

2011

SENIORS' HEALTHY LIVING

Report on Progress





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Message from Michael de Jong Minister of Health



The Government of British Columbia is committed to supporting seniors to stay healthy, active, and engaged. When we say “families first,” we mean it – and we know that seniors are an essential part of family and community life in every corner of this province.

In September 2008, the Province launched Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework, an ambitious action plan to promote the health and well-being of B.C. seniors. As Minister of Health, it is my privilege to present the Seniors’ Healthy Living 2011 Progress Report, highlighting the groundbreaking work we’re doing for the benefit of B.C. seniors, their families and communities.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. de Jong', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael de Jong, QC
Minister of Health

Message from Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors

Seniors are an important and growing force in British Columbia. As valued friends and family members, as keepers of knowledge, as volunteers, artists and athletes, seniors enrich the lives of communities across the province. It is critical that we embrace the opportunities presented by our aging population and rise to the challenge of preparing for this unprecedented demographic shift.

The Ministry of Health leads and coordinates this vital work across government. Key initiatives such as Age-friendly British Columbia – which I encourage you to read about in the following pages – are creating a better, brighter future for all of us.

Yours truly,



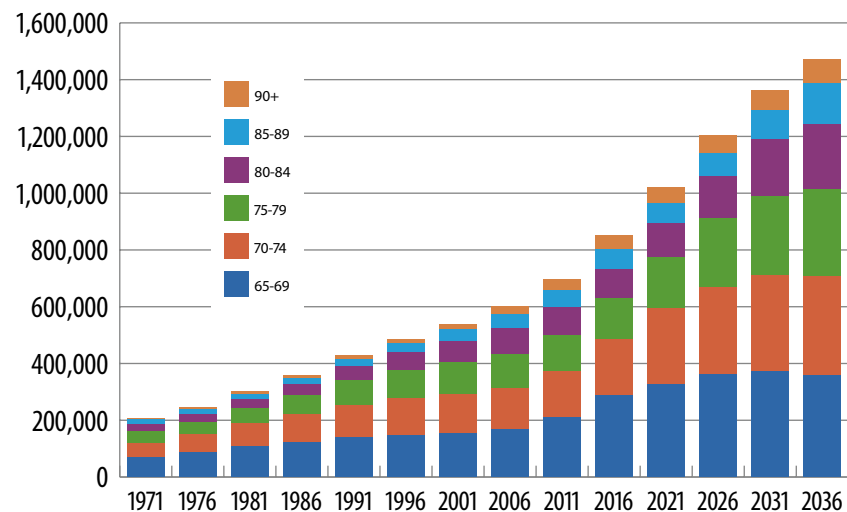
Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid
Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors to the Minister of Health



Context

There are currently more than 600,000 seniors aged 65+ living in British Columbia. This population is increasing rapidly, and is projected to more than double in the next 25 years. In addition to promoting the health and well-being of today's seniors, the Province is taking action to ensure that we are well prepared for the changes ahead.

B.C. Seniors Population Increases 1971-2036



Supporting and preparing for an aging population requires cross-government collaboration, and numerous provincial government ministries and organizations manage a wide variety of actions and initiatives to promote continuing health, independence, and social engagement for B.C. seniors.

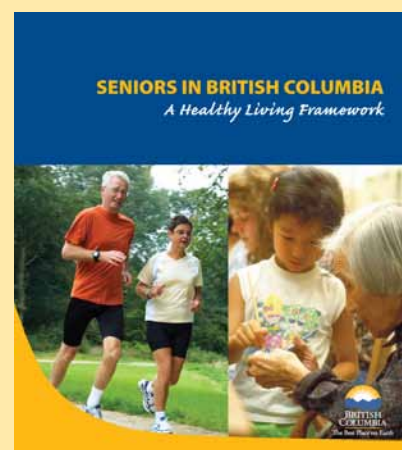
The ***Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat*** in the Ministry of Health leads and stewards many of these initiatives, and is responsible for reporting back on this cross-government work.

Key government partners include:

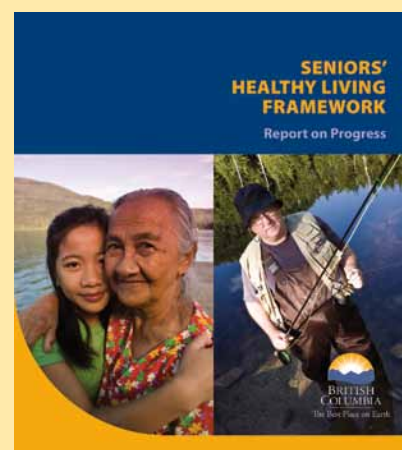
- ▶ **Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation**
- ▶ **Advanced Education**
- ▶ **Attorney General (Public Guardian and Trustee of B.C.)**
- ▶ **Community, Sport and Cultural Development**
- ▶ **Education**
- ▶ **Energy and Mines (responsible for Housing)**
- ▶ **Finance**
- ▶ **Health**
- ▶ **Jobs, Tourism and Innovation**
- ▶ **Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government**
- ▶ **Public Safety and Solicitor General**
- ▶ **Social Development (responsible for Multiculturalism)**
- ▶ **Transportation and Infrastructure**
- ▶ **BC Housing**
- ▶ **BC Transit**
- ▶ **Community Living BC**
- ▶ **Legal Services Society**

What We've Done:

- ▶ Promoted ongoing cross-government collaboration and innovation in programming and service delivery for seniors.
- ▶ Consulted with seniors and community organizations to obtain feedback and direction.
- ▶ Continued to report back on progress, highlighting the Province's achievements in supporting health and wellness for older British Columbians – **Seniors' Healthy Living Framework: Report on Progress** (2010).



Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework (2008) is government's comprehensive action plan to support the health and well-being of B.C. seniors and their families, caregivers and communities.



Seniors' Healthy Living Framework: Report on Progress (2010)

Age-Friendly Communities

The Province is committed to promoting age-friendly principles to create communities that are more welcoming, more accessible and more inclusive for everyone. In an age-friendly community, older people are engaged with their community through volunteer and intergenerational opportunities, responsive information, and community services. Age-friendly communities provide supportive, safe environments and promote quality of life for families with young children, pedestrians, cyclists, and people using mobility aids like canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs and scooters... In short, age-friendly communities benefit all British Columbians!

Age-Friendly British Columbia



In an age-friendly British Columbia, older people are supported to live active, socially engaged and independent lives. Our vision is of a province where people of all ages and abilities feel included and valued in their communities. Through Age-friendly BC, the government of British Columbia is working with local governments and other partners to achieve this vision.

Everyone benefits in an age-friendly community.

- ▶ **Seniors** are supported to age actively, enjoy good health, and remain independent and involved in their communities.
- ▶ **People of all ages and abilities** benefit from safer, barrier-free buildings and streets, better access to local businesses and facilities, and more green spaces.
- ▶ **Businesses** benefit from the increased support and spending power of older customers.
- ▶ **The community** benefits from the increased participation of older adults in community life.

The Province and the Union of BC Municipalities have partnered to distribute more than \$2 million in age-friendly planning and implementation grants. As of March 2011, 84 local governments across B.C. have received financial and/or other in-kind support for age-friendly planning and implementation.

For more information, visit the Age-friendly BC website at www.seniorsbc.ca/agefriendly or email agefriendlyBC@gov.bc.ca.

What We've Done:

- ▶ **AGE-FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION:** Promoted traffic safety for older drivers and pedestrians, as well as alternative transportation for seniors who are unable to, or prefer not to, drive.
 - **Enhanced pedestrian safety** by working with municipalities to install countdown signals at crosswalks and program longer crossing times in areas with a high proportion of elderly pedestrians.
 - **Increased visibility of traffic signals and signage** by upgrading to light-emitting diode (LED) signal heads at intersections and adopting new "Clearview" type fonts and higher reflectivity materials for highway and traffic signs.
 - Working to develop a **regulatory framework for the use and safety of motorized scooters** on public highways through consultations with the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, the Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles, enforcement agencies, local governments and other stakeholders.
 - Identifying options for **alternative, community-based, age-friendly transportation services** – in cooperation with partners and stakeholders such as United Way of the Lower Mainland, BCAA Road Safety Foundation, and Better Environmentally Sound Transportation.
 - **Continued to enhance access to transportation** for eligible low-income seniors and people with disabilities through the annual **Bus Pass Program**; the **Special Transportation Subsidy** for recipients of disability assistance who are unable to use public transportation; **HandyDART** for people with a disability who need assistance to use regular public transit; and the **Taxi Saver** program which provides a 50 per cent subsidy on the cost of taxi coupons to eligible HandyDART users in Vancouver, Victoria and other B.C. municipalities.

Making communities age-friendly is one of the most effective strategies to promote healthy and active aging, and will contribute to our goal of sustainable, healthy communities.



Did you know?

In 2006, 27.3 per cent of B.C. seniors – 154,750 people – were living alone.

68.6 per cent of B.C. residents aged 66 years and older – 396,817 people – were licensed drivers in 2007.

- ▶ **AGE-FRIENDLY HOUSING OPTIONS:** Continued to support housing options for seniors through a wide variety of programs and initiatives.
 - Completed **4,376 Independent Living BC assisted living units** as of December 31, 2010, with 114 additional units under development. Assisted living provides housing, hospitality and personal care services to those who are no longer able to live independently, but do not require 24-hour professional care. Assisted living supports a greater degree of independence and autonomy for seniors, and reduces the need for placement in a residential care facility.
 - Converting **765 seniors' supportive housing units** to provide specially modified rental homes, primarily for low-income seniors who need some assistance in order to continue to live independently.
 - Providing monthly cash payments through BC Housing's ***Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER)*** to make rent more affordable for eligible B.C. residents aged 60 and over who pay rent for their homes. Nearly 16,000 seniors' households benefit from the SAFER program, receiving an average payment of about \$154 per month.
 - Funded construction of **over 1,100 seniors' rental housing units** through a \$125.5-million joint investment under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement – providing affordable housing options for low- to moderate-income seniors and persons with disabilities in smaller communities across the province. As of December 31, 2010, 149 units were completed and 960 were under development.
 - Seniors may benefit from the property tax deferment program and a higher home owner grant than other British Columbians. In addition, the financial burden on senior homeowners has been eased through the introduction of the ***Northern and Rural Area Homeowner Benefit***.

► **AGE-FRIENDLY CARE AND INDEPENDENCE SUPPORTS:**

Increased support for seniors to age in place in their own homes and communities, while providing flexibility and security for older British Columbians requiring care.

