



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
United Way of the Lower Mainland

Program helping more seniors to be “Better at Home”

PARKSVILLE – With the selection of 11 new service providers for the Better at Home program, more B.C. seniors will benefit from assistance with non-medical services such as grocery shopping and snow removal to support them in living independently in their own homes.

“One of the things I have heard from B.C. seniors as I have travelled throughout the province, is their desire to live at home, among family and friends, for as long as possible,” said Minister of State for Seniors Ralph Sultan. “As a senior myself, I know that a little help around the house can make life easier, and the Better at Home program reflects our commitment to support seniors’ independence by helping them to live in the community of their choice where they can continue to engage with neighbours and friends.”

A partnership between the government of B.C. and United Way of the Lower Mainland, the Better at Home program is designed to help seniors with day-to-day tasks to help them live independently and remain connected to the community. Services and service providers are selected through a community engagement process that includes seniors. Services are designed to complement existing community supports and are based on the unique needs of local seniors. Examples include, friendly visits, light yard work, minor home repair, transportation to appointments, snow shovelling, light housekeeping and grocery shopping.

“The Better at Home program has been developed with the specific needs of seniors in each community in mind,” said Parksville-Qualicum MLA Ron Cantelon. “For many seniors, assistance with simple tasks such as getting to appointments or tidying up around the house can provide the support they need to remain independent in their own homes.”

In the months ahead, the newly selected service providers will begin offering services to support seniors in Abbotsford, Esquimalt, North Shore (North and West Vancouver), Parksville, Port Hardy, Quesnel, South Surrey/White Rock, Surrey Whalley, Tri-Cities (Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Port Moody), Vancouver West End and Williams Lake.

“Seniors are active and integral members of our communities. The Better at Home program lets us help seniors maintain their independence, keeps seniors engaged and allows them to age with dignity,” said Michael McKnight, president and CEO of United Way of the Lower Mainland.

Seniors may be asked to pay a small fee for services based on their income. The Better at Home program complements existing home support services such as assistance with personal hygiene or medical needs, which are provided through regional health authorities.

“Parksville is home to a growing population of seniors, and we are pleased to be part of the Better at Home program,” said Renate Sutherland, executive director of the Society of Organized Services. “We look forward to supporting local seniors by offering services that help them to live independent, healthy and productive lives.”

The Better at Home program is currently providing services for seniors in Dawson Creek, Osoyoos, Maple Ridge, Surrey (Newton), Vancouver (Renfrew-Collingwood) and Kamloops.

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 program is funded through a \$15-million investment from the government of B.C. and is managed by United Way of the Lower Mainland.

For access to an interactive map, which provides a full listing of communities and information on how seniors can access services, please visit: www.betterathome.ca

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

New service providers for Better at Home

Abbotsford

Lead organization: Abbotsford Community Services

Start date: Spring/Summer 2013

Esquimalt

Lead organization: Esquimalt Neighbourhood House Society

Start date: June 2013

North Shore (North Vancouver and West Vancouver)

Lead organization: North Shore Community Resources Society

Start date: July 2013

Parksville

Lead organization: Society of Organized Services

Start date: July 2013

Port Hardy

Lead organization: North Island Crisis & Counselling Centre

Start date: Summer/Fall 2013

Quesnel

Lead organization: North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society

Start date: May 2013

South Surrey/White Rock

Lead organization: Seniors Come Share Society

Start date: May 2013

Surrey Whalley

Lead organization: Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society/ S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Start date: July 2013

Tri Cities (Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam and Port Moody)

Lead organization: SHARE Family and Community Services Society

Start date: June 2013

Vancouver West End

Lead organization: West End Seniors' Network Society

Start date: June 2013

Williams Lake

Lead organization: Williams Lake & District Seniors Activity Centre Society

Start date: June 2013

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