



THE FEDERATION
of COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES of BC

Altogether better.

Life in BC Snapshot: 2017

Seniors

Things aren't getting better for the people of BC

Two years ago, The Federation of Community Social Services of BC scoured the news, research, and literature to take a snapshot of what life in BC was like. We wanted to understand how good things were for the people of our province. We also wanted to investigate important aspects of day-to-day life that get overlooked by a government focused on economic prosperity.

Things didn't look that great. And two years later, they are no better. We have updated these snapshots to prove that point and to help you talk about the state of our province and the things that need to change in order for the people of British Columbia to actually prosper and thrive.

6.3%

The median income for BC seniors has dropped 6.3% since 2013 (a period in which the national average increased).⁴

News headlines about seniors in BC

- ⇒ Vancouver seniors becoming increasingly vulnerable to homelessness - *CBC News*, 10/19/2016 (1)
- ⇒ Report offers solutions for BC's aging population - *Vancouver Sun*, 5/16/2016 (2)
- ⇒ More Vancouver-area seniors facing homelessness in their golden years - *National Post*, 4/11/2016
- ⇒ System to protect seniors in care not foolproof, advocate says - *Times Colonist*, 10/29/2016
- ⇒ Wait times growing for seniors looking for residential care - *CBC News*, 12/13/2016
- ⇒ Debt levels rising among those aged 65+ - *North Shore News*, 8/4/2016
- ⇒ High rents, reduced supports pushing B.C. seniors from homes: advocate - *Globe and Mail*, 12/13/2016
- ⇒ North Vancouver senior forced to check into homeless shelter after hospital discharge - *Vancouver Sun*, 2/18/2016



Case study: Winnie realizes it could happen to her

“After Winnie's husband died, the property tax on their Richmond home skyrocketed and she was forced to sell and move into an apartment. Now, after only two years, her landlord is evicting everyone to renovate the suites. After lending money from the sale of the house to her kids (also struggling with increasing rents in BC), Winnie can barely afford a place to live. But Winnie worries even more about what will happen to her neighbour, Pearl. Pearl's low income seniors supplement hasn't increased since 1991 and Winnie fears Pearl will end up homeless. But there's not much either of them can do.

1 in 4

Nearly one quarter of BC's population will become 65 or over during the next 20 years.³

Why these issues matter

The number of elderly clients requiring home support is increasing in four of BC's five health authorities but the number of support hours provided is decreasing in three out of five.⁶ BC's aging population is struggling to keep pace with ever-increasing rents and property taxes. Reduced home support hours and wait lists for subsidized housing are leaving many BC seniors stretched to the breaking point. It's time for things to start getting better for the people of BC—all the people of BC.

Raising awareness about these issues

- Given BC's rapidly aging population, it is critical that we challenge status quo thinking when it comes to delivering and financing care for seniors.²
- The BC Senior's Supplement (a guaranteed income supplement for low-income residents age 65 and older) is only \$49.30 per month and hasn't been raised since 1991.¹
- BC's 75+ population has increased over the past year but the number of home support hours decreased in three out of five BC health authorities.⁶

Talking points about seniors in BC

"B.C.'s health system is not prepared for the challenges of its aging population."²

- BC Care Providers Association

"One-third of unpaid caregivers in B.C. are in distress, one of the highest rates in Canada."⁵

- Isobel Mackenzie, BC Seniors Advocate

"With the housing prices going up the way they are [...] we have a lot of people who are just stuck."¹

- Selina Robinson, NDP Spokesperson for Seniors

About The Federation

The **Federation of Community Social Services of BC** is a social justice umbrella organization. We work tirelessly to improve the social conditions in BC on behalf of our members: community social service organizations across the province. We believe that:

- ⇒ Healthy, happy, and supported communities make good economic sense.
- ⇒ For your family to succeed, all families must succeed.
- ⇒ Job creation alone is not the solution to our province's social problems.

Learn more at www.fcssbc.ca or email us at info@fcssbc.ca

41%

Demand for health care services by BC seniors is expected to increase by 41% over the next 10 years due to population growth and aging alone.³

50,000

About 50,000 British Columbians are living with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or dementia.⁶



3500

Over 3500 BC seniors are waitlisted for subsidized housing in Vancouver alone.⁷

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

(3) *Strengthening Seniors Care: A Made-in-BC Roadmap*. BC Care Providers Association. Jan 2017.

(4) *StatsCan Income Data Good News for BC Families...Bad News for BC Seniors*. Office of the Seniors Advocate, July 2016.

(5) *2015-16 Annual Report of the Office of the Seniors Advocate*. www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca, June 2016.

(6) *Monitoring Seniors Services*. Office of the Seniors Advocate. Jan 2016.

(7) *No Vacancy: Affordability & Homelessness in Vancouver*. University of Victoria and Union Gospel Mission. 2016.