



## Significant Funding Boost to Improve Care for Seniors

On March 9th, the provincial government announced an investment of \$500 million over the next four years as part of a Ministry of Health’s action plan to improve care for seniors across the system. Year-over-year funding increases from the Ministry of Health will enable each health authority to reach a consistent average of 3.36 direct care hours per resident day in residential care facilities and will mean 1,500 additional staff. This was a key recommendation made by B.C. Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie and Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors Darryl Plecas. The Seniors Advocate described this as “an extremely well-thought out plan that recognizes the diversity of seniors.” She also highlighted that this will mean 3 million extra hours of care every year in B.C.’s publicly subsidized care facilities. To find out more [www.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017HLTH0052-000529](http://www.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017HLTH0052-000529)



Photo: BCTransit

## More Ride Availability and Shorter Wait Times Highlighted In OSA HandyDART Survey

Results of a province-wide survey of almost 7,500 HandyDART users in the province highlight that while 91% of users are satisfied with the service when they receive it, almost 1/3 of respondents say it is not meeting, or only moderately meeting, their transportation needs. Ride availability, wait times for rides, and the booking experience including the time required to book rides in advance are areas where riders feel improvements are most needed. Cost is also an issue for low-income riders who say they would use the service more if it cost less. Additional survey results include:

- ◆ Almost 80% of HandyDART clients are able to book a roundtrip always or most of the time
- ◆ 26% said they were rarely or never able to get a ride when placed on standby
- ◆ 38% are somewhat or not at all familiar with no-show or cancellation policies
- ◆ 60% of clients report they always reach appointment on time
- ◆ Less than 50% report they are always picked up within the 30-minute pick-up window

The full HandyDART survey report can be viewed at [www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/movingin-the-right-direction-handydart-survey-results/](http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/movingin-the-right-direction-handydart-survey-results/)

## Key Guides



**British Columbia Residential Care Facilities: Quick Facts Directory** - lists information for publicly subsidized facilities in B.C. [www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/residential-carequick-facts-directory/](http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/residential-carequick-facts-directory/)



**Monitoring Seniors’ Services** - tracks key seniors’ services in the province. [www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/reportmonitoring-seniors-services-2016/](http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/reportmonitoring-seniors-services-2016/)



**BC Seniors’ Guide** - information and resources for planning and living a healthy lifestyle as we age. [www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/b-c-seniors-guide/](http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/b-c-seniors-guide/)

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## New Report Monitors Seniors' Services

In December, the OSA released its second annual Monitoring Seniors' Services report. The report provides the status of key seniors' services in the province, highlighting where seniors' needs are being met and where improvements are most needed. Highlights include:

### Transportation

- ◆ Between 2012 and 2014, there was a 10% increase in seniors with active driver's licences in British Columbia. The greatest increase in active drivers was observed in the 85 and older age group: 13%.
- ◆ In 2015, RoadSafetyBC opened 157,000 driver fitness cases, the majority of which involved a Driver Medical Examination Report (DMER) and 40% (approximately 63,000 drivers) involved drivers who were aged 80 years or older. Approximately 1,000 drivers of all ages were subsequently referred for a DriveABLE cognitive assessment.

### Housing

- ◆ Since 2005, the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) maximum rent that qualifies for a subsidy has increased 9%, while rents have increased by 34%. There was an 8% increase in the number of individuals on SAFER (91% are 65 and older).
- ◆ There was an increase of 16% in new users of the property tax deferment program.

### Health Care

- ◆ At the end of 2014/15, approximately 52,000 British Columbians were living with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or another dementia, leaving four out of five seniors aged 85 and over with no diagnosis of dementia.
- ◆ The number of residential care beds has increased 3.5% since 2012, while the population of seniors aged 85 and older has increased 21% over the same time period.
- ◆ 74% of reported residential care beds are in single occupancy rooms

### Income Support

- ◆ The Senior's Supplement, a monthly top-up provided by the provincial government to low-income seniors remains at \$49.30, which, in 2016, is the same as it was in 1987.

The 70-page Monitoring Seniors' Services report can be viewed here  
[www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/report-monitoring-seniors-services-2016/](http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/report-monitoring-seniors-services-2016/)

## Spotlight On Our Information/Referral Service

The Office of the Seniors Advocate provides a comprehensive information and referral service, receiving on average 10,000 queries per year. Members of the public can call our office and contact us via email or letter. Questions are answered by trained experts who collectively have over 30 years of experience in seniors' service with both government and clinical expertise. Our phone line is staffed daily during business hours with translation services in 180 languages available.

**Toll-Free 1.877.952.3181** | Monday to Friday, 8:30-4:30  
Translation services available in  
more than 180 languages.  
[info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca](mailto:info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca) | [seniorsadvocatebc.ca](http://seniorsadvocatebc.ca)



## Work Ahead

- ◆ Home Support review
- ◆ Residential care survey report and review
- ◆ Transportation review
- ◆ Abuse and neglect of seniors initiative to improve tracking and collection of data
- ◆ Hospital Discharge and Emergency Department report