

# B.C.'s Seniors Advocate: Issues and Mandate



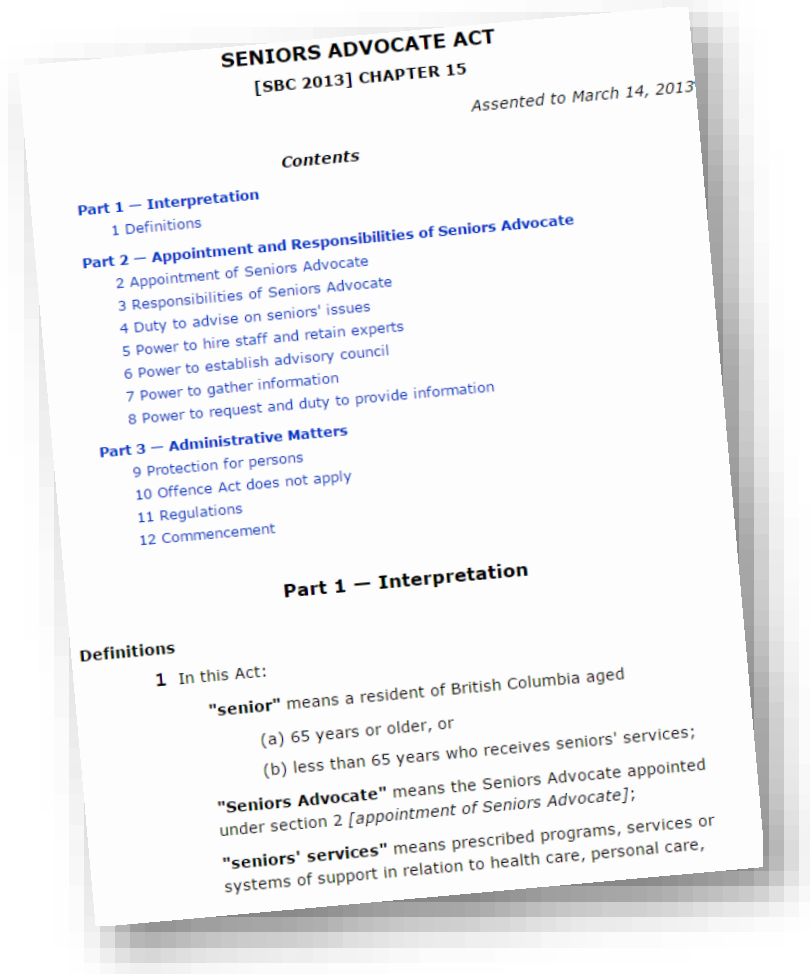
OFFICE OF THE  
**SENIORS** ADVOCATE

**October 2015**

[www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca](http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca)  
1-877-952-3181

# The Office of the Seniors Advocate

- B.C. government introduced legislation outlining duties and authorities of Seniors Advocate in February 2013
- *Seniors Advocate Act* passed on March 14, 2013
- Isobel Mackenzie appointed as B.C.'s first Seniors Advocate as of March 31, 2014



# Role and Responsibilities

- ◆ **Monitors** the provision of seniors' services
- ◆ **Analyzes** issues pertaining to seniors
- ◆ **Provides** information and referral to seniors and their family members
- ◆ **Reports** to Minister and to the public on issues affecting seniors

## 5 mandated areas:

- **Health care**
- **Housing**
- **Income support**
- **Personal Support**
- **Transportation**



# B.C.'s Seniors - Demographics

- 820,000 seniors in B.C. (17% of population)
- Projected to grow to 1.35 million, or 24%, by 2031
  - 56% (459,000) - age 65-74
  - 30% (246,000) - age 75-84
  - 14% (115,000) - age 85+
- According to the 2011 Census, 7.66% of B.C. seniors cannot hold a conversation in English
  - For B.C. seniors 75+ this increases to 9.22%



# B.C.'s Seniors: Housing and Income

- Less than 4% of live in residential care
  - 1.7% of 65-84 year olds
  - 15% of 85+ year olds
  - Less than 4% live in Seniors Housing
- Less than 4% receive home support
  - 2.3% of 65-84 year olds
  - 12.5% of 85+ year olds
- 20% rent
- 80% own their home
  - 78% have no mortgage
- Nearly 2/3 live in urban areas
- 26% live alone
- Median income is \$24,600
- 52,000 earn \$16,200 or less
- 11% are employed



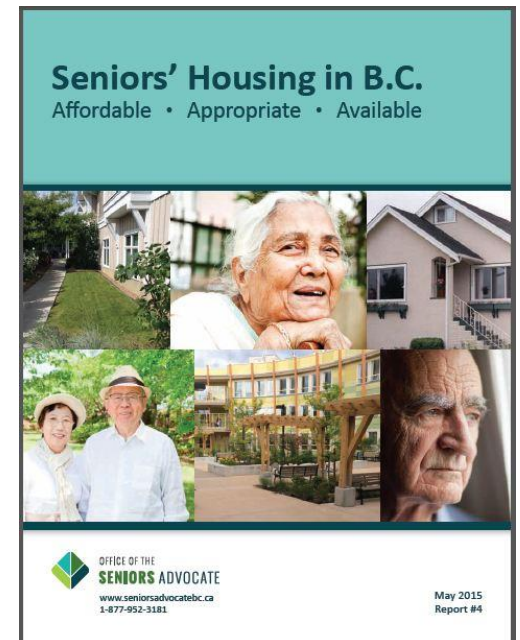
# Issues for Seniors in B.C.

- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Awareness of Programs
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Fragmentation of services
- ◆ Low incomes
- ◆ Caregiver burnout
- ◆ Rural vs. Urban
- ◆ Ageism



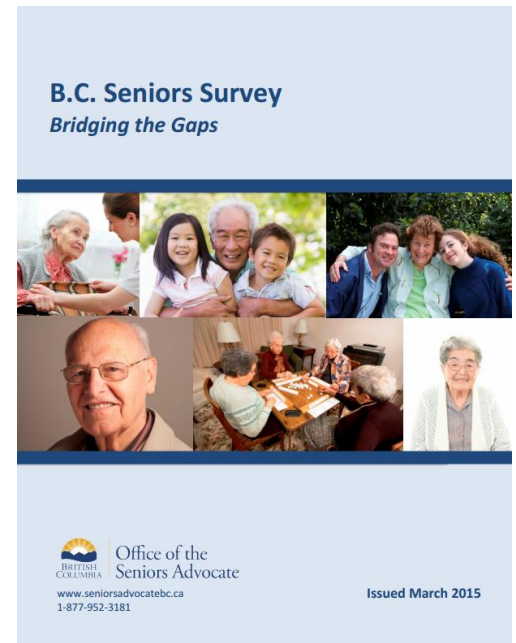
# Housing

- **Seniors' Housing in B.C., Affordable, Appropriate, Available**
  - More help for low-income renters through increases to SAFER
  - New Homeowner Expense Deferral Account program
  - Fundamental redesign of registered assisted living
  - Ensure quicker access to preferred residential care bed
  - All residential care rooms are single room occupancy with ensuite bath by 2025



# Lack of Awareness

- **Do seniors know about programs that can help them?**
  - Senior homeowners with household incomes less than \$30,000 are least likely to be aware of Provincial Property Tax Deferment Program (PTD)
    - only 40% of these homeowners were aware of the program
  - Only 39% of low income seniors knew about MSP Premium Assistance program
  - Only 31% of respondents knew about Provincial Home Adaptations for Independence Program
  - Only around 50% of seniors knew about the SAFER program

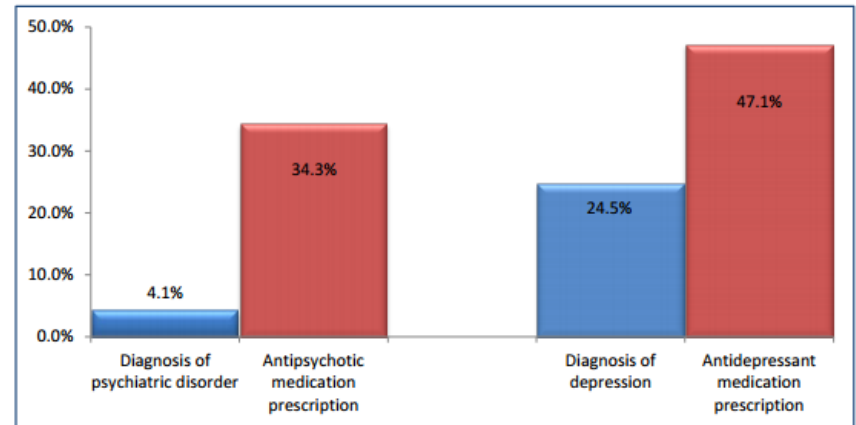




# Challenges in Residential Care

- Studied health data for all home support and residential care clients in B.C.
- Found:
  - Overuse of some medications
  - Up to 15% of seniors in residential care who may be able to live more independently
  - B.C. lagging in physical therapy and recreational therapy

Incidence of psychiatric disorders and mood disorders with medication prescriptions, B.C. residential care population



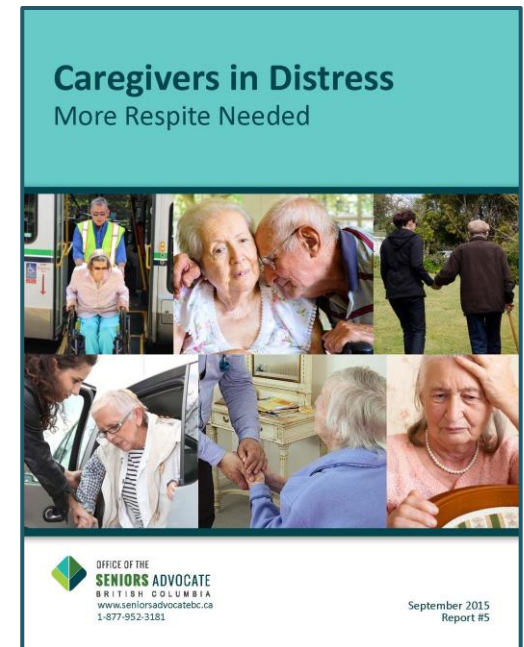
RAI indicator	Residential care population		
	B.C.	AB	ON
Senior received any physiotherapy in last 7 days	11.6%	25.2%	57.7%
Senior received any occupational therapy in last 7 days	8.9%	22.2%	1.8%
Senior received any speech-language therapy in last 7 days	0.2%	0.6%	0.4%
Senior received any recreational therapy in last 7 days	21.8%	42.3%	6.8%



# Caregiver Distress

## ◆ Caregivers in Distress, More Respite Needed

- Findings:
  - 29% of caregivers are in distress, one of the highest rates in Canada
    - Increases to 38% for those caring for seniors with complex care needs
  - Strongest predictor of distress is number of hours a caregiver provides
    - Unpaid caregivers provide an average of 19 hrs/week, increases to 30 hr/week for caregivers in distress
  - Three provincial respite programs
    - Adult Day Programs (ADP)
    - Respite Beds
    - Home Support



# Ageism



# Contact

[www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca](http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca)

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Open Monday to Friday, 8:30-4:30

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