAFER if you meet all of the following conditions:

- You are age 60 or older;
- You have lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months immediately preceding your application;
- You and your spouse (with whom you are living) meet the citizenship requirements; and
- You pay more than 30 per cent of your gross (before tax) monthly household income towards the rent for your home, including the cost of pad rental for a manufactured home (trailer) that you own and occupy.

You will not be eligible if any of following is true:

- You are under age 60;
- You live in subsidized housing or a residential care facility funded by the Ministry of Health;
- You live in co-operative housing and are a shareholder;
- You or your 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);
- You or your spouse (if applicable) are in Canada under a private sponsorship agreement that is still in force;
- You do not live in British Columbia;
- You have not lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months immediately preceding your application;
- You do not meet the citizenship requirements; or
- Your gross monthly income exceeds the following:

	Metro Vancouver Regional District	Other Areas of the Province
Singles	\$2,550	\$2,223
Couples	\$2,750	\$2,423
Shared	\$1,776	\$1,776



Application forms and further information on eligibility are available from any BC Housing office, or can be downloaded from BC Housing's website.

For more information, contact BC Housing at the address or numbers listed below.

BC Housing SAFER
101– 4555 Kingsway
Burnaby BC V5H 4V8

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 257-7756
Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218
Website: www.bchousing.org/programs/SAFER

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.

To apply to developments listed in the registry, complete and submit a housing application form. Application forms and further information on eligibility are available from any BC Housing office, and can be downloaded from the BC Housing website.

Website: www.bchousing.org/Options/Subsidized_Housing/Apply

For non-profit and co-op housing providers that maintain their own registries, contact these groups directly. Contact information for societies and co-ops across the province is available from any BC Housing office, and can be downloaded from the BC Housing website.

Website: www.bchousing.org/Options/Subsidized_Housing/Listings

For more information, contact BC Housing at the address or numbers listed below.

BC Housing

The Housing Registry/SAFER/Rental Assistance Program

101 - 4555 Kingsway

Burnaby BC V5H 4V8

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Email: applicantinquiries@bchousing.org

Website: www.bchousing.org/Options/Subsidized_Housing/Apply

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

Information about the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC can be found on their website, or by calling the phone number below.

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 879-5111

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 879-5111

Website: www.chf.bc.ca/contact



Seniors' Supportive Housing

The Seniors' Supportive Housing program provides specially modified rental homes in selected subsidized housing developments, primarily to low-income seniors who need some assistance in order to continue to live independently. The program provides support services such as a daily meal, 24-hour response, weekly housekeeping and linen laundry, and social and recreational activities. Those eligible pay 50 per cent of their gross household income to live in these units.

You may be eligible for support if:

- You are a low-income senior or person with a disability who would benefit from an accessible home;
- You require some support services to continue to live independently; and
- You are able to manage your own lifestyle.

Application forms and further information on eligibility are available from any BC Housing office, and can be downloaded from BC Housing's website. For more information, contact BC Housing at the address or numbers listed below.

BC Housing SSH

101 – 4555 Kingsway

Burnaby BC V5H 4V8

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Website: www.bchousing.org/Options/Supportive_Housing/SSH/SSH

Subsidized Assisted Living

Subsidized assisted living units are for seniors and people with disabilities who require some support, but do not need 24-hour institutional care. Assisted living offers a middle option to bridge the gap between home care and residential care by providing:

- Accommodation;
- Hospitality services, such as meals, housekeeping, laundry,

recreational opportunities and 24-hour response; and

- Personal care services, such as assistance with grooming, mobility and medications.

Those eligible pay 70 per cent of their after-tax income, plus a hydro surcharge, to live in these units. Only seniors in need of additional support to remain independent may be eligible. To be considered for assisted living, candidates must first be assessed, then referred through their local health authority.

A health authority case manager will work with you to find out whether assisted living is the best option for you. For more information, refer to the BC Housing website.

Website: www.bchousing.org/Options/Supportive_Housing/SSH/AL

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 in Metro Vancouver. 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: HSRT0@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/landlordtenant



Getting Around





YOUR THOUGHTS AS YOU PLAN FOR HEALTHY AGING

USE THIS SPACE TO RECORD YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS.



Typically, older adults live 7 – 10 years beyond their driving ability. What are you doing to plan for your future transportation needs?

Do you know how to access public transportation in your community?

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



GETTING AROUND

Transportation is Crucial to Help Seniors Stay Active

Transportation can be a major issue in a senior's life. As roads become busier and communities grow and expand, accomplishing the day's errands can become more of a challenge. Whether you rely on public transportation or drive a vehicle, you need reliable access to a range of transportation options to stay active in your community.

In this section, you will find 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 Bus Pass program is offered in over 60 B.C. communities and benefits more than 65,000 people each year.

If you need someone to drive for you, many local community organizations provide volunteer driving services, or can put you in touch with commercial driving services. You 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 licences for seniors and licence plates for veterans can be found in this section. If you need 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. In this section, you can learn about driver medical fitness and an online toolkit to help senior drivers assess and improve their driving skills.



The following programs in this section of the BC Seniors' Guide may be of particular interest to seniors with lower incomes:

- ☐ Transit Seniors' Fare Discounts
- ☐ Bus Pass Program
- ☐ Seniors' Vehicle Insurance Discounts

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.translink.ca

Greater Victoria Region

BC Transit

Phone: 250 382-6161

Website: www.bctransit.com/victoria

Outside of Greater Victoria and Metro Vancouver, contact your local transit operator, or visit the BC Transit website and search for your local transit system.

Website: www.bctransit.com



Bus Pass Program

The 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 Bus Pass program, the applicant must be living in a transit service area where the annual pass is available and meet one of the following criteria:

- Receiving Federal Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), the Federal Allowance, or the Allowance for the Survivor;
- 18 – 64 years of age and receiving persons with disability assistance from the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation;
- 60 – 64 years of age and receiving income assistance from the Province of British Columbia;
- Over 65 years of age and would qualify for GIS, but does not meet the Canadian 10-year residency requirement;
- 18 – 64 years of age, living on a First Nations reserve and receiving disability assistance from the band office; or
- 60 – 64 years of age, 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.

Cost

The bus pass is provided for an administrative fee of \$45 per year and is valid for one calendar year, expiring on December 31. The fee is not prorated for applicants applying part way through the year.



Contact

Phone service is available 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday. Demand for bus passes is very high, with peak call volume between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Another option is to contact the Bus Pass program via email. (Please note: the office is not able to reply via email – you will receive a telephone response within 3 – 5 business days). When contacting the program, please provide:

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

Bus Pass Program

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

Mailing Address: PO Box 9985 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9R6

Email: SDSIBUSPA@gov.bc.ca

Please do not send attachments as the office is unable to open or access attachments received by email.

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

Website: www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/programs/bus-pass.html

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 you and your caregiver or family member, and provide follow-up, to make sure you are comfortable using the transit system.

Phone BC Transit Safety & Training (250 385-2551 and press 0), or contact your local transit provider to learn about travel training in your area. In Greater Victoria, Kelowna, Prince George and Vernon, contact:

Greater Victoria Phone: 250 384-7723

Website: bctransit.com/victoria/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training

Kelowna Phone: 250 860-8121

Website: bctransit.com/kelowna/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training

Prince George Phone: 250 563-0011

Website: bctransit.com/prince-george/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training

Vernon Phone: 250 545-7221

Website: bctransit.com/vernon/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training

Access Travel: TransLink

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): 778 375-6868

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

HandyDART Custom Transit

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.)

