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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

### **National Seniors Day – celebrate a senior in your life**

VICTORIA – Oct. 1 is National Seniors Day and a perfect time for British Columbians to pay tribute to those who have helped to build our province.

“It is important that we honour the many amazing seniors in our lives who paved the way for our successes,” said Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health for Seniors Linda Larson. “In honour of National Seniors Day, I will be participating in the BC Seniors Living Association’s annual “Let’s Dance Party” and I encourage all British Columbians to make sure they spend some time tomorrow to let a senior in their life know how valued they are.”

Statistics Canada recently noted that British Columbians have the highest life expectancy in the country, well above the national average. Currently, seniors (65+) make up more than 16 per cent of the population in British Columbia, and this number is expected to double in the next 20 years to an estimated 1.4 million. With British Columbians living longer, all levels of government are working hard to adapt, plan ahead and take significant steps to prepare for this demographic shift.

“National Seniors Day is about recognizing seniors and the positive impact they make on our daily lives,” said Marlene Williams, executive director, BC Seniors Living Association. “We hope that tomorrow at 2 p.m. all B.C. seniors along with their loved ones will get up and dance for 90 seconds to celebrate a day that honours them and their amazing contributions.”

Government launched the Seniors Plan in February 2012, in response to seniors, their families and caregivers, as well as to the Ombudsperson’s report on seniors’ care. The Province has now met all of the commitments set for year one. Examples include:

- Passing legislation to create the first Seniors Advocate in Canada.
- Launching Together to Reduce Elder Abuse - B.C.’s Strategy, which includes expanding the hours of the Seniors Abuse and Information Line.
- Establishing the Provincial Dementia Action Plan for British Columbia and developing best practice guidelines to support physicians, nurses, clinicians, and care staff when they provide aid and support to persons with dementia and their families.

Through consultation with seniors and collaboration with local governments and community groups, the Province continues to invest in innovative and unique programs such as Better at Home, managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, and the Age-friendly Community Planning and Project Grant program administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

**Learn More:**

For more information about National Seniors Day please visit the Government of Canada's seniors' website at: [www.seniors.gc.ca/eng/pie/nsd/index.shtml](http://www.seniors.gc.ca/eng/pie/nsd/index.shtml)

For more information about the BC Seniors Living Association and how to participate with your local area retirement communities in the "Let's Dance Party" please visit the link below and search by area: [www.bcsla.ca/membership/directory.html](http://www.bcsla.ca/membership/directory.html)

For information about government strategies, supports and services for seniors please visit: [www.seniorsbc.ca](http://www.seniorsbc.ca)

For more information about the Better at Home program please visit: [www.betterathome.ca](http://www.betterathome.ca)

For more information about Age-friendly Community Planning and Project Grants please visit the Union of British Columbia Municipalities website: <http://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/healthy-communities/seniors-housing-support-initiative.html>

For more information from Statistics Canada about B.C.'s life expectancy please visit: [www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/130925/dq130925a-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/130925/dq130925a-eng.htm)

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