- Improving seniors' quality of life through **Community Action for Seniors' Independence (CASI)** pilots, providing a suite of non-medical services and supports to assist older adults to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.
- Partnered with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. to make *Dorothy's Story*, a new **seniors' care education package**, available in simple and traditional Chinese as well as English. This resource will help ensure seniors, their loved ones and health-care practitioners are working together to ensure better health care and improved outcomes for hospitalized seniors.
- Working with *CanAssist* at the University of Victoria to promote the use of **customized assistive technologies** for enhanced patient/client independence, reduced length of hospital stays, and decreased reliance on home support services.
- Adopting new health care consent laws as of September 1, 2011, and developing a provincial **Advance Care Planning tool** which expands the preplanning options available and will enable capable adults to create advance directives, consenting to or refusing recommended treatments in case they are unable to give instructions at the time health care is required. Advance directives assist in ensuring that end-of-life health care reflects an adult's wishes.
- Created the *BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry*, to **protect vulnerable British Columbians and support caregivers**.
- Committed \$1 million to expand Alzheimer Society of B.C. programs providing **support for dementia patients and their families**, in recognition of World Alzheimer's Day on September 21, 2010.





Photo courtesy of Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Times

Community Action for Seniors' Independence

Community Action for Seniors' Independence (CASI), a partnership between the government of B.C. and the United Way of the Lower Mainland (UWLM), focuses on supporting seniors to age in place. Through this initiative, the Province and UWLM are working with five pilot communities to implement and evaluate community-based program models for delivering non-medical home support services for seniors.

CASI pilots began in Maple Ridge in July 2010, and in the Renfrew-Collingwood area of Vancouver, the Newton area of Surrey, Dawson Creek and Osoyoos in October and November 2010. Each pilot will run for 18 months.

Pilot communities offer a suite of services to seniors aged 65+ within their catchment areas. Services are provided by both volunteers and paid staff, and are intended to support seniors whose functional impairments do not permit them to perform certain activities of daily living. CASI services may include transportation, housekeeping, home repair, yard maintenance, and information and referral.

Surrey (Newton) was chosen as a pilot community partly because of its large ethnocultural population. DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, the lead agency providing CASI services in Surrey (Newton), has many years experience in serving immigrant groups, and has recruited CASI volunteers who speak a variety of languages to help reach out to immigrant seniors.

For more information, see **CASI news** at SeniorsBC.ca, or call one of the following numbers:

- ▶ **CASI Dawson Creek:** South Peace Seniors' Access Services Society and the South Peace Community Resources Society; 250 782-1138, ext. 228
- ▶ CASI Maple Ridge: Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Community Services; 604 467-6911, ext. 232
- ▶ **CASI Osoyoos:** Osoyoos Seniors Centre Association; 250 495-6925
- ▶ CASI Surrey (Newton): DIVERSECity Community Resources Society; 604 507-2266
- ▶ CASI Vancouver (Renfrew-Collingwood): Renfrew-Collingwood Neighbourhood House; 604 435-0375

CASI Makes A Difference!

I met J. at a CASI presentation. It was her 91st birthday. She told me that her birthday present was that she had to give up her driver's licence. Her eyes misted and her chin trembled. Her world was at an end. She didn't know how she would get her groceries so that she could eat.

I told her about a new pilot project in town named CASI. We could help her. Our volunteers could help her get groceries, go to the bank, take her to appointments, and even drive her to the hairdressers. You could see her shoulders relax, the spark come back in her eyes. CASI's birthday gift to her was a solution. She could continue to live in her home, keep her independence and still get around town.

– story from CASI Osoyoos



- ▶ **AGE-FRIENDLY, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES:** Worked with community partners to promote welcoming, inclusive and accessible B.C. communities.
 - Provided ongoing funding to the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres for the **Elders Transportation Program**, to ensure that older Aboriginal people have the opportunity to travel to the annual Elders Gathering. In 2010, 25 groups received funding to support travel for 464 Elders.
 - Contributed to the Centre for Healthy Aging at Providence's scoping review: **A Population Health Approach to the Health and Healthcare of Ethno-Cultural Minority Older Adults**.
 - Provided funding to organizations seeking to promote multiculturalism and eliminate racism in their communities through the **EmbraceBC** program. Past funding has supported a series of anti-racism workshops for B.C. seniors' centres through the 411 Seniors Centre Society, as well as a variety of cultural activities bringing seniors and Elders together with youth.
 - Extended funding for eight demonstration projects providing **outreach and settlement support to 2,000 immigrant and refugee seniors** in the Fraser Valley, Lower Mainland, Nanaimo, Penticton, and Victoria.
 - Expanded and improved **WelcomeBC**, a comprehensive, one-stop website for newcomers to B.C., the agencies that serve them, the communities they select as home, and anyone thinking of living, working, studying or investing in B.C.
 - Held a series of forums across the province to discuss the challenges and changing needs of **adults with developmental disabilities** and their families as they age, hosted by **Community Living BC**.

Volunteerism

In addition to promoting volunteerism and volunteer opportunities to enhance community engagement and social participation for older British Columbians, the Province continues to partner and build relationships with non-profit organizations. Through financial and in-kind assistance, government supports many of these organizations in delivering programs and services to seniors in communities across British Columbia. ***The Families First Agenda for Change*** includes a commitment to engage non-profits and British Columbians and find a way to build non-profit and public partnerships that strengthen communities.