Website: www.bctransit.com



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): 778 452-2860

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

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): 250 727-7811

Outside of Greater Victoria, contact your local transit operator.

Website: www.bctransit.com

TransLink: TaxiSaver is a supplementary service to handyDART, available to people with permanent disabilities who already have a HandyCard. To find out more about the program, please contact the Access Transit Customer Care office at the number below.

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 778 452-2860

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. As a taxi passenger, you have the right to:

- Be picked up and transported to your 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:

Website: www.taxirights.gov.bc.ca

FERRY TRAVEL FARES

BC Ferries

B.C. seniors age 65+ travel at 50 per cent off regular adult fare on most BC Ferries routes sailing Monday through Thursday (including Remembrance Day on November 11), except on holidays. This applies to passenger fares only.

Note: The 50 per cent off regular adult fare is not applicable on the northern routes. However, a special discount on B.C. Senior passenger fares on these routes is available.

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): 1 250 386-3431

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

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 223-3779

Website: www.bcferrries.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.th.gov.bc.ca/marine/ferry_schedules.htm

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-7585

Website: www.drivebc.ca

SENIOR DRIVERS

Seniors' Vehicle Insurance Savings

If you are 65 or older, you may be eligible for a 25 per cent reduction in the cost of your Basic Autoplan when insured for pleasure use only in the senior rate class. Seniors with a disability who qualify under both programs may receive both the senior rate class and the disability discount. 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/autoplan/costs/Pages/Discounts-and-savings.aspx

Driver's Licences

If you are 65 years or older, fees for some services offered by ICBC driver licensing offices are reduced or free of charge.

Reduced fees apply to:

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



Free services include:

- British Columbia identification card, if you are giving up driving and surrender your driver's licence; and
- Driver's road test examinations conducted by ICBC.

For more information, contact ICBC.

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 978-8300

Website: www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/visit-dl-office/Pages/Fees.aspx

Senior Drivers' Toolkit

If you're a senior driver or supporting a senior driver in your family, the BC Automobile Association (BCAA) 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 Canadian Automobile Association 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.bcaa.com/seniordrivers

Driver Medical Fitness Reports and Road Test Re-exams

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 licence;
- At regular intervals if they hold a commercial class driver's licence;
- 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.

If you are required to provide a driver's medical exam report for any of the reasons listed above, you will be mailed the form, which you should then take to your doctor. There are detailed instructions on the back of the form.

Your doctor will complete this report and send it for review to RoadSafetyBC. You will be notified in writing only if there is any change to your driver's licence status or if more information or testing is needed, to determine your fitness to drive.

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

Phone (Service BC, toll-free): 1 800 663-7867, and ask to be transferred to 250 387-7747

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-7747

Website: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/osmv/medical-fitness/index.htm

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/driver-licensing/re-exam



Licence Plates For Veterans

Veteran specialty licence plates are available to veterans who served:

- During wartime;
- In a post-war capacity; or
- During a NATO or UN operation, including members of the RCMP and municipal police.

To apply for a veteran specialty licence plate, print the application form from ICBC's website or pick up a copy from your Autoplan broker.

Website: www.icbc.com/vehicle-registration/licence-plates/Pages/Licence-plates-for-veterans.aspx

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

British Columbia Veterans Commemorative Association

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 876-2838

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





Your
Money

YOUR THOUGHTS AS YOU PLAN FOR HEALTHY AGING

USE THIS SPACE TO RECORD YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS.



Have you thought about what sources of income you will have in the future?

Do you have a plan in case you become unable to manage your financial matters? Do you know about representation agreements and powers of attorney?

Are you aware of the tax credits and discounts you can qualify for as a senior?

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



YOUR MONEY

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 you maintain quality of life as you get older. If you're a low-income senior, there are programs available to help supplement your income. These include the federal Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement programs, and the B.C. Senior's Supplement.

You may also be eligible for a variety of provincial and federal tax credits to reduce the amount of tax you pay. This section provides information about income security programs and tax credits so you can make sure you're getting all the benefits you're entitled to receive. For more information, refer to the *Your Benefits* tab at the beginning of this guide.

Also refer to the section on *Your Safety and Security* in this guide to read about incapacity planning and how to appoint someone to make legal and financial decisions for you in case you're ever unable to make these decisions on your own, as well as consumer protection and investor education programs to help you protect yourself and your money from scams and fraud.

The following programs in this section of the BC Seniors' Guide may be of particular interest to seniors with lower incomes:

- ☐ Old Age Security Pension
- ☐ Guaranteed Income Supplement
- ☐ Allowance/Allowance for the Survivor Benefits
- ☐ Senior's Supplement Program
- ☐ Income Assistance for Seniors Not Receiving Old Age Security
- ☐ Veterans Affairs Canada

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.

If you 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.

Old Age Security 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. You should apply at least six months before your 65th birthday or the date of your eligibility to receive OAS benefits if you do not receive a proactive enrolment letter. As of July 2013, you can defer receiving your OAS pension for up to 60 months after the date you 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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/oas

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. You must apply to receive the GIS. Whether you are a new applicant or you already receive these benefits, your benefits will be renewed automatically each year, as long as you remain eligible and you file your annual income tax return on time.

If you do not file your income tax return on time, or if further information is needed, you will receive a renewal form in the mail. The GIS is based on your annual income, or the combined income of you and your spouse or common-law partner. 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 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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/oas/gis

Income Assistance for Seniors Not Receiving Old Age Security Pension

If you are 65 or over and not eligible for the Old Age Security pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, you may be eligible for income assistance from the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. Eligibility is based on your income, assets and shelter costs. For more information, please contact the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation.

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 866-0800; press 3

Allowance/Allowance for the Survivor

If you are a spouse or common-law partner of someone receiving both Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, you may qualify for a benefit called the Allowance. The Allowance provides extra money to eligible low-income individuals aged 60 to 64. The benefit you receive will be based on the combined incomes of you and your spouse or common-law partner.

If your spouse or common-law partner dies (or has died), you are 60 to 64, and you have low income, you may receive a benefit called the Allowance for the Survivor until you reach age 65. Please consult the Service Canada website for all of the eligibility criteria.

You must apply to receive the Allowance or the Allowance for the Survivor. Whether you are a new applicant or you already receive these benefits, your benefits will be renewed automatically each year, as long as you remain eligible and you file an 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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/oas/allowance.shtml

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/oas/allowance-survivor.shtml

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. You must apply to receive CPP benefits – retirement benefits do not begin automatically unless you were in receipt of CPP disability benefits when you turned 65. Apply at least six months before you want your CPP pension to begin.

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

If you have lived or worked in another country that has a social security agreement with Canada, or if you are 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, you may be eligible for benefits from Canada or from the other country.

If you have contributed to the CPP for the necessary number of years, the CPP also offers a one-time lump-sum death benefit to your estate upon your death. Furthermore, your 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).

Please note that changes to the CPP have been phased in between 2011 and 2016. More information on these changes, and applications for CPP benefits, are available from any Service Canada office and on the Service Canada website.

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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/cpp

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

Website: www.cra.gc.ca/cpp

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 low-income 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

Website: www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/PROGRAMS/other.htm#ss

Registered Retirement Savings Plans

A Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) is a savings plan that can give you immediate tax benefits at a time when your income is generally higher and defers taxes to later years when your 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. You have until December 31 of the year in which you turn 71 to contribute to your RRSP.

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

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/rrsp-reer/rrsps-eng.html

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.

