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More communities get age-friendly p.5

Message from Parliamentary Secretary Linda Larson



A new year is a great opportunity to share my enthusiasm for my commitment to work hard for British Columbia's seniors and their families. As Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors, I look forward to continuing to connect with as many British Columbians as I can throughout the province.

What better time to reconnect with B.C.'s seniors than in January, Alzheimer's Awareness Month. Up to 70,000 British Columbians are currently living with Alzheimer's disease, or another dementia, and almost 10,000 of those individuals are under the age of 65. These are our friends, family members and our neighbours.

Alzheimer's will eventually impact the thoughts, actions, and feelings of those with the disease and how they react to their environment. These symptoms can sometimes be misunderstood as depression or even as normal signs of aging. Alzheimer Awareness Month is one way we can raise awareness so that families affected by this terrible disease know they are not alone and know where to find help and information.

Government is committed to ensuring that those with Alzheimer's and other dementias have access to early diagnosis, treatment and support. The Province's Dementia Action Plan commits government to supporting community programs, such as the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s First Link Program, which, together with physicians, refers people with dementia and their families to support services as early as possible.

Alzheimer's disease and dementia have a profound impact on the family members who act as caregivers. Front line community groups work hard with health authorities to continue to improve the services available for individuals caring for loved ones by offering personalized patient care plans and support groups. Raising awareness about available services and the impacts of this disease is critical, especially in rural B.C., to ensure that diagnosed individuals and their families feel supported and encouraged to remain active and engaged in their communities.

On January 26, Health Minister Terry Lake and I will each be attending an Investors Group Walk for Memories held in support of the Alzheimer Society of B.C. These walks take place in 23 communities throughout the province and I'll be at the walk in Vancouver. Attending the Walk for Memories is a great way to support families in your community who are impacted by dementia.

I want to know what is going on with seniors in B.C. and let you know that your voice matters. Beginning in February, I will be sending out a monthly newsletter that will be a part of that ongoing dialogue and a chance for me to share information about B.C. seniors. You are invited to sign up for that newsletter at: www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/enews-subscribe.html.

To learn more about the First Link Program and supports available in your community please visit the Alzheimer Society of B.C. website at: www.alzheimerbc.org.

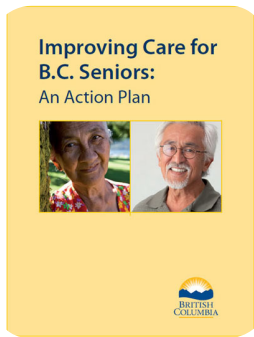
To register for the Investors Group Walk for Memories, please visit: www.walkformemories.com today.

Yours truly,

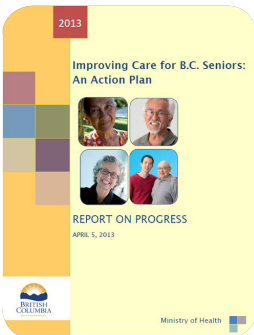
Linda Larson

Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors to the Minister of Health

B.C. moves forward with Seniors Advocate



www.gov.bc.ca/seniorsactionplan



www.gov.bc.ca/seniorsactionplanreport

The Government of B.C. recently launched a national executive search to recruit Canada's first Seniors Advocate. Once established, the Office of the Seniors Advocate will provide an important voice to nearly 700,000 seniors in British Columbia.

The Seniors Advocate will have a broad mandate to identify and examine systemic issues affecting the well-being of seniors and raise awareness about resources available to seniors. The Advocate will also make recommendations to government and those who deliver seniors' services related to health care, personal care, housing, transportation and income support.

Establishing a Seniors Advocate was a commitment in the Seniors Action Plan released on Feb. 14, 2012. Following consultations with the public and stakeholders, government introduced and then passed the Seniors Advocate Act on March 14, 2013.

The Seniors Advocate competition closed on Dec. 13, 2013. Candidates will be interviewed early in the new year. Government anticipates having the Advocate appointed by spring 2014.

The role, mandate, duties and powers of the Seniors Advocate are outlined in the Seniors Advocate Act, available at: www.leg.bc.ca/39th5th/3rd_read/gov10-3.htm.

To stay up to date on the appointment of the Advocate please visit the SeniorsBC website at: www.SeniorsBC.ca/seniorsadvocate.ca. There you will also find valuable resources, information and tools to support older British Columbians, their families and caregivers.

FREE fitness classes for seniors

There are free exercises classes available for seniors (65+ years of age) at three YMCA locations in the Greater Vancouver area. As part of a research study being conducted at the University of B.C., seniors are invited to attend an exercise class 3x per week from March to August. Participants will also be given a free fitness appraisal. For more information please visit: www.goal.kin.educ.ubc.ca or contact the project manager, Dr. Samantha Harden at: samantha.harden@ubc.ca or 604 822-9140.

Do you know an outstanding citizen?

If so, the British Columbia Honours and Awards Secretariat is seeking nominations for the province's highest honour, the Order of British Columbia (OBC).

Established in 1989, the OBC recognizes those people who have served with the greatest distinction and excelled in any field of endeavor that benefits the people of B.C. or elsewhere. It represents the highest form of recognition the province can extend to its citizens.