Non-profits, charities and volunteer groups deliver services creatively every day in B.C. and form the bedrock of our communities. They willingly respond to their residents' needs, and provide tremendous value for money.

The voluntary sector is one of the largest social and economic drivers in British Columbia, and older people form the backbone of the sector.

*From the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors **Exemplary Canadian Seniors** online initiative*



Marjorie White
New Westminster, British Columbia

Ms. White (Na-cha-uks), 74, is a dedicated Elder and a role model to countless Aboriginal people. She is a founding member of several Aboriginal organizations in Vancouver, and a senator of the National Association of Friendship Centres. Ms. White has volunteered with various associations for over 50 years, working tirelessly to promote the cause of Aboriginal and First Nations people in British Columbia and throughout Canada.

*"If you want to go fast,
go alone; if you want
to go far, go together."*

– **Bob Baker, Squamish Nation Elder,**
*who delivered an opening prayer and
welcome to the traditional land on
which the GNPI Summit was held.*

What We've Done:

- ▶ Worked with the Department of Gerontology at Simon Fraser University to identify and develop strategies to overcome barriers to volunteering for older adults. By assessing the experience of older volunteers at the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver/Whistler, the benefits of increased physical and social activity, and the related health benefits experienced by the older volunteers, as well as the challenges they faced, were identified and will inform ongoing support for older volunteers across B.C.
- ▶ Joined with organizations such as the BC Seniors Games and BC Games societies to increase opportunities for B.C. seniors to volunteer at and participate in sporting events.
- ▶ Funded new after-school sport programs in Haida Gwaii, Prince George, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria, providing opportunities for seniors to volunteer as program leaders.

Government/ Non Profit Initiative (GNPI) SUMMIT



The GNPI held its 3rd annual summit in Vancouver on November 17, 2010. The summit brought together approximately 130 leaders from across the province from both the provincial government and the non-profit sector. The theme of the GNPI Summit 2010 was Making Connections – exploring how – through working together to build a stronger, more open relationship between government and the non-profit agencies that deliver services – we can connect citizens, communities and organizations to create:

- ▶ vibrant, inclusive and participative communities;
- ▶ responsive services focused around the needs of the people we serve;
- ▶ innovative ways of approaching an opportunity or need; and
- ▶ the most sustainable and efficient ways of doing business.

► **SUPPORT FOR NON PROFIT AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

ORGANIZATIONS: Through collaboration, funding, and other assistance, the Province supports the development of a strong, effective, and vibrant voluntary sector that will enhance the social, economic, cultural, and environmental well-being of all British Columbians.

- Continue to support **stronger communities and better outcomes** for British Columbians through the government/non-profit initiative by bringing together service providers and policy makers in a partnership to improve the ways we work together. Some key areas of focus include: building human resource capacities for both sectors; improving the business and finance relationship between government and service providers; and working at the regional level to develop and implement local solutions to local issues through better collaboration.
- Community gaming grants provide funding to **approximately 6,000 local and provincial organizations across B.C.**, a portion of which provide services to seniors and older adults. On March 24, 2011, the Province announced a \$15 million increase in funding for gaming grants, bringing annual funding up to \$135 million.
- **Neighbourhood Learning Centres** provide funding and other resources to help transform schools into community hubs – welcoming places where seniors and people of all ages can access learning and community services.



Did you know?

In 2007, 38.0 per cent of B.C. seniors volunteered, contributing 196 volunteer hours annually on average – and 44.3 million annual volunteer hours in total.

► RECOGNIZING ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS:

We believe it is critical to celebrate success by honouring the outstanding achievements and contributions of B.C. seniors to their neighbourhoods and communities.

- The **SeniorsBC** website and e-Newsletter regularly feature interviews with **noteworthy senior volunteers and achievers**.
- British Columbia participates in federal/provincial/territorial initiatives to promote **positive images of aging**, which has included providing support for the national **Spotlight on Images of Aging symposium** in December 2010, as well as profiling exemplary B.C. seniors as part of the **Exemplary Canadian Seniors** online initiative.
- The **BC Community Achievement Awards** celebrate **British Columbians of all ages** who go above and beyond in their dedication and service to others – and who devote time and energy to making their communities more caring, dynamic, beautiful, healthy, and unique. Recipients inspire by their example.
- Multiculturalism is an important and growing part of our provincial identity, and the provincial **Nesika Awards** honour and **celebrate British Columbia's cultural diversity and indigenous communities**, recognizing the people, organizations and communities whose exceptional work helps to bring our diverse cultures together.

Healthy Living

Government supports seniors to adopt healthy behaviours by building on existing opportunities, putting in place interventions that are known to be effective, showing leadership, and supporting innovative approaches.

Encouraging and supporting older British Columbians to adopt healthy lifestyles is critical to improving and maintaining health and well being, because healthy lifestyles have the most influence in avoiding deterioration that has been associated with aging.

Although about 30 per cent of aging can be explained by biology and genetic endowment, people who are physically active, eat a healthy diet, live smoke-free, avoid injuries due to falls and other reasons and remain socially engaged, reduce their risk for chronic diseases and have a much reduced rate of disability compared to those who do not.