The receipt of pension income does not prevent you from receiving EI benefits. If you return to work and accumulate enough insurable hours and meet the entitlement conditions to set up a claim, your pension income will not be deducted from your EI benefits.



You can apply for Employment Insurance benefits online.

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/application/employmentinsurance.shtml

For more information, contact Service Canada:

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

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei

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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/publications/sew_publication.shtml

EI provides Compassionate Care Benefits to persons who have to 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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/benefits/compassionate.shtml

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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/benefits/sickness.shtml

Employed Seniors Receiving CPP Pensions and Benefits

The rules for contributing to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) changed on Jan. 1, 2012. The changes apply to employees and self-employed individuals 60 to 70 years of age who are receiving a CPP or Quebec Pension Plan (QPP) retirement pension. If you are under 65, you will now have to contribute to the CPP if you are receiving a CPP or QPP retirement pension and working. If you are 65 to 70 years of age, you will also have to contribute, unless you elect to stop contributing to the CPP.

For more information on how to make this election, or on CPP contributions,

refer to your income tax guide, call the Canada Revenue Agency, or visit one of the websites below.

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

Website: www.cra.gc.ca/cpp

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/cpp

TAX CREDITS

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

Age Amount

In addition to the basic personal amount, if you turned 65 during the year (or are older), you 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 you can claim is based on your net income.

Pension Income Amount

If you receive pension income, superannuation or annuity payments, you may be able to claim the pension income amount. Your qualifying pension income amount will be used in determining the total non-refundable tax credits used to reduce your federal income tax.

Amounts Transferred from Spouse

Your spouse may be able to transfer to you amounts that he or she qualifies for, but does not need to reduce his or her federal income tax to zero. For example, your spouse may be able to transfer the age amount, pension income amount or the disability amount.

Pension Income Splitting

You may also want to explore the idea of splitting your eligible pension income with your spouse or common-law partner if you meet the



requirements. Using income splitting, your spouse or common-law partner may be able to transfer up to half of their pension income to you 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 their website.

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

Website: www.cra.gc.ca/pensionsplitting

Other Amounts

You 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.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/sgmnts/snrs/ddctns-eng.html

Disability Tax Credit

If you have a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions and meet certain conditions, you may be entitled to claim the disability tax credit. To determine eligibility, you must 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 their website.

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

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/disability

Goods and Services Tax Credit

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

To receive GST credit payments, you must file your income tax and benefit return even if you did not receive any income during the year. Starting in the 2014 tax year, you no longer have to apply for the GST credit as the Canada Revenue Agency will determine your eligibility 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 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): 1 800 959-1953

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/gsthstcredit

Sales Tax Credit

You are eligible to claim the sales tax credit for a tax year if you were a resident of B.C. on December 31 of the tax year and any of the following apply to you:

- Were 19 years of age or older;
- Had a spouse or common-law partner; or
- Were a parent.

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

You claim the sales tax credit when you file your T1 Income Tax Return, by using the British Columbia Credits form (BC479). The credit is refundable to the extent it exceeds your income tax payable. You can access the British Columbia Credits form on the following website:

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/tf/5010-tc/README.html

For information about the provincial sales tax credit, consult the following website:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “BC479 sales tax credit” in the Search field)

British Columbia Low Income Climate Action Tax Credit

The BC Low Income 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 credit.

The maximum annual payment amount for the period July 2015 to June 2016 is \$115.50 for yourself, \$115.50 for your spouse or common-law partner, and \$34.50 per child (\$115.50 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 2014 net income over \$32,445. For families, the maximum credit is reduced by two per cent of their 2014 net income over \$37,852. The net income thresholds are indexed annually to provincial inflation.

For more information:

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-3332

Email: ITBTaxQuestions@gov.bc.ca

Website: www2.gov.bc.ca

(enter “low income climate action tax” in the Search field)

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/rltd_pgrms/bc-eng.html

If You Move

If you move, remember to inform the Canada Revenue Agency immediately, even if you use direct deposit and your bank account does not change, to ensure that your payments are not disrupted and that your tax and benefit information is up-to-date.

Individual Income Tax and Trust Enquiries – Canada Revenue Agency

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

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/cntct/phn-eng.html

POWERS OF ATTORNEY

A power of attorney is a legal document that appoints another person(s), called an “attorney,” to deal with your business and property and to make financial and legal decisions on your behalf. It can be broad in scope, or can be limited to specific matters. A “regular” (non-enduring) power of attorney ends if you become mentally incapable. If you want the power of attorney to continue, even if you become mentally incapable of making financial decisions, you 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 and the Ministry of Justice website.

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca/services/services-to-adults/Pages/personal-planning.aspx

Website: www.ag.gov.bc.ca/incapacity-planning



Your
Safety & Security



YOUR THOUGHTS AS YOU PLAN FOR HEALTHY AGING

USE THIS SPACE TO RECORD YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS.



Do you know how to protect yourself against financial fraud, scams and identity theft?

Do you know who to contact for help if you, or a senior you know, is being abused, neglected or overmedicated?

Are you prepared in case of an emergency or natural disaster? Will you know what to do?

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



YOUR SAFETY AND SECURITY

Protection and Support When You Need it

Many seniors say that personal security is a major issue for them. 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.

In this section of the guide, you can find information about the growing problem of elder abuse and neglect. If you think that someone is abusing or neglecting a senior, and it is an emergency, call 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*.

You can also learn more 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 for you in case you're ever unable to make these decisions on your own. When you think about, discuss, and write down your beliefs, values and wishes for health care, you are making an advance care plan. This section directs you to resources, such as *My Voice – Expressing My Wishes for Future Health Care Treatment*, which will help you make your own advance care plan to help ensure that any care you receive is given according to your wishes.

Scams and fraud are also increasingly of concern for seniors. In this section you can find information on organizations that can help you protect yourself from unfair business practices and investment fraud. As well, there is information on the help and services available for victims of crime, and information and resources to help you and your family get prepared and stay safe in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.



The following program in this section of the BC Seniors' Guide may be of particular interest to seniors with lower incomes:

- ☐ Legal Services Society

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 from people they rely on or trust, such as physical, emotional, or financial abuse and neglect. 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 can also include friends and caregivers.

If you think a senior is being abused, taken advantage of or neglected, and you believe that the senior is in immediate danger, call the police (9-1-1). In cases where there is no imminent danger or you want 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, you can report the situation to the designated agency in your health authority, to Providence Health Care, or, for individuals with a developmental disability, call Community Living BC. If the mistreatment involves financial abuse or abuse by a substitute decision maker (e.g., under a power of attorney), call the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia. 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.



BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support

The BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support 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.

Legal Programs

These programs provide legal advice, advocacy and representation to people age 55+ who are not able to access legal help due to low income or other barriers on legal issues involving housing, debt, abuse/neglect, guardianship, capacity, government benefits and financial exploitation.

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, contact the BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support or call the 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@bcceas.ca

Website: www.bcceas.ca



VictimLink BC

VictimLink BC provides information, referrals and support for victims of family and sexual violence and other crimes.

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

Website: www.victimlinkbc.ca/vlbc/help/elder_abuse.page

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: 250-364-5395

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)



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.

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 952-1369

Mailing Address: PO Box 9638 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9P1

Email: info@alregistrar.bc.ca

Website: www.health.gov.bc.ca/assisted

BC Association of Community Response Networks

The BC Association of Community Response Networks addresses adult abuse and 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 co-ordinated 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.SeniorsBC.ca/elderabuse

HealthLink BC

You can 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. Your call can remain anonymous at your request. Translation services are available in over 130 languages. Information is also available on the HealthLink BC website.