Recognition

Successful nominees will be presented with the Order by the Lieutenant Governor of B.C. and Chancellor of the Order of B.C., at an official ceremony at Government House in Victoria.

Eligibility

The Order of B.C. is open to any resident of B.C. or former long-term resident, who has demonstrated outstanding achievement, excellence or distinction in any field of endeavor benefiting the people of B.C. or elsewhere. Fields include community leadership, business, labour, industry, volunteer service, professions and other occupations, research, culture, arts, sports and others. Federal, provincial and municipal elected representatives are not eligible for appointment to the Order while they remain in office. A person may not be appointed to the Order posthumously unless the Advisory Council recommends the appointment to the Lieutenant Governor in Council before the person's death.

Nomination forms

Nomination forms are available on the Order of British Columbia web site at: www.orderofbc.gov.bc.ca. All entries should reach the Honours and Awards Secretariat office in Victoria by 4:30 p.m. on March 7, 2014. For more information e-mail: OrderofBC@gov.bc.ca or phone: 250 387-1616.

More communities get age-friendly

In Houston, B.C., seniors will join Northwest Community College students on a Daily Life mapping exercise to investigate safety issues. In Mackenzie, the Seniors' Housing Committee will look at ways to adapt the temporary housing associated with industrial projects to provide affordable seniors' housing. These are two of twenty-six local government projects that have received 2014 Age-friendly Planning and Project Grants.

The annual grants of up to \$20,000 are funded by the Ministry of Health and administered by the Union of B.C. Municipalities. Health Minister Terry Lake announced that each project "reflects the vision of an age-friendly British Columbia, in which older people are supported to live active, socially engaged and independent lives."

For 2014, communities were encouraged to consider projects that complemented three provincial priorities for seniors: elder abuse prevention, dementia care and non-medical home support. Tumbler Ridge is one example of a community that responded to that suggestion and will use the grant to provide elder abuse awareness training in four communities in the Peace Region.



The grant program is one part of Age-friendly BC, a strategy which provides direct support, tools, information and a recognition program to celebrate the achievements of communities as they meet the needs of an aging population.

For more information on how your community can be involved in Age-friendly BC, please visit: www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly.

Age-friendly BC Recognition

Local governments can become an Age-friendly BC community after completing four steps that focus on community engagement, commitment, assessment and action. Recognized communities receive a recognition poster, a \$1,000 reward and promotion on SeniorsBC.ca. E-mail: AgefriendlyBC@gov.bc.ca for an application form or visit: www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly and search "Getting Recognized – Age-friendly".

Applications received by March 31, 2014 are eligible for the 2014 award.

Planning for your care needs

Are you or a loved one having difficulty managing at home? Please talk with your physician or care provider about how your changing health care needs may affect your ability to live safely at home. You may be referred to your local health authority home and community care program who will then meet with you (and your family if you wish) to help you determine what services and supports may be available to you, including services to support you in your home.

In B.C., there are a range of housing, support and care options for people who need assistance to maintain their health. The booklet “Planning For Your Care Needs – Help in Selecting a Residential Care Facility” provides information about residential care services and also includes descriptions of other services available to help you. The decision to move into a residential care facility is a significant one and there may be other options that may be more suitable for you.



The Planning for Your Care Needs booklet is designed to help you and your family select the care facility that is right for you. It contains a number of questions you may wish to consider as you make your decision. Although you may not have time

to consider all of these questions, they are intended as a guide so you may choose the items that are most important to you.

This booklet also contains information about eligibility, cost, services, oversight, and practical examples of things to consider when selecting a residential care facility. It can be accessed online at: www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2013/planning-for-your-care-needs.pdf.

Bereavement Checklist

The death of a loved one is a difficult part of life; family members and those close to the deceased are often left to handle various administrative tasks.

The B.C. Bereavement Checklist is a tool that can assist with identifying key federal departments and provincial ministries that should be notified of a death, to terminate benefits and services or to initiate benefits for survivors. The last page of the checklist provides a short list of other organizations external to government that may need to be advised of a death.

To view the checklist visit: www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/services/Bereavement_Checklist_WEB.pdf

76 year old female smashes world records

Christa Bortignon, a 76-year-old from West Vancouver, has received the highest award in track and field from the World Masters Athletics after breaking seven world records this year. Christa now holds world records in 14 different events, rather impressive considering she only started participating in track and field a mere four years ago. Christa was kind enough to share a few insights about competing and inspiring other seniors.

What inspires you to compete in track and field in your mid 70's?

In 2009, age 72, I had to give up my beloved tennis because of arthritis in both wrists. That summer, I saw a story in the Northshore News about Olga Kotelko who at 92 had won many medals in track and field. Since I had participated in 75m and long jump as a teenager, I thought I should give it a try.

How do you balance training and competition with other life commitments?

The involvement in track and field has given not only structure to my life as a retired person, but also made me establish a certain routine. I am an accountant by profession and still work part time. I practice 3 times a week on the track plus at least twice in the gym.

How do you feel your health and wellness has been impacted by your participation in sport?

