



May 2012  
Volume 3, Issue 1

## Welcome to the e-Newsletter

To subscribe to the e-Newsletter, visit [www.SeniorsBC.ca](http://www.SeniorsBC.ca) and to unsubscribe, [click here](#).

## Seniors' Advocate Consultations

**How could an Office of the Seniors' Advocate help seniors in British Columbia? We want to hear from you.**

Public consultations are being held in communities around the province:

May 29 - Victoria	June 11 - Parksville
June 1 - Surrey	June 20 - Kelowna
June 4 - Vancouver	June 22 - Cranbrook
June 5 - Vancouver	June 25 - Prince George
June 8 - Abbotsford	June 27 - Dawson Creek

To RSVP for one of these meetings, please call toll-free 1 855 356-9614 or email [SeniorsAdvocate@gov.bc.ca](mailto:SeniorsAdvocate@gov.bc.ca) – space is limited. For those unable to attend a session, we invite you to consider the questions in a discussion paper, which is available on the [SeniorsBC](http://SeniorsBC) website, and send us your ideas. We also encourage interested organizations to share the paper with their networks and make a submission.

Please send written input to:  
Seniors Action Plan  
Ministry of Health  
PO Box 9825, STN PROV GOV  
Victoria, BC V8W 9W4

Or by email: [SeniorsAdvocate@gov.bc.ca](mailto:SeniorsAdvocate@gov.bc.ca)

The deadline for submissions is July 31, 2012.

You can also join the discussion about seniors on the [ThinkHealthBC](http://ThinkHealthBC) website.

## Message from the Parliamentary Secretary



Seniors, their families, and their care providers have expressed their views about the future of seniors' care in B.C. and we have listened. Our new seniors action plan, *Improving Care for B.C. Seniors*, was informed by what we heard from you, and what we heard from the Provincial Ombudsperson in her report on seniors' care. The action plan establishes priority goals focused on ensuring consistent and fair delivery of care, on helping seniors and their families access information about care

options, and on providing ways to report concerns about seniors' quality of life – including the establishment of a seniors' advocate.

In April, we met the first of many action plan commitments when we released a combined advance care planning guide, workbook and videos, to help guide British Columbians through the advance care planning process. These new resources explain your options for making your wishes for future health care treatment known to loved ones and health care providers. In this edition of the [SeniorsBC](http://SeniorsBC) e-Newsletter, you will find more information about the steps in advance care planning as well as the tools and forms available to help you make your own advance care plan.

The health care system is complex and ever changing, but working together is the best way forward. That's why we're reaching out to you and all British Columbians to ask for input on the seniors action plan. One of the best places to do so is [ThinkHealthBC](http://ThinkHealthBC), a website devoted to showing and sharing health change in motion. Join us there or simply send an email with your thoughts to: [SeniorsActionPlan@gov.bc.ca](mailto:SeniorsActionPlan@gov.bc.ca).

Consultations to inform the role of the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will take place over the next two months. A list of community consultations and information on where to send your written submission is included in this e-Newsletter. I look forward to hearing from you!

With your help, we are working to implement a more accessible, transparent and accountable approach to seniors' care.

Yours truly,

Ron Cantelon  
Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors to the Minister of Health

## Advance Care Planning Resources

By planning ahead, you have a voice in your future health care decisions.

Visit the [SeniorsBC](#) website to access tools and resources to help you create an Advance Care Plan:

- Planning Guide and workbook
- Advance Care Planning videos (in English, and with Punjabi or Simplified Chinese subtitles)
- Advance Care Planning Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

If you have questions about B.C.'s advance care planning tools or resources, please email:

[AdvanceCarePlanningBC@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AdvanceCarePlanningBC@gov.bc.ca)

Visit the [HealthLinkBC](#) website to read about cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), kidney dialysis, advance care planning and end-of-life care.

If you're having difficulty finding B.C.'s Advance Care Planning tools and resources, call HealthLink BC (toll-free) at 8-1-1.



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## New Horizons for Seniors Program

The Government of Canada New Horizons for Seniors Program is accepting applications for the 2012-2013 funding period. The Application Deadline is June 29, 2012.

### **This will be the only Call for Proposals in 2012.**

The New Horizons for Seniors Program offers grants of up to \$25,000 for projects led or inspired by seniors that make a difference in communities and in the lives of others.

For more information, visit the [Human Resources and Skills Development Canada](#) website or leave a voice message at 1-866-717-5842 and someone will return your call.