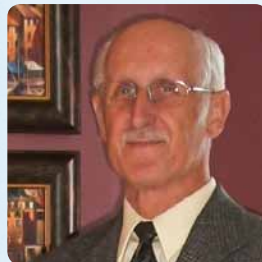
Healthy Minds, Healthy People, the Province's ten-year plan to address mental health and substance use, includes a number of actions focused on seniors:

- ▶ Implement a coordinated provincial initiative to prevent elder abuse so that seniors will be less vulnerable to emotional, psychological and physical abuse.
- ▶ Improve routine screening protocols for mental health and substance use problems during primary care interventions with seniors.

The Province is committed to creating supportive environments to enable older people to live healthy, active and independent lives.

- ▶ Strengthen the mental health of seniors by:
 - Promoting physical activity through initiatives such as ActNow BC Seniors' Community Parks and the Move for Life DVD resource and educational resources; and
 - Leveraging opportunities within the age-friendly communities initiatives to foster cognitive stimulation and community connectedness.
- ▶ Use the Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework platform and partnerships with local government and other organizations to promote opportunities for older adults to remain socially connected and meaningfully engaged in their communities, including workforce, learning and volunteer opportunities.

*From the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors **Exemplary Canadian Seniors** online initiative*



John Howat
Sorrento, British Columbia

Mr. Howat, a mine surveyor by trade, is an active community volunteer. He is an avid swimmer and walker and wants to inspire others to be more physically active by setting a good example. Mr. Howat believes that having a positive outlook is the best contributor to healthy aging – an outlook he proves every day when he brightens the room with his big smile.

What We've Done:

- ▶ Posted the **Active Aging in BC plan to support healthy, active aging** – with a focus on key areas such as education, fall prevention, healthy eating, leadership and participation, physical activity, recreation, social connection, tobacco cessation and volunteering.
- ▶ Hosted the fourth **Active Aging Symposium** on June 9, 2011, for seniors and stakeholders, to promote exchange of ideas and best practices in facilitating healthy, active aging in communities across the province.
- ▶ Working with ethnocultural communities to develop culturally relevant tools and resources to foster **healthy, active aging and social participation for immigrant, refugee and ethnocultural seniors**.
- ▶ Distributed the **Healthy Eating for Seniors handbook** in audiobook format throughout B.C. public libraries and the ActNow BC website, and reprinted hardcopies of this popular resource (available in English, French, Chinese and Punjabi).
- ▶ On May 9, 2011, Government announced that **nicotine replacement therapies will be available to all British Columbian smokers at no cost** and smoking cessation prescription drugs will be covered under PharmaCare, beginning September 30, 2011.
- ▶ **QuitNow** offers B.C. smokers a confidential helpline (1 877 455-2233), with information available in 130 languages, and an online community where professional and peer support is available 24/7. Quitters can sign up for email quit tips and text messages, join QuitNow's Twitter and Facebook page, and explore interactive quit tools and resources at www.quitnow.ca.

Did you know?

While B.C. has the lowest smoking rate in Canada at 14.9 per cent, there are approximately 550,000 British Columbians who smoke. An estimated 70 per cent of smokers in B.C. want to quit.

B.C. seniors report lower levels of smoking than seniors in five other provinces. In 2009, 8.8 per cent of people 65 years and above in the province reported smoking daily or occasionally; this is below the national average for seniors (9.6 per cent).

► PROMOTED PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL

ACTIVITY: To encourage physical activity among older adults, the Province works with partners such as the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association, the Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology, ProMotion Plus, provincial sport organizations, and the BC Seniors Games Society to develop tools and resources, share information, and promote physical activity opportunities.

- Celebrating Seniors' Week, June 5-11, 2011, with **Circuits 4 Seniors** – a series of open houses at various **Act Now BC Seniors' Community Parks** across the province. Older adults are encouraged to bring along family members to help spread the message "Celebrate Seniors' Week by Getting Active with your Whole Family!" Seniors can also watch a series of **instructional videos** to help them learn to use the park equipment more effectively.
- Government continues to support the **ActNow BC Senior Ambassador program**, promoting healthy, active lifestyles for older British Columbians. For more information about the program, please email actnow@gov.bc.ca.
- Aboriginal ActNow BC mobilizes Aboriginal people and communities to live active, healthy lifestyles, and **supports First Nations, Métis, and urban Aboriginal people to create and receive culturally appropriate health information**, build capacity and leadership in their communities, and increase awareness of available health supports. The program includes community training events, an Aboriginal RunWalk program, and minor grants that support community-based healthy living activities.
- Created new opportunities for seniors to be physically active through the BC Sport Participation Program. 2010 funding included **Soccer BC's Kickin' It 55+ program and Promotion Plus' 55-70 in Sport program for women**.
- Continued to support the annual **BC Seniors Games**, providing opportunities for **seniors aged 55 and over to compete in more than 24 activities** ranging from track and field and softball to cribbage and one-act plays. The 2010 BC Seniors

Games in Comox/Courtenay attracted 3,300 participants from across the province and engaged 1,700 volunteers. The 2011 BC Seniors Games will be hosted by West Kootenay (Castlegar, Nelson, and Trail) from August 16 to 20.