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

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

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/elderabuse

Office of the Seniors Advocate

The Office of the Seniors Advocate was established in 2014 as an independent office of the provincial government. It is the only 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

1-2, 1515 Blanshard St.

Victoria BC V8W 3C8

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 you become incapable of making your own health care, personal care or financial decisions. Careful planning can help you and your family feel more at ease and manage a difficult time. There are a number of legal options and resources available in British Columbia to assist capable adults to make plans in the event of future incapacity. Although you are not required to visit a lawyer or notary public in order to use the forms and documents listed below, it is recommended that you seek legal and medical advice before completing them. For information about personal planning options, see:

It's Your Choice: Personal Planning Tools

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca/documents/STA/lt%27s_Your_Choice-Personal_Planning_Tools.pdf

For other publications on the Public Guardian and Trustee website, visit:

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca/services/services-to-adults/Pages/personal-planning.aspx

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

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/advancecare

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

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfeatures/advance-care-planning.html

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

Website: www.ag.gov.bc.ca/incapacity-planning

Enduring Power of Attorney

You can use an enduring power of attorney to appoint another person to make financial and legal decisions for you. You must be mentally capable when you make an enduring power of attorney. Unlike a “regular” (non-enduring)



power of attorney, which ends if you become mentally incapable, an enduring power of attorney continues in effect if you become incapable. An enduring power of attorney can be broad in scope, or very specific.

Representation Agreement

You can use a representation agreement to appoint a representative to make decisions for you if you become incapable of doing so on your 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 your financial affairs (section 7).

Advance Directive

An advance directive allows you to provide your instructions about the health care treatments you want to accept or refuse, including life-support and life-prolonging medical interventions, directly to your health care provider(s). Generally, unless you also have a representative, health care providers must follow an advance directive and won't seek a consent decision from anyone when your instructions address the care that is needed at the time.

If You Have Not Planned In Advance of Incapacity

Temporary Substitute Decision Maker

If you become incapable and need a health care decision to be made and you do not have a court appointed guardian (committee of person) or representative with authority to make health care decisions for you, and you do not have an advance directive that applies to the health care decision, then B.C. law provides for a health care provider to choose a Temporary Substitute Decision Maker (TSDM) who may decide on your behalf. The TSDM must make their decisions based on your known instructions or wishes expressed while you were capable, or if your wishes are unknown, in your best interests. A TSDM may not give consent for an adult's admission to a residential care facility. You can read more about TSDMs and find a form to make a TSDM contact list as part of your advance care plan in the *My Voice – Expressing My Wishes for Future Health Care Treatment* advance care planning guide available on the SeniorsBC website.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/advancecare



Guardianship (Committeeship)

If you become mentally incapable and 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 your behalf. A guardian (committee) may be appointed to make decisions about your 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. You can find more information about this process on the Public Guardian and Trustee website.

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca/services/services-to-adults/Pages/financial-management-and-personal-decision-making-services.aspx

The Guide to the Certificate of Incapability Process: www.trustee.bc.ca/reports-and-publications/Pages/certificate-of-incapability-guidelines.aspx

Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry

The Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre is a non-profit, charitable organization. Nidus provides education on personal planning – making legal arrangements in case you need assistance with things such as paying bills or making health care decisions due to illness, injury or disability. You will find information and forms on the Nidus website for representation agreements, as well as information on enduring powers of attorney, advance directives and health care consent.

Nidus operates a centralized registry for personal planning documents, including representation agreements, enduring powers of attorney, advance directives, *My Voice – Expressing My Wishes for Future Health Care Treatment*, nominations of committee and notices of revocations. For more information, visit:



Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry

1440 W. 12th Ave.

Vancouver BC V6H 1M8

Voicemail (toll-free): 1 877 267-5552

Voicemail (Metro Vancouver): 604 408-7414

Email: info@nidus.ca

Website: www.nidus.ca

Public Guardian And Trustee of British Columbia

The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) of British Columbia provides 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/committeeship.

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/documents/adult-guardianship/How%20You%20Can%20Help.pdf

When the PGT is Committee

Website: www.trustee.bc.ca/reports-and-publications/Pages/when-the-pgt-is-committee.aspx

Estate and Personal Trust Services

The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) is often requested to administer estates in British Columbia.

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 (Service BC, toll-free from Victoria): 250 387-6121 (ask to be transferred to the Public Guardian and Trustee at 604 660-4444)

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, providing information, referrals, emotional support and practical assistance to victims of crime. VictimLink BC is a toll-free information and help line, available 24/7, for victims and witnesses of crime or violence. If you, or someone you know, is a victim or a witness of crime or violence, contact VictimLink BC at the number below to find a victim service program in your area.

Government also supports more than 250 programs across B.C., which provide services for women and children impacted by violence. These programs include Stopping the Violence Counselling, Children Who Witness Abuse Counselling, Outreach Services and Multicultural Outreach Services. To find a program in your area, please contact VictimLink BC at the number below.

VictimLink BC; 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, which helps victims of crime protect themselves and their homes, and recover from these experiences. For more information about financial assistance and benefits for victims of crime, please visit the website below.

Website: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/financial

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-5199

Email: VictimServices@gov.bc.ca

Email: CrimePrevention@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices

Website: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention



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: bc.rcmp.ca/ViewPage.action?contentId=1142&siteNodeId=87

Legal Services Society

If you have a legal problem that the Legal Services Society covers and a low income, you may be 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 to help you work through your problem on your own;
- Legal advice from a lawyer who can help you work through your problem; and/or
- Legal representation (a lawyer to act for you) in court if you have 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



People's Law School

The People's Law School is a non-profit society that provides complimentary and impartial legal information in plain language. A wide range of law-related topics are covered in several languages in booklets, e-books, videos, animations and public events. The People's Law School publishes a planning for aging booklet series entitled, "When I'm 64: Benefits and Services." The resource is also available online in e-book format.

They do not provide legal advice on individual legal problems. However, they have a variety of public legal education and information resources on their website and can refer individuals to other sources of help.

For more information, or to find out about similar services in other communities, visit the People's Law School reading room or website, or call the number provided below.

People's Law School

150 – 900 Howe St.

Vancouver BC V6Z 2M4

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 331-5400

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 331-5400

Email: info@publiclegaled.bc.ca

Website: www.publiclegaled.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 in an effort to make sure consumer transactions respect the laws that govern them. When the consumer protection laws it administers are violated, Consumer Protection BC has the ability to 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

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 more than 1,400 motor dealers and over 7,000 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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 574-5050

Email: consumer.services@mvsabc.com

Website: www.vehiclesalesauthority.com

Investor Education Program Helps Seniors Avoid Scams – BC Securities Commission

Many older British Columbians depend on others for care and financial advice. This can make them targets of scam artists who try to befriend them in order to take advantage of them.

To help protect the finances of those who cannot protect themselves, a person may have a public trustee, or transfer power of attorney to someone of their choice. (See the Substitute Decision Making content in this section of this guide for more information on enduring powers of attorney.)

This is usually a good idea, but it can be dangerous if the person they trust turns out to be a scam artist who specifically targets them and then steals their money. The scam artist may also become close and influence the senior without going through the legal paperwork of gaining power of attorney.

Some seniors may be looking for investments to help get through retirement and leave money for their children and grandchildren. Many have lost their life savings to risky or dangerous investments because they did not understand the risks, ask the right questions, do independent research, or get a second opinion.