## Protecting Vulnerable Seniors

*Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan* includes a commitment to ensure the protection and safety of seniors through the development of a provincial elder abuse prevention, identification and response strategy by December 2012.

To help inform the development of the strategy and to identify priority action areas, Government invited community experts across the province to take part in regional consultations in February and March 2012. Consultations included various sectors (health, legal/justice, finance, education), as well as Aboriginal, multicultural, community-based, and senior-serving organizations. For more information on elder abuse prevention, visit the 'preventing elder abuse and neglect' pages on the [SeniorsBC](#) website.

The action plan also includes a commitment to establish a new Office of the Seniors' Advocate. The consultations to inform the role of the advocate will take place over the next two months. Seniors, caregivers, service providers and other organizations in a number of communities across the province will be invited to provide input into the creation of this new Office. Government is requesting written submissions from everyone who would like to contribute. The first page of this e-Newsletter includes information on community consultations and how to provide a written submission on the role of the seniors' advocate.

## Age-friendly B.C. grants and videos

Seniors in every region of B.C. will benefit as 52 local governments received age-friendly grants to support older residents in staying healthy and active in the community.

One element of Age-friendly BC is a partnership between the Province and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) to provide grants of up to \$20,000 to local governments, through UBCM's age-friendly planning and project grant program. These planning and project grants help establish or continue a variety of projects, from improved transportation options for seniors to community gardens.

Also, a new video series highlights age-friendly actions, such as affordable housing or welcoming public spaces for seniors, from Lumby, Revelstoke, Saanich, Sechelt, Abbotsford, Richmond, Vancouver and the North Shore. To see the videos and learn more about Age-friendly BC, visit the [SeniorsBC](#) website.

## Betty Pattinson's Advance Care Plan

BURNS LAKE -- When she got a pacemaker in 2006, Betty Pattinson decided, right then and there, that she wanted to put plans in place. At the time she didn't think of it as advance care planning.

"All I knew was that I didn't want to be a burden to my kids. I didn't want them to have to sit there and watch me being kept alive."

At 72, Betty has a menu of health concerns. "I have heart problems, I have lung problems and I have kidney problems." She figures one of her organs will be her eventual undoing so she talked to her doctor in Prince George and told him that if ever there was a question of life support to keep her alive - forget it. She put her wishes in writing and carries copies of her very basic advance care plan in her purse and in her suitcase. There is no misinterpreting Betty's wishes.

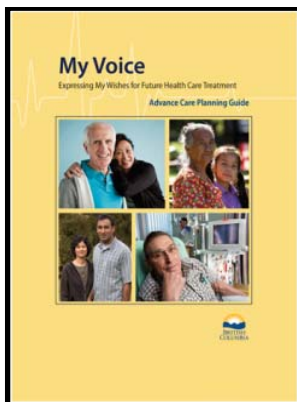
Advance care planning usually begins with a conversation about your beliefs, values and wishes.

In Betty's case the conversation went like this: "I just told my kids straight out what I didn't want. They both know I don't want to be kept alive by a machine."

Updated planning laws that came into effect in September 2011 give adult British Columbians options for planning their health care for a time when they may be incapable of expressing their wishes. The laws mean capable adults can put plans in place that outline the health care treatments they would agree to or refuse, and set out who can speak on their behalf if they become incapable without visiting a lawyer or notary public (unless the situation is complex).

The B.C. government has produced information to walk people through the process of advance care planning and tools that can help. See page 2 of this e-Newsletter for more information on Advance Care Planning Resources or visit the [SeniorsBC](http://SeniorsBC) website.

## Advance Care Planning Steps



**Step 1: Download the Advance Care Planning Guide. If you need help finding it on-line, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.**

*My Voice: Expressing My Wishes for Future Health Care Treatment* is available to download on the [SeniorsBC](http://SeniorsBC) and [HealthLinkBC](http://HealthLinkBC) websites. You can use it to learn about advance care planning and also to make your own Advance Care Plan that will serve as your voice in the future. Check your health authority's website for information about obtaining printed copies.

**Step 2: Have family conversations about your beliefs, values and wishes.**

Every Advance Care Plan starts with conversations between you and your trusted family members or friends. It may feel hard to get started, but usually the people who care about you will understand the need for these conversations.

**Step 3: Decide what health care treatments you will or won't accept, and note them in the guide.**

It's important to think about when you might want to accept life-supporting interventions — things like breathing machines, or feeding tubes. You should also think about when you might prefer not to have life support or life-prolonging interventions.

