



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
United Way of the Lower Mainland

\$5 million to further support the Better at Home program

NORTH VANCOUVER – United Way of the Lower Mainland will receive an additional \$5 million to enhance Better at Home, an innovative program that offers B.C. seniors help with a variety of non-medical services to assist them in living independently in their own homes.

“This new funding will provide continuity for the Better at Home program and allow us to expand services to support even more seniors in staying in their own homes and communities longer,” said Minister of State for Seniors Ralph Sultan. “Seniors have told me that they value their independence and appreciate help with simple non-medical services such as grocery shopping or getting to appointments. Assistance with these simple services can make a big difference to their independence.”

The Better at Home program is currently underway or in development in close to 60 B.C. communities. The new funding will allow the program to expand to assist seniors in up to 68 B.C. communities as well as support all sites in operating through December 2015. The new funding is provided by the Provincial Health Services Authority and brings total government support for the Better at Home program to \$20 million.

Managed by United Way of the Lower Mainland, Better at Home is designed to help seniors with day-to-day tasks to help them live independently and remain connected to the community. Services are provided by local non-profit organizations, which are selected through a community engagement process, which includes local seniors.

“We are pleased that this funding will allow us to expand the program and offer a helping hand to even more B.C. seniors,” said Michael McKnight, president and CEO of United Way of the Lower Mainland. “The program is now in development in communities throughout B.C. and supports our commitment to ensuring seniors can age with dignity and remain independent close to family and friends.”

Better at Home services are designed to complement existing community supports, including those offered by regional health authorities, like assistance with medical needs or personal hygiene, and are based on the unique needs of local seniors.

Examples of Better at Home services include friendly visits, light yard work, minor home repair, transportation to appointments, snow shovelling, light housekeeping and grocery shopping. Seniors may be asked to pay a small fee for services based on their income.

“The North Shore has a vibrant and growing seniors’ community and we are pleased to be part of the Better at Home program, which reflects our commitment to ensuring the independence, dignity and health of local seniors,” said Li Boesen, executive director, North Shore Community Resources Society.

The Better at Home program was developed from the Community Action for Seniors’ Independence (CASI) pilot project, which has offered assistance with simple non-medical support services to more than 1,000 seniors in Dawson Creek, Osoyoos, Maple Ridge, Surrey (Newton), Vancouver (Renfrew-Collingwood) since 2009. Assistance with services is already available for seniors in these five communities as well as in Kamloops, Langley and New Westminster. The pilot CASI communities will transition into the Better at Home program.

Better at Home is a key component of B.C.’s Seniors Action Plan, which focuses on building a more accessible, transparent and accountable approach to seniors’ care and commits to ensuring improved access to non-medical supports to help seniors remain living in their own homes.

The Better at Home website has an interactive map and full listing of participating communities as well as information on how seniors can access services. To learn more, please visit:

www.betterathome.ca

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