InvestRight and the BC Securities Commission can help answer questions about investment planning, unsuitable investments and scams. The InvestRight website 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 take action and prevent financial abuse of elders. Take the time to 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 BC Securities Commission or fill out the Report a Scam form on their website.

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 899-6854

Website: www.investright.org/report_scam.aspx

You can also contact the commission to book a free investor education seminar for your group of 20 or more.

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 899-6500

EMERGENCY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

An important part of provincial emergency preparedness is personal preparedness. You have a responsibility to know what to do in an emergency to protect yourself and your 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 will also help during a power outage or a snow storm.

There are many simple actions you can take to be prepared for an emergency. You may have already heard of the recommendation to be prepared for at least 72 hours, but did you know that some authorities, such as the Capital Regional District (covering Greater Victoria and the southern gulf islands), now recommend a minimum of seven days? If you have special needs, there are steps you can take to ensure that your needs are met during an emergency. Preparing for an emergency will ensure an emergency does not become a disaster. The first step to preparedness that you can take is to fill out the Personal Record and Emergency Numbers page in the *Key Contacts* section at the beginning of this guide.

- 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; and
- Insurance agent contact information.

The most important thing you can do to prepare for any emergency is to discuss and co-ordinate your needs with your family and friends, as well as any people involved in your care, (e.g., your family physician, home care providers or residential care providers).

Here are some simple steps that will help you get prepared. Discuss any specific medical needs with your family physician. For more detailed information see the information for specific programs below.

- 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;
- Have copies of your most recent prescriptions available;
- Keep spare glasses, even if it is not your most recent prescription; and
- 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:

- o Water: Four litres per person, per day, for a minimum of three days. Two litres are needed for hydration and another two for basic hygiene, such as washing hands and brushing teeth.
- o Food that you like to eat and that is appropriate for any dietary restrictions you may have. Also consider how you would store the food and any expiration dates.



- o First aid kit
- o Flashlight and spare batteries, or a hand crank or wind-up flashlight
- o AM/FM radio and spare batteries or a hand crank or wind-up radio
- o Clothing
- o Candles and matches
- o Hygiene items
- o Basic tools
- o Pet preparedness items

A 'grab-and-go' kit should contain the following items:

- o A backpack or small rolling suitcase containing essentials that you can easily take with you if you have to evacuate very quickly – in case there is a fire, for example.
- o Bottled water
- o Non-perishable food items
- o Essential medications
- o Copies of prescriptions
- o Copies of essential paperwork, such as driver's licence, insurance policies and birth certificate
- o Cash and banking information
- o Spare house and car keys
- o Essentials for your pet if applicable
- o Flashlight
- o Sturdy shoes

Store the 'grab-and-go' kit close to a door, for example in the entrance closet.

Regularly check and update the contents of your emergency and 'grab-and-go' kits. For example, check your kits at the same time you switch to daylight savings time in the spring and back in the fall. Also remember to update your



medication. When you get a new prescription you could put that in your emergency kit and use up the one in there next. By making this a routine you will always have the most current items in your kit and also familiarize yourself with the content of your kit and improve it as you go along.

In addition to having an emergency kit, know what to do. Learn what to do if you smell fire, gas or how to protect yourself during an earthquake – Drop! Cover! Hold On! Also, learn how to provide basic first aid.

The following programs provide information and resources to help individuals get prepared for emergencies. You can access information about general emergency preparedness as well as emergency preparedness for seniors. For specific information regarding emergency programs in your area, contact your local emergency program through your municipal hall. 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/PreparedBC

Website: www.embc.gov.bc.ca/em

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.embc.gov.bc.ca/em/hazard_preparedness/disabilities_information.html



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

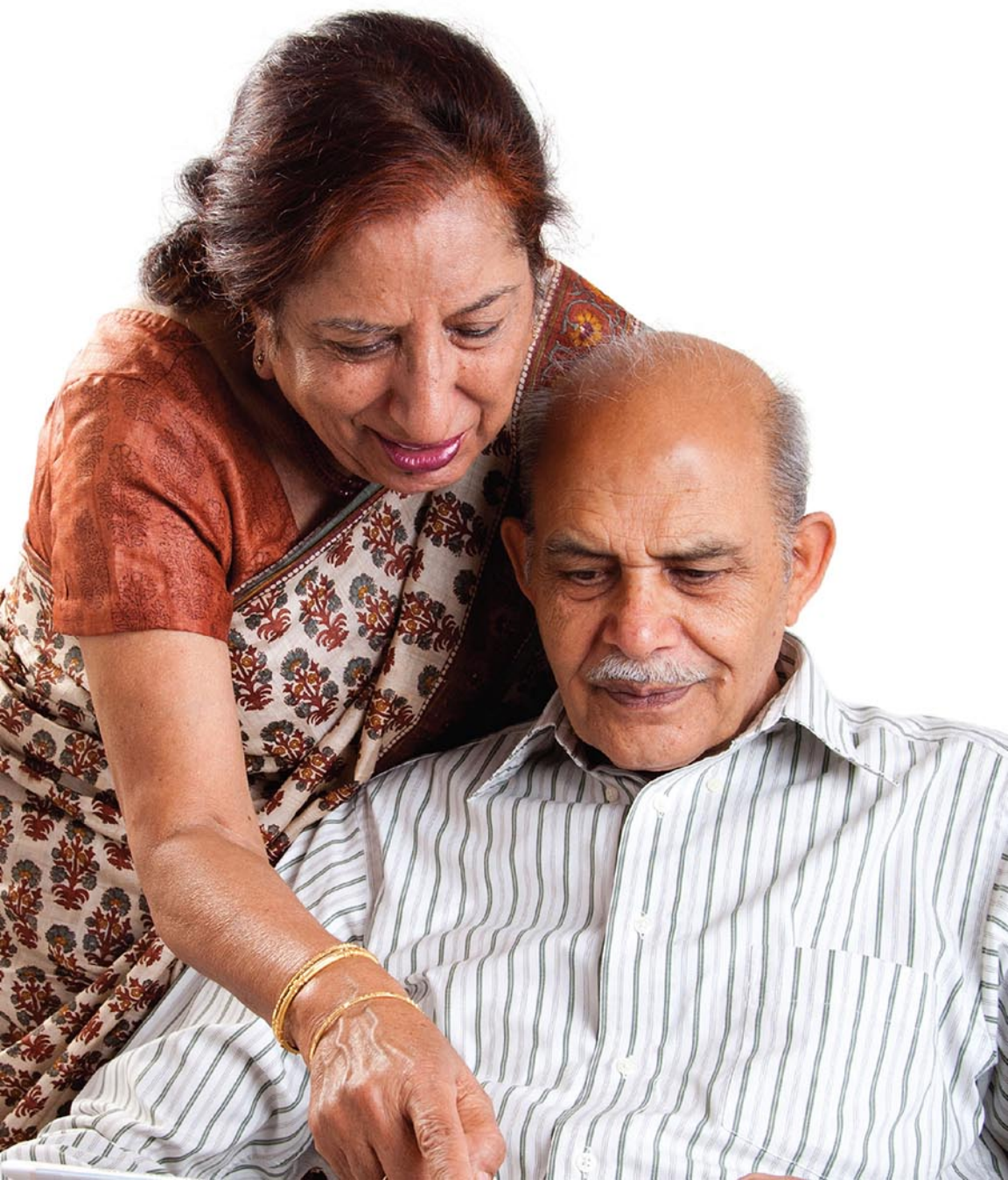
Access the *Your Emergency Preparedness Guide* online.