By participating in this sport I had to adjust my diet to make sure I was getting all the nutrients I need. Sometimes after practice I would drop my weight by over two pounds. I also make sure I get plenty of sleep, go to bed at the same time, relax with my favourite music and read a lot. Since German is my native tongue I try to either read German books or watch the German TV.

Do you have any advice for seniors who are looking to get involved in sports?

Give track and field a try because there are so many options. You can choose to run short or long distances, from 50m to 10K or even a marathon. Or you can try your hand in events such as high jump, pole vault, javelin, discus and shot put.

Getting involved in sport is also a lot of fun. There are many opportunities to meet people and make new friends, travel the globe for competitions and it is relatively inexpensive; all you need are running shoes and sweatpants. You can also do it almost anywhere, use the high school track which is free. Just remember it is never too late to start getting active!



Planning tip: Move for Healthy Aging

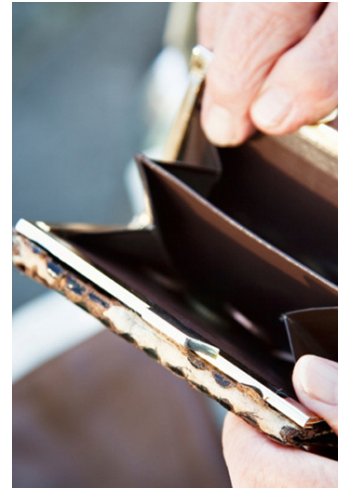
Walk, run, stretch. Be active! Staying physically active is one of the best ways to prepare for healthy aging. Plan to build regular physical activity into your life to improve your mental health, promote a healthy brain and strengthen your bones and muscles. Exercise will also help you recover more quickly from illness, reduce your risk of falling and help you maintain your independence. It's a great way to support healthy aging!

To order a **FREE** physical activity DVD call toll-free 1 877 725-1149 and ask for the Move for Life DVD.

Council to Reduce Elder Abuse up and running

After much anticipation, the Office to Reduce Elder Abuse is pleased to advise that the Council to Reduce Elder Abuse (Council) met for the first time in Vancouver, on December 13, 2013. Establishing the Council marks the completion of one of the key actions in government's *Together to Reduce Elder Abuse – B.C.'s Strategy* (TREA Strategy), which was launched on March 6, 2013. The TREA Strategy outlines measures to improve prevention, recognition, and response, as well as coordination and collaboration, and serves as a challenge for all British Columbians to help reduce elder abuse.

The Council members bring with them knowledge and expertise from a variety of sectors, including health, legal, financial, policing and caregiving, as well as senior-serving organizations, and Aboriginal and ethnocultural communities. Their work will be based on a shared leadership model; keeping in mind that no one organization or government body can address elder abuse effectively on its own. The members' diverse perspectives, experience and passion will serve as a catalyst for efforts to reduce elder abuse, and further inspire all of society, collective and individual, to build a province in which elder abuse is not tolerated.



The Council will not be starting from scratch, as it will build upon the work and efforts related to elder abuse prevention, recognition and response that are already underway. Members of the Council will work to further efforts across sectors to reduce elder abuse; provide a collaborative forum in order to achieve the commitments in the TREA Strategy; and galvanize society, at both an individual and collective level, to commit to taking action to prevent elder abuse.

The Council will be supported by the Office to Reduce Elder Abuse (Office), located within the Ministry of Health. The Office is responsible for coordinating government activity relating to elder abuse prevention, recognition and response, and implementation of certain commitments in the TREA Strategy, as well as providing a link between government and the Council.

The Council members are now in the process of building a work plan, with timelines and specific actions, and identifying potential action groups.

For more information on elder abuse prevention and the TREA Strategy visit:

www.gov.bc.ca/elderabuse or view the new release [here](#).

Tofu Stir Fry



Serves 2

Prep and cooking time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 7 oz (200g) extra firm tofu
- 2 tsp (10 mL) low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp (5 mL) brown sugar
- 2 tsp (10 mL) vegetable oil
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 tsp (5 mL) grated fresh ginger (optional)
- ½ medium onion, sliced
- 2 cups (500 mL) chopped fresh vegetables
- 1 tsp (5 mL) cornstarch
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) cold water

Per Serving:

Calories: 291 Protein: 21G
Fat: 13G Carbohydrate: 25G
Fibre: 5.2G Sodium: 406MGS
Calcium: 274MGS

Instructions

1. Cut tofu into ½ inch (1 cm) cubes and toss in a bowl with soy sauce and brown sugar.
2. Chop vegetables.
3. Heat oil in heavy skillet or frying pan, add onion, garlic and ginger and stir fry. Toss gently for about four minutes.
4. Add chopped vegetables and stir fry another four to five minutes until almost cooked. Turn heat down.
5. Dissolve cornstarch in cold water, then add to stir fry.
6. Add the tofu cubes and heat through, approximately three to four more minutes.
7. Serve and enjoy!

Source: Healthy Eating for Seniors handbook

For more great recipes order your **FREE** copy of the Healthy Eating for Seniors handbook by calling HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 or download a copy from: www.gov.bc.ca/seniorshealthyeating.