- Worked with the Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology to develop the **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LINE (PAL)**, a free telephone and *online resource* that offers physical activity and healthy living information to both the public and health professionals. Staffed by certified exercise physiologists, PAL offers guidance on becoming more physically active, overcoming barriers, and staying motivated. PAL's toll-free telephone services are available by calling **1 877 725-1149** Monday to Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
- As part of the \$15 million increase in funding for gaming grants announced on March 24, 2011, \$300,000 was provided to support seniors' participation in **seniors games zones** competitions.
- **HEALTHY ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES:** The Province, Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal organizations work together to promote individual and community health and respect for traditional cultural knowledge.
 - **Promoted access to fresh, healthy food in 17 remote First Nations communities** with food garden grants through the Produce Availability in Remote Communities Initiative. First Nations community leaders guide the development of the gardens with support from an agrologist and \$200,000 in funding to the Aboriginal Agricultural Education Society of British Columbia.
 - Committed \$500,000 to the First Nations Education Steering Committee Society to **support First Nations language teacher education programs**.
 - **Supported Métis Nation BC** in the purchase of a building that will provide significant economic development opportunities as a training and education centre in Abbotsford.



- Supported the work of the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council, including Our First Voices, a collection of 13 short documentaries told in their original First Nations languages, exploring the creative efforts being made by First Nations communities in British Columbia to **preserve their languages for the future and bring generations together** to reinvest in the future of their communities.

*From the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors **Exemplary Canadian Seniors** online initiative*



Wayne Mark
Vancouver, British Columbia

Mr. Mark, 97, has volunteered at the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Simon K. Y. Lee Seniors Care Home since 2001, providing one-to-one visits and assisting in many

activity programs. He is also the special events reporter for the Evergreen, a Chinese-language newspaper published by S.U.C.C.E.S.S., and vice chair of the Good Will Ambassador Council, which helps raise funds to enhance the physiotherapy program for residents.

- **PROVIDED INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TO REDUCE FALLS AND PREVENT INJURIES AMONG OLDER ADULTS.** The Province continues to partner with organizations such as the Centre of Excellence on Mobility, Fall Prevention and Injury in Aging at the Centre for Hip Health & Mobility, the BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit, and the Public Health Agency of Canada to enhance mobility and reduce the risk of falls and fall-related injuries among older British Columbians. The following are highlights of key activities:

- **Promoted public awareness** through events such as the public forum on Healthy Aging through Fall Prevention Among Older Aboriginal People (May 2011), and the annual proclamation of Seniors' Fall Prevention Awareness Week in B.C.
 - Provided support to the **BC Fall and Injury Prevention Coalition**, a multi-sectoral collaborative which undertakes a broad range of activities, including mobile clinics, emergency department programs, best practice guidelines for falls prevention in home care and assisted living, hip fracture reduction interventions, and innovative research.
 - Worked with partners and stakeholders to **develop and disseminate resources on fall prevention**.
 - **Continued to promote education and training opportunities**, through delivery of the Canadian Falls Prevention Curriculum basic and facilitator courses; Primary Care Fall Prevention Multimedia Training for both seniors and physicians; and ongoing support for implementation of the Strategies and Actions for Independent Living program, providing fall prevention training for community health workers and home health professionals.
- **RAISING AWARENESS AND PREVENTING ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS:** Abuse is wrong in any form and can be perpetrated against people at any stage of life. The Province works with partners such as the B.C. Adult Abuse/Neglect Prevention Collaborative, the B.C. Association of Community Response Networks, and the B.C. Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support to raise awareness and prevent and respond effectively to abuse of older adults.
- Healthy Minds, Healthy People, the Province's ten-year plan to address mental health and substance use, contains a commitment to develop a provincial initiative intended to **reduce the prevalence of elder abuse in B.C.** The expected outcomes include seniors feeling safe in their communities, having better mental health, and taking on increasingly active and healthy roles in society.

- Promoted awareness by proclaiming June 15th **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** and providing *elder abuse prevention* information and resources online.
- Worked with federal, provincial and territorial colleagues to develop and distribute a series of eight factsheets on *Financial Planning and Protection for Older Adults* (available in French and English).
- Participating in the Canadian Institute for Health Research project to identify interventions for **preventing violence against older immigrant women**.
- Funded **specialized victim services and crime prevention programs for older adults** through the BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support and Elder Abuse Domestic Violence Response Units at Family Services of Greater Vancouver and the Vancouver and New Westminster police departments. These programs served close to 500 new clients in 2010/11. For more information, call *VictimLink BC* – a toll-free, confidential telephone service available across B.C. and the Yukon 24/7 at: 1 800 563-0808.
- Through the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) of B.C., the Province **provides services to support and assist incapable adults and protect the financial interests of vulnerable adults**, including seniors. On June 21, 2011, the PGT and partner organizations will host a World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Knowledge Exchange on Financial Abuse.
- In B.C., the five regional *health authorities* and *Providence Health Care* are designated agencies under the Adult Guardianship Act to receive reports and **investigate situations of abuse, neglect and self-neglect of vulnerable adults**. They work to develop and share educational tools and resources such as the *Re:Act Adult Abuse & Neglect Response Resource*. In addition, Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health have partnered to create a comprehensive new curriculum for adult protection workers in designated agencies – the first of its kind in Canada.

- ▶ **INCOME SUPPORTS:** The Province provides a variety of income supports to reduce financial pressures for seniors with low and modest incomes.
 - **Supported B.C. seniors in financial need** through the **Senior's Supplement**. Seniors are not required to apply, as the supplement is paid automatically to eligible recipients.
 - Eligible low-income seniors receive \$105 annually through the **Low Income Climate Action Tax Credit**, which will increase to \$115.50 on July 1, 2011. See additional information [online](#).
 - Government also offers a number of **transportation and housing supports** and subsidies for lower-income seniors; see pages 7-8 for details.