Website: www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/yprprdnssgd/index-eng.aspx

Access the *Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs* online.

Website: www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/pplwthdsblts/index-eng.aspx

Directory



Notes

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

Directory

Following is an alphabetical listing of services described in this guide or available to seniors.

A

Aboriginal Elders Transportation

(see Elders Transportation Program)

Accessibility 2024

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/accessibility

Acute, Home and Community Care Services

Look under “Health Authorities” in the blue pages of your phone book for the number in your area, or check the HealthLink BC website for information. You can also 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

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca

Adult Education

Adult education programs are offered across the province through both public post-secondary institutions and community-based service providers to support literacy, skills development, and high school completion or upgrading. Some B.C. post-secondary institutions offer reduced or free tuition to seniors.

Website: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/adultlearning/welcome.htm

Website: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/welcome.htm

Affordable Housing for Seniors

(see BC Housing)

Age-friendly BC (Age-friendly Communities)

Email: AgefriendlyBC@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly

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

Alcohol and Aging: Know the Facts

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/alcoholandaging

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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/oas/allowance.shtml

www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/oas/allowance-survivor.shtml

Alzheimer Society of British Columbia

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 681-6530

Email: info@alzheimerbc.org

Website: www.alzheimerbc.org

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 (Metro Vancouver): 604 875-5051

Phone (interpreter services, toll-free): 1 877 228-2557

Phone (interpreter services, Greater Vancouver): 604 675-4099

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

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 952-1369

Email: info@alregistrar.bc.ca

Mailing Address: PO Box 9638 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9P1

Website: www.health.gov.bc.ca/assisted

Automobile Insurance Discounts

(see Seniors' Vehicle Insurance Discounts)

BC Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Service

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

B.C. Brain Injury Association

Address:

c/o Sea to Sky Meeting Management Inc.

Suite 206, 201 Bewicke Ave.

North Vancouver BC V7M 3M7

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 984-1212

Email: info@brainstreams.ca

Website: www.brainstreams.ca

BC Cancer Agency

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 663-3333

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 877-6000

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 Elder Advocacy and Support

Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL); 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (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@bcceas.ca

Website: www.bcceas.ca

BC Emergency Health Services

BC Emergency Health Services oversees the BC Ambulance Service and the BC Transfer Network.

In a medical emergency, dial 9-1-1 where available, or call the EMERGENCY phone number listed on the inside cover of your phone book.

If a phone book is not available, dial 0 to reach the operator.

For non-emergency information, call the number below.

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: bcehs.phsa.ca/about/billing/fee

BC Ferries

B.C. seniors age 65+ travel at 50 per cent off regular adult fare on most BC Ferries routes sailing Monday through Thursday (including Remembrance Day on November 11), except on holidays. 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): 250 386-3431

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

B.C. Health Care System

Phone (Service BC, toll-free): 1 800 663-7867

BC HealthGuide

For information on the BC HealthGuide, call 8-1-1 or visit the HealthLink BC website.

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

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

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/servicesresources/bchealthguidehandbook

BC Healthy Communities Society

The BC Healthy Communities Society is a provincewide, not-for-profit organization that promotes and supports healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-0876

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

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

Phone (Prince Rupert): 250 627-7501

BC Hydro

For electric service or energy-efficiency information:

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224-9376)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 224-9376

To report a power outage or downed wires:

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 POWERON (1 888 769-3766)

B.C. Low Income Climate Action Tax Credit

Websites:

www.gov.bc.ca (enter “low income climate tax” in the Search field)

www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/rltd_prgrms/bc-eng.html

BC Palliative Care Benefits Program

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “who we cover pharmacare” in Search field)

BC Parks - Campsite Fee Discount

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/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

B.C. Seniors' Community Parks

Website: www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/healthy-aging

BC Seniors Games Society (55+ BC Games)

Phone (Greater Victoria): 778 426-2940

Email: bcsgs@shaw.ca

Website: www.55plusbcgames.org

B.C. Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit

The B.C. Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit 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.

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

Email: ITBTaxQuestions@gov.bc.ca

Mailing Address: Income Taxation Branch
PO Box 9444 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9W8

Website: www.gov.bc.ca

(enter “seniors home renovation tax” in Search field)

BC Services Card

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “services card id” in Search field)

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 (Metro Vancouver): 604 294-8929

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.cmha.bc.ca/how-we-can-help/adults/bounceback

Brain Health for Seniors

Five easy steps to help you promote your brain health.

Website: www.yourbrainmatters.org.au

Risk factors for Alzheimer's disease and what you can do to help reduce those risks.

Website: www.alzheimer.ca/en/bc/About-dementia/Alzheimer-s-disease/Risk-factors

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 Social Innovation services*, input your Personal Identification Number and PIN, or your Social Insurance Number, then press option 3, and then press option 1.
- Option 2 - If you are receiving Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation 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 3, and then press option 1.

* See eligibility criteria at the website below.

Email: HSDBUSPA@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/programs/bus-pass.html

Business Practices and Consumer Protection Authority of B.C.

(see Consumer Protection BC)

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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/cpp

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

Website: www.cra.gc.ca/cpp

Canada Revenue Agency

Phone (individual income tax and trust enquiries, toll-free):
1 800 959-8281

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca

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/en/default.cfm

Canadian Diabetes Association

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 226-8464

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 732-1331

Email: info@diabetes.ca

Website: www.diabetes.ca

Centre for Addictions Research of B.C.

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 408-7753

Email: info@carbc.ca

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 472-5445

Email: carbc@uvic.ca

Website: www.carbc.ca

Child Care Subsidy Program

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-6501

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], toll-free): 1 800 661-8773

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TTY], Metro Vancouver): 604 775-0303

Website: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/subsidy

Choice in Supports for Independent Living

Speak with your health care provider for more information.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “supports independent living” in the Search field)

Chronic Disease Self-Management Program

(see Self-Management BC)

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/safe/Life-in-B-C/index/find-services/family-resources/seniors.aspx

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): 250 384-7723

Website: www.bctransit.com/victoria/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training

Phone (Kelowna): 250 860-8121

Website: www.bctransit.com/kelowna/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training

Phone (Prince George): 250 563-0011

Website: www.bctransit.com/prince-george/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training

Phone (Vernon): 250 545-7221

Website: www.bctransit.com/vernon/riderinfo/accessibility/travel-training

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.cra.gc.ca/volunteer

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/congratulatorymessages

Consular Services

(see Foreign Country Services)

Consumer Protection BC

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 320-1667

Email: info@consumerprotectionbc.ca

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 681-8651

Website: www.alzheimer.ca/en/bc/We-can-help/Resources/First-Link-dementia-helpline

(also see Alzheimer Society of B.C.)

Disability Tax Credit

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

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.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 Medical Fitness Reports and Road Test Re-exams (RoadSafetyBC)

Phone (Service BC, toll-free): 1 800 663-7867, and ask to be transferred to 250 387-7747

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-7747

Website: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/osmv/medical-fitness

Driver's Licences (ICBC)

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 978-8300

Website: www.icbc.com/driver-licensing

Driving – BCAA 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.bcaa.com/seniordrivers

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.bcceas.ca

VictimLink BC

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/vlbc/help/elder_abuse.page

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 388-5522

Email: frontdesk@bcaafc.com

Website: www.bcaafc.com/programs/firstcitizensfund/30elderstransportationassistance

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.embc.gov.bc.ca/em

Employment Insurance (EI) Benefits

Phone (Service Canada, toll-free): 1 800 206-7218

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei

EI Compassionate Care Benefits

EI provides compassionate care benefits to persons who have to 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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/benefits/compassionate.shtml

EI Sickness Benefits

EI provides sickness benefits to individuals who are unable to work because of sickness, injury, or quarantine.