**Step 4: Gather the contact information for the people who could be individually asked to be your Temporary Substitute Decision Maker (TSDM) if a health care decision is needed for you, and write it down in the guide.**

If you don't like the order of people to be asked on the Temporary Substitute Decision Maker list, or if you have many adult children, or if you would rather have your friend, not your parent for example, be asked to make health care decisions for you, then you can choose the person you want to decide for you by naming them as your Representative in a legally binding Representation Agreement, so that your health care provider can ask them instead.

**Step 5: Put your Advance Care Plan in a safe, accessible place.**

Your Advance Care Plan is a really important document. If you have a chronic health condition, if you engage in high-risk activities, or even if you're just marking a significant birthday, you should have an Advance Care Plan. Make sure the people who need it, can find it, quickly. You can change your advance care plan at any time as long as you remain capable.

## ThinkHealthBC

Do you want to learn more about the changes going on in B.C.'s health care system and the Ministry of Health's strategy for sustainable health care?

Would you like to participate in an online dialogue with the Ministry and other British Columbians about health care in B.C.?

Now you can, by visiting the Ministry of Health's new interactive online resource, [ThinkHealthBC](http://www.ThinkHealth.ca) (www.ThinkHealth.ca), which was launched April 4, 2012.

ThinkHealthBC was developed to engage British Columbians in a new way of thinking about B.C.'s health care system.

The new website is entertaining as well as informative, and uses mixed media such as animated videos, provides links to resources that can be downloaded, and features an online discussion forum moderated by a team of ThinkHealthBC Online Community Ambassadors.

ThinkHealthBC was designed to be as age-friendly as possible, and includes information specifically for seniors. To make sure seniors are comfortable using the website, it has scalable fonts that can be enlarged as needed, and clear, easy-to-use navigation features.

In particular, the ministry is inviting older British Columbians, as long-time users of the health care system, to bring their wealth of experience to the online discussions about health care in our province.

So power up your computer and join the dialogue. If you don't have a computer at home, check to see if your local library or community centre has computers available for public use.

## Improving Care for Seniors: An Action Plan

Please visit [www.SeniorsBC.ca](http://www.SeniorsBC.ca) to read *Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan*, and for periodic updates on our progress toward implementing the plan.

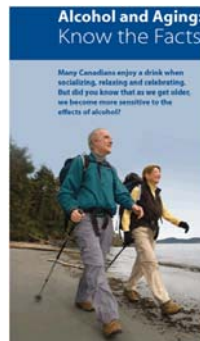
## "I've made a living will, so do I have to do an advance care plan?"

New incapacity (or personal) planning laws came into force in B.C. on September 1, 2011, providing adults with more options to express their wishes and instructions for their future health care treatment. Your advance care plan may now include an Advance Directive which gives your instructions directly to your health care provider for the health care treatment you agree to, or refuse, in the event you are incapable of deciding when the care is needed. No one is asked to make a health care decision for you when your Advance Directive addresses the care you need.

If you created a 'living will' or another type of advance care planning document in B.C. prior to September 1, 2011, the document may be deemed a valid Advance Directive ONLY if it meets all of the requirements for Advance Directives as set out in the updated *Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act*. If the document you created prior to September 1, 2011, is not deemed an Advance Directive in B.C., it may still be used as your basic advance care plan with an expression of your wishes to inform your substitute decision maker if they are asked to make a health care decision for you.

You may wish to read the new provincial advance care planning guide, *My Voice: Expressing My Wishes for Future Health care Treatment* to learn more about B.C.'s laws and options to help you decide if you want to update, change or replace your existing advance care planning documents while you are capable. See the Advance Care Plan Steps article in this e-Newsletter for more information on how to create an advance care plan.

## Alcohol and Aging: Know the Facts



Did you know that as we age, our bodies process alcohol more slowly, and become more sensitive to the effects of alcohol?

The Province recently released a brochure and web-based information, available on the [SeniorsBC](http://SeniorsBC.ca) website, to explain why age plays a role in how alcohol is processed and to provide guidance on low-risk drinking for seniors.

Alcohol can cause a number of health problems. Too much alcohol can contribute to chronic diseases, including cancer and some heart conditions. Almost half of all prescription drugs taken by older people can interact with alcohol and even the smallest amount of alcohol may negatively impact the effectiveness of medications.

Being aware is the first step in self care. Here's to your health!