*From the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors **Exemplary Canadian Seniors** online initiative*



Blanche Black
Victoria, British Columbia

Ms. Black, 61, is a fitness nurse and exemplifies positive, healthy and vibrant aging. She teaches aquafit and yoga classes to people of all ages

and abilities. Ms. Black also trains seniors as ActNow BC Senior Ambassadors, who provide information on healthy living to their peers and act as positive role models in the community.

Did you know?

- ▶ **B.C. seniors are the most physically active in Canada.**
In 2009, 54.7 per cent of people aged 65 years and over in the province reported being moderately active or active during their leisure time. 46.3 per cent of B.C. seniors had some form of participation or activity limitation, sometimes or often.
- ▶ **Older people in British Columbia report having the lowest rates of obesity in the country.**
- ▶ **50.6 per cent of B.C. seniors reported eating five or more fruits and vegetables per day in 2009.**



Older Workers

Older British Columbians may choose to remain in or re-enter the workforce for a variety of reasons, including social contact and engagement, job satisfaction, and extra income. However, many older workers have particular needs, and employers must provide flexible, inclusive workplaces in order to attract and retain older workers. Through federal, provincial and territorial collaboration and partnerships with community-based organizations, the Province is working to promote skills development, recruitment and retention of seniors who want to work.

As British Columbians live longer, healthier lives, many older people want to keep working into their senior years. These are highly-skilled employees, with a lifetime of knowledge and experience that is invaluable to their workplaces and to our province.

What We've Done:

- ▶ Continued to support the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW), assisting workers aged 55-64 (and in some cases, those aged 50-54 and 65+ as well) by improving their employability, literacy and transition skills. Projects offer employment programming in eligible communities facing high unemployment or affected by downsizing, and have assisted approximately 2,200 older British Columbians to re-enter the workforce since 2008. Project sponsors are currently providing TIOW projects in over 33 communities.
- ▶ Worked with colleagues in the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Seniors and Near Seniors in the Labour Force Working Group to identify challenges, opportunities and best practices, nationally and internationally, for facilitating the retention of older workers (aged 50+) in the labour force and accommodating their unique workplace needs.
- ▶ Continued to collaborate with other provinces and territories and the federal government to develop options for expanding pension coverage to improve retirement income adequacy for all workers in B.C., including the self-employed.
- ▶ Provided public information and legislation to prevent age discrimination in British Columbia, including age discrimination by employers – available **online** in English, Chinese and Punjabi.

Did you know?

In 2009, 30.5 per cent of B.C. senior males and 16.3 per cent of senior females participated in the labour force.

Employment And Age Discrimination



An employer cannot refuse to interview, hire, promote or decide to fire an employee because of their age (19 and over).

An employer cannot make age an issue or advertise for a certain age when hiring. An ad must not say "only mature people need apply" or "young people wanted." An employer cannot refuse an older applicant because "the job requires a lot of energy and enthusiasm and the company is looking for someone with career potential."

When hiring, an employer can ask someone if they are legal working age, but cannot ask anything that could reveal age. After hiring, an employer might legitimately need to know the employee's age for a purpose like enrolment in a pension or benefits plan.

As of Jan. 1, 2008, mandatory retirement is no longer allowed in British Columbia (with some exceptions). The choice about when to retire is up to the employee. Early retirement benefits can be offered to all employees as an incentive to retire, but an employee cannot be forced to retire.

– From Human Rights in British Columbia: Age Discrimination

Value in Experienced Workers (VIEW)



Horton Ventures delivers the Value in Experienced Workers (VIEW) program, funded under the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers, in 100 Mile House, Williams Lake and Quesnel. Meet Lana Johnson, one of the VIEW program's many success stories.

I spent 23 years as a factory furnace attendant in a bottle factory and I was very good at what I did, but I didn't think those skills could help me find the ideal job. I had a Fork Lift and Dangerous Goods Ticket that I thought could land me a job in the mines. However, I wasn't having any success with my interviews.

I decided to give the VIEW program a try. It was a great experience and just the thing I needed at that time. I acquired a new understanding about being part of a group. I gained personal growth, and built up my confidence and received support to go after what I wanted.

I had never completed grade 12 and thought that it was too late to try. I decided to support another participant trying to get their grade 12 and checked out what level I was at. I was very surprised and excited to learn I was at a grade 12 level. Through the program I gained new certificates and was able to renew some I already had.

These trainings played a part in obtaining my dream job at The Hills Health Ranch in 108 Mile Ranch, British Columbia. I love yoga, outdoor sports and swimming, and now I get to teach other people what I am passionate about. I've been employed at The Hills Health Ranch for two years this June and I love every minute of it.

Did you know?

In 2009, 40.7 per cent of Canadian seniors used the internet for personal, non business reasons.



Information and Outreach

The Province is committed to providing access to information, tools and resources to promote healthy lifestyle choices for B.C. seniors. We strive to ensure that information and materials are accessible to seniors, their families and caregivers, in all areas of the province. We provide information online, in print, and by phone, in multiple languages, through our networks and community partners, and by way of outreach at events like the B.C. Seniors Games and the annual B.C. Elders Gathering.

