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Message from Parliamentary Secretary Dr. Darryl Plecas

The leaves are turning colour and falling to the ground and there is a crispness in the air, meaning autumn is here.

It has been a busy summer and that will continue in the weeks ahead as I continue to meet with seniors and seniors' groups listening to their concerns and letting them know about the many supports that government offers to benefit older residents.



I had the pleasure recently to attend the BC Seniors Living Association conference. There were some good meetings and networking with passionate people who are committed to improving the lives of seniors throughout the province. One highlight was the honour I had of presenting the LEAP (Let's Embrace Aging Passionately) award to Janet Shier, a resident at Cavell Gardens in Vancouver. Janet has a positive approach to life and is an inspiration to others and she also just celebrated her 100th birthday!

Our government also announced \$500,000 for the 2016 Age-friendly grants. As B.C.'s older population is growing, it's important that communities plan ahead to better accommodate seniors' needs and independence close to home. More information is included in this newsletter on application deadlines.

Yours truly,

Dr. Darryl Plecas, *Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors to the Minister of Health*

MSP Premium Assistance and Fair PharmaCare

These programs help seniors with lower incomes, and those experiencing unexpected financial hardship, with the costs of Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums, as well as eligible prescriptions, medical supplies, and pharmacy services. You must apply or register for each of these programs.

Regular Premium Assistance offers subsidies ranging from 20 to 100% of MSP premiums, based on an individual's net income (or a couple's combined net income) for the preceding tax year. For information on who is eligible and how to apply, visit www.gov.bc.ca/premiumassistance

Temporary Premium Assistance offers a short-term period of MSP premium waiver to individuals and families experiencing unexpected financial hardship. For information on who is eligible and how to apply, visit www.gov.bc.ca/temporarypremiumassistance

PharmaCare helps B.C. residents with the cost of eligible prescription drugs, and certain medical supplies and pharmacy services. PharmaCare covers 100% of eligible costs for those receiving B.C. Income Assistance and for permanent residents of licensed residential care facilities listed with the PharmaCare program. Other seniors can access coverage through the Fair PharmaCare Plan. This plan focuses assistance on those who need it most, based on their net income. For information on who is eligible and how to register, visit www.gov.bc.ca/fairpharmacareregistration

Health Insurance BC administers MSP and PharmaCare, and can answer your questions about these programs. For MSP enquiries, customer service representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. For PharmaCare enquiries, customer service representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday to Friday, and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays.

- Phone (Lower Mainland): 604-683-7151
- Phone (elsewhere in B.C., toll-free): 1-800-663-7100
- Or visit a Service BC Centre (government agent)

Dementia-Friendly Workplaces

As part of its Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. has produced resources to promote dementia-friendly workplaces in the legal, financial, and housing sectors.

For more information, or to access the resources online, visit

<http://alzbc.org/dementia-friendly-communities> or email

dementiafriendlybc@alzheimerbc.org



Upcoming Events

- **New Westminster Seniors Festival**, Saturday, October 17, 2015, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Century House (620 Eighth Street, New Westminister). The festival will include an information fair featuring over 35 businesses and organizations where seniors can learn about local arts, social, and recreation classes. The festival will also include music, food for purchase, and seminars with Service Canada and Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie. For more information, email Sarad Renyard at srenyard@newwestcity.ca or call 604-525-7388.
- **British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society's 2015 Vancouver Island Disability and Wellness Gathering**, Victoria, February 22-24th 2016. For more information, visit www.bcands.bc.ca or email accessibility@bcands.bc.ca
- **The Online Chronic Disease Self-Management Program** is a free, six-week, online small-group workshop for adults with any type of long-term health condition. Participants will learn to manage symptoms and day-to-day activities in a convenient, flexible, and highly interactive online environment. For more information, or to sign up, visit www.selfmanage.org/onlinebc or email bc@selfmanage.org

Malaysian Delegation Learns from First Nations at BC Elders Gathering



Malaysian delegation to the 39th Annual BC Elders Gathering; photos courtesy of Ha-Shilth-Sa Newspaper www.hashilthsa.com

Tsawout First Nation and the W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich) Elders hosted the 39th annual BC Elders Gathering in North Saanich, July 7-9, 2015. In addition to approximately 3,000 First Nations and Aboriginal Elders from across B.C., this year's Gathering attracted a delegation from the Malaysian state of Sabah on the island of Borneo. The delegates came to learn from language revitalization efforts in B.C., which they hope will help in efforts to revitalize their own language and culture.