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/benefits/sickness.shtml

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.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb

Employment Support for Older Workers

(see *Targeted Initiative for Older Workers* 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.

Website: www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/after-education-language.asp

F

Fair PharmaCare Plan

(see PharmaCare)

Fall Prevention

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/fallprevention

Family Caregivers of British Columbia

(formerly the Family Caregivers' Network Society)

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 520-FCNS (3267)

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 384-0408

Email: caregiversupport@fcns.ca

Website: www.familycaregiversbc.ca

Federal and Provincial Non-refundable Tax Credits

Federal

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

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/sgmnts/snr/dds/eng.html

Provincial

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html (enter "british columbia income tax credit" in Search field)

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)

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Seniors Canada On-Line

Website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/audiences/seniors

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© Program

Website: www.alzheimer.ca/en/bc/We-can-help/First-Link

(also see Alzheimer Society of B.C.)

Fishing (Angling) and Hunting Licences for Seniors

For information on fishing (angling) licences:

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/licences

For information on hunting licences:

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/hunting/resident/#hunting

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.protocol.gov.bc.ca/protocol/prgs/consular/directory.htm

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

Goods and Services Tax (GST) Credit

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 959-1953

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/gsthstcredit

Government Agents

(see Service BC Centres)

Government of Canada

Retirement and public pensions:

Website: www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/retirement.html

Seniors Canada On-Line:

Website: www.Canada.ca/Seniors

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Line

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 558-4740

Website: www.parentsupportbc.ca/grandparents_raising_grandchildren

Grants for Age-friendly Community Planning and Projects

Email: AgefriendlyBC@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.ubcm.ca (enter “seniors housing support initiative” in the Search field)

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.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/oas/gis

H

HandyDART Custom Transit

BC Transit (Greater Victoria and the rest of B.C. outside Metro Vancouver)

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 382-6161, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Website: www.bctransit.com

TransLink (Metro Vancouver only)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 953-3333

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

Interior Health

Phone (Kelowna): 250 862-4200

Website: www.interiorhealth.ca

Island Health

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 370-8699

Website: www.viha.ca

Northern Health

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 565-2999

Phone (Prince George): 250 565-2649

Website: www.northernhealth.ca

Vancouver Coastal Health

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 884-0888

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 736-2033

Website: www.vch.ca

Provincial Health Services Authority

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 675-7400

Website: www.phsa.ca

First Nations Health Authority

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 913-0033

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 693-6500

Website: www.fnha.ca

Health Connections

Health Connections provides access to transportation for patients who must travel for non-emergency medical appointments.

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/healthconnections

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

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 hand side of the page).

Website: www.bctransit.com

Island Health

Service provided through Wheels for Wellness, a non-profit society.

Phone (Comox): 250 338-0196

Website: www.wheelsforwellness.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): 250 799-5311

(also see Travel Assistance Program)

HealthLink BC

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.coscoba.ca/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/seniorshealthyeating

Further healthy eating information is available on the Healthy Families BC website, the HealthLink BC website, or by calling HealthLink BC.

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

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

Website: www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/eating

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile68j.stm

Healthy Families BC

Learn more about healthy eating and physical activity.

Website: www.HealthyFamiliesBC.ca

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

Email: hafi@bchousing.org

Website: www.bchousing.org/HAFI

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. The upgrades must be completed by March 31, 2016, and all applications submitted by April 30, 2016.

Website: www.bchydro.com/homerebates

Home Owner Grant for Seniors

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

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/homeownergrant

If you still 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): 1 800 663-7867

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-0555

Email: ruraltax@gov.bc.ca

Homeowner Protection Office

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 407-7757

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 646-7050

Housing Registry

Individuals searching for subsidized housing can submit an application 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 2

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Email: thehousingregistry@bchousing.org

Website: www.bchousing.org/Partners/Housing_Registry

Hunting and Angling (Fishing) Licences for Seniors

For information on hunting licences:

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/hunting/resident/#hunting

For information on angling (fishing) licences:

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/licences

Website: www.fishing.gov.bc.ca

I

iCON – interCultural Online Health Network, University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine eHealth Strategy Office

iCON provides culturally and linguistically appropriate health resources on chronic disease management to Chinese, South Asian, and Aboriginal patients, families and caregivers throughout British Columbia.

Website: www.iconproject.org

Insurance Corporation of B.C. (ICBC)

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 661-2800

Website: www.icbc.com

Immigrant Services

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

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

Income Assistance for Seniors Not Receiving Old Age Security

Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 866-0800; press 3 then 1

Website: www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/contacts/tollfree.htm

Website: www.eia.gov.bc.ca/bcea.htm

Inland Ferries

Website: www.th.gov.bc.ca/marine/ferry_schedules.htm

InspireHealth Integrative Cancer Care Centres

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 734-7125

Website: www.inspirehealth.ca

Investor Education Program

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@kidney.bc.ca

Website: www.kidney.ca/BCHome

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

Email: customerservice@ltsa.ca

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

Licence Plates for Veterans

(see Veteran Specialty Licence Plates)

Loneliness: Seniors Speak Out

Seniors Speak Out about Loneliness is a resource produced by Seeking Solutions, a national project funded by Health Canada and the National Population Health Fund.

Website: www.agingincanada.ca/Seniors%20Speak%20Out%20About...Loneliness2.pdf

M

Medical Employment Insurance (EI) Benefits

(see Employment Insurance (EI) Benefits – Sickness Benefits)

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/meia/online_resource/health_supplements_and_programs/mso

Medical Services Plan (MSP)

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/medicalservicesplan

Medical Services Plan Billing (Revenue Services of B.C.)

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 405-4909

Phone (Collections, toll-free): 1 866 361-5050

Email: RSBC@HPAAdvancedsolutions.com

Mailing Address: PO Box 9482 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9W6

Medication Coverage (Plan G) – Psychiatric Medication

The No-Charge Psychiatric Medication Plan (Plan G) is available to individuals of any age who are registered with a mental health services centre and who demonstrate clinical and financial need. The plan provides coverage of certain psychiatric medications. Find more information here:

Website: www.gov.bc.ca (enter “who we cover pharmacare” in the Search field)

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/library/publications/year/2005/MentalHealthGuide.pdf

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/how-we-can-help/adults/bounceback

Move for Life! DVD

Move for Life! can be downloaded from the SeniorsBC website.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 725-1149

Website: www.SeniorsBC.ca (enter “move for life dvd” in the Search field)

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.esdc.gc.ca/eng/seniors/funding

Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry

Voicemail (toll-free): 1 877 267-5552

Voicemail (Metro Vancouver): 604 408-7414

Email: info@nidus.ca

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 representative can connect you with a registered dietitian, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Phone (toll-free in B.C.): 8-1-1

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

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating

Email a HealthLink BC dietitian via the website:

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating/emaildietitian.html

Healthy Eating on the Healthy Families BC website:

Website: www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/eating

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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/eng/services/pensions/oas/pension/index.shtml

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

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

Mailing Address: PO Box 9039 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9A5

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 endeavour benefiting the people of the province or elsewhere.