What We've Done:

- ▶ Hosted a series of ten focus groups in April and May 2011 to **engage with seniors and seniors' organizations across the province** to help keep SeniorsBC.ca and other resources and initiatives responsive and relevant. Focus groups were held in Cranbrook, Kelowna, Parksville, Prince George, Vancouver, Vernon and Victoria, and included groups co-hosted by the Prince George Native Friendship Centre and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. in Vancouver.
- ▶ Participated in meetings of the **Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Forum of Ministers Responsible for Seniors** to promote **exchange of ideas and best practices** in areas such as financial security, supporting older workers, and positive images of aging.
- ▶ Engaged in ongoing consultation and collaboration with the **Seniors' Healthy Living Advisory Network**, which provides advice and input to government on a broad range of seniors' issues and initiatives. The thirteen members represent seniors' organizations across the province, as well as Aboriginal, ethnocultural, academic, research and business interests.

Seniors' Healthy Living Advisory Network

Dr. Patricia Baird, *OC OBC, UBC Centre for Health Services and Policy Research*, Vancouver

Mr. Peter W. Brown, *OBC, BC Chamber of Commerce*, Vancouver

Ms. Alice Choi, *S.U.C.C.E.S.S.*, North Delta

Dr. Elsie Gerdes, BC Old Age Pensioners Organization, Armstrong

Dr. Gloria Gutman, *OBC, BC Network for Aging Research*, Vancouver

Mr. Murry Krause, *Union of BC Municipalities*, Prince George

Ms. Sylvia MacLeay, *Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC (COSCO BC)*, West Vancouver

Ms. Deb Bryant, *United Way of the Lower Mainland*, Burnaby

Mr. Colin Milner, *International Council on Active Aging*, Vancouver

Ms. Carol Mooring, *Prince George Council of Seniors*, Prince George

Mr. Carl Mashon, *BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres*, Victoria

Ms. Suzanne Allard Strutt, *British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association*, Burnaby

Mr. Barry Thomas, *CARP: A New Vision of Aging for Canada*, Victoria

- ▶ Promoted access to information and resources on health and well-being for immigrant, refugee and ethnocultural seniors.
 - Produced informational materials, such as the B.C. Seniors' Guide and the Healthy Eating for Seniors handbook, in multiple languages, and provided translation support for government telephone services such as the Health and Seniors Information Line.
 - Launched a new *multilingual resource page* on the SeniorsBC website, providing resource links by language to facilitate user-friendly access to materials in Chinese, French, Punjabi, and other languages.
- ▶ Provided **access to health and wellness information for Aboriginal Elders and seniors.**
 - Launched a dedicated page of *resource links for Aboriginal Elders and seniors* on the SeniorsBC website.
 - Distributed an *e-newsletter focused on Aboriginal Elders and seniors* (August 2010).
 - Shared information and resources while participating in the B.C. Elders Gathering in Salmon Arm (July 2010).
- ▶ For seniors who prefer to **access information by phone**, the Province operates a suite of phone line services (see "Stay in Touch" on page 34).

SeniorsBC.ca – your information website

On March 18, 2010, Government launched ***SeniorsBC.ca*** – a comprehensive, user-friendly, one-stop information source for B.C. seniors, their families and caregivers.

The Province is continually working to improve and expand on ***SeniorsBC.ca***, to keep it fresh and up to date. Check out these and other key features:

- ▶ ***Healthy living videos*** produced by the International Council on Active Aging
- ▶ Expanded information and resources on ***fall prevention*** to help seniors stay safe
- ▶ ***Caregiving: A Shared Journey***, launched in celebration of B.C. Family Caregiver Week (May 7–13, 2011)
- ▶ The SeniorsBC ***e-newsletter***, with over 1,200 individual and organizational subscribers, provides up-to-date information and healthy living tips for older adults. Subscribe ***online***.





Stay In Touch

HealthLink BC:

Non-emergency health information and services available 24/7. Translation services available in over 130 languages.

Phone: 8-1-1

Deaf and hearing impaired (TTY): 7-1-1

Health and Seniors Information Line:

Obtain information on health and non-health related federal and provincial government programs and services for British Columbia seniors. Translation services available in over 130 languages

Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 pm PST, Monday to Friday (excluding statutory holidays)

In Victoria: 250 952-1742

Toll-free: 1 800 465-4911

Service BC is your source for frontline government services and information in British Columbia – in person, online or by phone.

Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (excluding statutory holidays)

In Victoria: 250 387-6121

In Vancouver: 604 660-2421

Elsewhere in B.C.: 1 800 663-7867

Outside B.C.: 604 660-2421

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD):

In Vancouver: 604 775-0303

Elsewhere in B.C.: 1 800 661-8773


Email: EnquiryBC@gov.bc.ca

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HEALTH & SENIORS INFORMATION LINE


Victoria
250-952-1742 or
Toll Free
1-800-465-4911

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Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat





Celebrating B.C. Seniors


More Videos:
[Dr. Vicky Scott on Fall Prevention](#)
[Positive Aging](#)



Circuits 4 Seniors

Celebrate BC Seniors' Week by Getting Active!
(June 5-11, 2011)

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Profiles

[Volunteer Profile: Mel Kotler, Kelowna](#)

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News and Events

- [Community Actions for Seniors' Independence \(CASI\)](#)
Pilot communities share successes and challenges at February meeting
- [SeniorsBC.ca e-Newsletter Issue 6 \(PDF 671K\)](#)
- [SeniorsBC.ca Survey](#)

Notes



SeniorsBC.ca