In July 2016, the Tl'etinqox (Anaham) Government from the Tsilhqot'in Nation will host the 40th Annual BC Elders Gathering in Williams Lake, with support from the Secwepemc, Carrier, Nuxalk, and St'át'imc communities. For more information about the Annual BC Elders Gathering, visit www.bcelders.com

2016 Age-friendly Community Planning and Project Grants

On September 18, 2015, the Province announced \$500,000 for 2016 Age-friendly Community Planning and Project grants to help local governments establish or continue projects and community planning that support healthy, active seniors. Age-friendly Community Planning and Project grants are administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).

Municipalities and regional districts are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$20,000 to support the needs of older residents. For the 2016 round of age-friendly grants, communities are encouraged to consider projects and community planning that focus on accessibility, elder abuse prevention, dementia, and non-medical home supports. Applications are due by Friday, October 30, 2015.

To access the application form and guide, visit the UBCM website at www.ubcm.ca

For information on Age-friendly BC, visit www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly

Elder Knowledge: Growing Food Close to Home Project

In June 2015, the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) began recruiting enthusiastic seniors and participants of all ages for an exciting new project, Elder Knowledge: Growing Food Close to Home. The project connects newcomer seniors who want to learn or share their knowledge on gardening and growing food with community members who would like to learn from seniors from other cultures. Over the past several months, participants have visited city farms, planned year-round veggie gardens, grown food in containers, learned about composting, and visited the PEPÁŖEN HÁUTW (“Blossoming Place” in the SENĆOTEN language) School Garden to learn about native plants. The project will also offer workshops on preserving and canning food before wrapping up in November.



The Elder Knowledge: Growing Food Close to Home project has been coordinated in partnership with the LifeCycles Project Society and the Compost Education Centre, with funding from Victoria Foundation and the TD Friends of the Environment. For more information, visit the ICA website at www.icavictoria.org or email Paulina Grainger at pgrainger@icavictoria.org

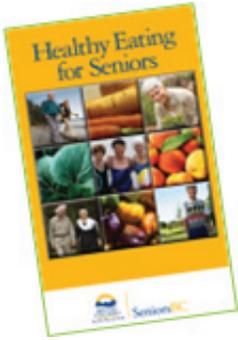
Office of the Seniors Advocate: Recent Reports

In August 2015, the Office of the Seniors Advocate released its first annual report, covering the period from April 1, 2014, to March 31, 2015. The report also outlines activities currently underway and planned for the remainder of the year from April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2016.

In September 2015, the Office released an additional report, *Caregivers in Distress: More Respite Needed*.

To read these and other reports from the Office of the Seniors Advocate, visit www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/reports

Healthy Eating for Seniors Handbook



The Healthy Eating for Seniors handbook is available online and in print in English, French, Chinese and Punjabi, and as an audio book at all public libraries in B.C. It includes a variety of tasty recipes with nutritional information, smaller portion sizes, and cultural adaptations where appropriate.

To order a free copy, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1, or download a PDF copy from www.gov.bc.ca/seniorshealthyeating

Healthy Aging Tip

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide recommends seven (7) servings of vegetables and fruit each day for adults aged 51+. Knowing how to keep vegetables and fruit fresh can help you eat more of them, waste less, and save money. For more information, visit www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/blog/save-money-and-waste-less-keep-produce-fresh

To view, print, or order a paper copy of Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide in English, French, Arabic, Chinese (simplified), Farsi (Persian), Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, or Urdu, visit www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/order-commander/guide_trans-trad-eng.php

To view, print, or order a paper copy of Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide—First Nations, Inuit and Métis in English, French (paper copies only), Inuktitut, Ojibwe, Plains Cree, or Woods Cree, visit www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/pubs/fnim-pnim/index-eng.php

You can also order a paper copy of Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide or Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide—First Nations, Inuit and Métis by contacting Health Canada (this publication can be made available on diskette or audio-cassette, in large print, or in braille, upon request):

Mailing address: Publications, Health Canada, Ottawa ON K1A 0K9

Email: publications@hc-sc.gc.ca

Phone (toll-free): 1-866-225-0709

Phone (TTY, Service Canada): 1-800-465-7735



Recipe: Braised Root Vegetables

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 30 ml (2 tbsp) olive oil or melted butter
- 454 g (1 lb.) turnips, rutabaga or other root vegetable, cut into chunks
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) of low-sodium vegetable broth
- Pepper and salt to taste
- Lemon juice to taste
- Parsley, chopped (optional garnish)



Instructions

In a sauce pan, combine the first 3 ingredients and lightly season with pepper and salt. Bring to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer and cover. Cook until the root vegetables are tender.

Add extra vegetable broth if it all evaporates to prevent burning.

Remove the lid and raise the heat to boil off most of the liquid. The vegetables will become glazed with a combination of the olive oil (or butter) and the pan juices. Taste and adjust the seasoning if required. Top with lemon juice and parsley.

Recipe from HealthyFamiliesBC (www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca), adapted from *How to Cook Everything Vegetarian* by Mark Bittman.