Email: protocol@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

Email: bcdivision@osteoporosis.ca

Website: www.osteoporosis.ca

Pain BC

Website: www.painbc.ca

Parkinson Society British Columbia

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 662-3240

Email: info@parkinson.bc.ca

Website: www.parkinson.bc.ca

Patient Care Quality Offices

(see the Patient Care Quality Offices information in the Your Health section of this guide)

People's Law School

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 331-5400

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 331-5400

Email: info@publiclegaled.bc.ca

Website: www.publiclegaled.bc.ca

Personal Income Tax Information Services

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

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/personalincometaxes

Personal Safety Tips from the RCMP

Website: [bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.](http://bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodId=87&languageId=1&contentId=25520)

[action?siteNodId=87&languageId=1&contentId=25520](http://bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodId=87&languageId=1&contentId=25520)

Personal Supports Information Line

Contact information and referrals to government programs that may provide equipment and assistive devices for persons with disabilities.

Phone (toll-free): 1 888 818-1211

Email: PersonalSupportsInformation@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.personalsupports.bc.ca

PharmaCare

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 683-7151

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare

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 Healthy Families BC website.

Website: www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/activity-lifestyles

Physical Activity Line

For every age and health level, there's a free physical activity plan that works. Just connect with B.C.'s Physical Activity Line or PAL. At PAL, you'll find qualified exercise professionals to provide you with custom physical activity plans that meet your needs.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 725-1149

Email: info@physicalactivityline.com

Website: www.physicalactivityline.com

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

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-POWER ON (1 888 769-3766)

Phone (from your cell phone): *HYDRO (*49376)

Website: www.bchydro.com/outages

Problem Gambling

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

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

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.

Mailing Address:

Tax Deferment Office

Ministry of Finance

PO Box 9475 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9W6

Phone (Service BC, toll-free): 1 800 663-7867 (if you call toll-free, ask to be transferred to 250 356-8121)

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-8121

Email: taxdeferment@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/propertytaxdeferment

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 at 604 660-4444)

Phone (Service BC, toll-free from Victoria): 250 387-6121 (ask to be transferred to the Public Guardian and Trustee at 604 660-4444)

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 660-4444

Email: mail@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/publichealthalerts

(also see Nutrition Information and Immunization Services in this directory)

Q

QuitNow

(see Tobacco Cessation)

R

Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) – Canada Revenue Agency

Phone (Canada Revenue Agency, toll-free): 1 800 959-8281

Website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/rrsp-reer/rrsps-eng.html

Residential School Survivor Services

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support program provides mental health and emotional supports to eligible former Indian 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 Crisis 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/landlordtenant

Revenue Services of BC

(see Medical Services Plan)

Royal BC Museum

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

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-7226

Phone (Greater Victoria, volunteer services only): 250 387-7902

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 (Service BC, toll-free): 1 800 663-7867; if you call toll-free, ask to be transferred to 250-387-0555

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 387-0555

Email: Ruraltax@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/ruralpropertytax

S

Sales Tax Credit

Website: www2.gov.bc.ca (enter "BC479 sales tax credit" in the Search field)

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.bcceas.ca

(also see BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support)

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' 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

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca/commonhealthconcerns/seniorshealth

Seniors' Housing & Support Initiative (Union of B.C. Municipalities)

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-2947

Email: lgps@ubcm.ca

Website: www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/lgps/current-lgps-programs/seniors-housing-support-initiative.html

(also see Age-friendly BC)

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 Social Innovation

Phone (toll-free): 1 866 866-0800

Website: www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/PROGRAMS/other.htm#ss

Seniors' Supportive Housing

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Website: www.bchousing.org/Options/Supportive_Housing/SSH/SSH

(also see BC Housing)

Seniors' Vehicle Insurance Discounts (ICBC)

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 661-2800

Website: www.icbc.com/autoplan/costs/Pages/Discounts-and-savings.aspx

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

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TDD], toll-free): 1 800 661-8773

Phone (Deaf/hard-of-hearing [TDD], Metro Vancouver): 604 775-0303

Website: www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca

Service BC Centres (formerly Government Agents)

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

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

*Service BC Centres (continued)***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: 250 342-4260

*Service BC Centres (continued)***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

Nanaimo

460 Selby St
Nanaimo BC V9R 2R7
Phone: 250 741-3636

Nelson

310 Ward St
Nelson BC V1L 5S4
Phone: 250 354-6104

*Service BC Centres (continued)***Oliver**

Room 101 – Court House
583 Fairview Road, Box 5000
Oliver BC V0H 1T0
Phone: 250 498-3818

Penticton

40 Calgary Ave
Penticton BC V2A 2T6
Phone: 250 487-4200

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

*Service BC Centres (continued)***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

1360 Pemberton Ave, Box 1008
Squamish BC V8B 0A7
Phone: 604 892-2400

Stewart

703 Brightwell St, Box 127
Stewart BC V0T 1W0
Phone: 250 636-2294

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: 250 398-4211

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/dis-cond/a-z/_s/SexuallyTransmittedInfections/default.htm

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 (Metror Vancouver): 604 433-2218

Website: www.bchousing.org/programs/SAFER

Sickness Benefits

(see Employment Insurance (EI) Benefits – Sickness Benefits)

Subsidized Housing

(see BC Housing)

T

Targeted Initiative for Older Workers

Email: LabourMarketProgramsBr@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.workbc.ca (click on Job Seekers > Build Your Career >

Starting and Planning Your Career > B.C. Labour Market Programs)

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): 250 727-7811

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

Website: www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/individual.html

Telephone Device for the Deaf (Service BC)

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 661-8773

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 775-0303

Temporary Premium Assistance (Medical Services Plan)

Temporary Premium Assistance provides a short-term period of MSP premium waiver for qualifying individuals and families.

Phone (toll-free): 1 800 207-2051

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 356-8285

Mailing Address: PO Box 9627 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9P1

Email: TPA@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/individuals/Service/MSP/financial_assistance.htm

Tobacco Cessation (resources to help you quit smoking)

QuitNow Program

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

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 731-5864

Website: www.quitnow.ca

BC Smoking Cessation Program

Phone: 8-1-1

Website: www2.gov.bc.ca (enter “pharmacare cessation” in the Search field)

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/travelassistanceprogram

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

(see iCON)

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.vehiclesalesauthority.ca

Veteran Specialty Licence 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/vehicle-registration/licence-plates/Pages/Licence-plates-for-veterans.aspx

British Columbia Veterans Commemorative Association

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 876-2838

Website: www.bcveterans.org

BC Yukon Command, Royal Canadian Legion

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 736-8166

Website: www.bcyuk.legion.ca

Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 391-1568

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 Aboriginal 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.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices

Volunteer BC

Phone (Metro Vancouver): 604 379 2311

Email: volunteerbc@gmail.com

Website: www.volunteerbc.bc.ca

Volunteer Canada

Website: www.volunteer.ca

WelcomeBC

WelcomeBC provides information about programs, services and resources for newcomers to British Columbia.

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

Website: www.WelcomeBC.ca

WorkBC

WorkBC is the provincial government's access point to the world of work in British Columbia. It was created to help all British Columbians, including mature workers, to successfully navigate B.C.'s labour market.

Phone (toll-free): 1 877 952-6914

Phone (Greater Victoria): 250 952-6914

Email: workbcinformation@gov.bc.ca

Website (general): www.workbc.ca

Website (mature workers): www.workbc.ca (click on Job Seekers > Build Your Career > Advice for Specialized Groups > Mature Workers)

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

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



www.seniorsbc.ca

**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**