



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

More B.C. seniors to benefit from Better at Home

LANGLEY – Minister of State for Seniors Ralph Sultan joined the United Way of the Lower Mainland to announce that the Better at Home program is more than tripling the number of sites, adding 38 new locations including First Nations communities around the province.

The Better at Home program is designed to help seniors age 65 and older live in their own homes longer by providing simple services delivered by local non-profit agencies. The program is managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland and funded by the government of British Columbia.

“Our government is committed to supporting seniors so that they can stay at home as long as possible because that is what they want,” said Sultan. “Better at Home is a program funded by this government that helps seniors live at home longer – among friends, family and neighbours – by providing simple services such as grocery shopping, friendly visits or snow removal.”

Better at Home will be developed and delivered by non-profit organizations, selected through a community engagement process. Five communities have completed the community engagement process, selected a non-profit operator and will be ready to offer services to seniors this spring:

- Kamloops – Seniors Outreach Society. Projected start date for some services: February 2013.
- Langley – Langley Senior Resources Society. Projected start date for some services: April 2013.
- New Westminster – Seniors Services Society. Projected start date for some services: April 2013.
- Penticton – Penticton and District Community Resources Society in partnership with South Okanagan Seniors Wellness Society. Projected start date for services: April 2013.
- Sunshine Coast – Sunshine Coast Community Services Society. Projected start date for some services: May 2013.

“We want to help seniors age with dignity and maintain their quality of life,” said Michael McKnight, president and CEO of the United Way of the Lower Mainland. “Better at Home helps seniors stay engaged and independent. By providing seniors with the support they need, United Way helps prevent isolation, loneliness and related health problems.”

Simple services provided by Better at Home may include friendly visits, yard work, home repair, transportation to appointments, snow shovelling, housekeeping, and grocery shopping. The services are non-medical in nature and are supplemental to home support services provided through health authorities such as personal hygiene assistance and help with medical needs or mobility. Services are provided by a mix of volunteers and paid staff. Seniors who receive services will pay a fee based on their income.

As part of Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan, the B.C. government provided the United Way with \$15 million to establish and manage Better at Home. The community initiative is a key part of the provincial Seniors Action Plan to respond to the needs of seniors and an aging population in B.C.

Seniors will be able to access Better at Home services in 56 communities throughout British Columbia. For a full list of locations, visit: www.betterathome.ca

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

Better at Home expands to 56 communities throughout B.C.

The selection of communities is based on consultation with provincial health authorities, regional United Ways and local organizations serving seniors, as well as demographics and local conditions. The Better at Home program evolved from Community Action for Seniors' Independence (CASI), a pilot project undertaken by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, in partnership with the government of British Columbia.

Locations announced in September 2012:

- Abbotsford – in development.
- Cranbrook – in development.
- Duncan/Cowichan region – in development.
- Esquimalt – in development.
- Kamloops – opening spring 2013.
- Langley – opening spring 2013.
- New Westminster – opening spring 2013.
- North Shore (city of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver) – in development.
- Parksville – in development.
- Penticton (will serve Naramata and the Red Wing and West Bench areas) – opening spring 2013.
- Port Hardy – in development.
- Quesnel – in development.
- Richmond – one site in development.
- Sunshine Coast (will serve Sechelt, Pender Harbour and Gibsons) – opening spring 2013.
- Surrey – one site in development.
- Tri-Cities (Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Port Moody) – in development.
- Vancouver – West End site in development.
- Williams Lake, including Lac La Hache, Horsefly, McLeese Lake, 150 Mile House and Likely – in development.

New locations:

- Ashcroft/Logan Lake/Cache Creek.
- Burnaby – two locations.
- Campbell River.
- Castlegar.
- Central Okanagan, including Kelowna.
- Chilliwack.
- Comox.
- Courtenay.
- Cowichan Tribes.
- Dawson Creek – CASI pilot site will transition to the Better at Home program.
- Delta.

- Fort Langley/Aldergrove.
- Gitxsan.
- Hope.
- Maple Ridge – CASI pilot site will transition to the Better at Home program.
- Mission.
- Nanaimo.
- Osoyoos – CASI pilot site will transition to the Better at Home program.
- Pemberton/Whistler/Mount Currie.
- Port Alberni.
- Powell River.
- Prince George.
- Richmond – one new location added for a total of two sites in Richmond.
- Saanich.
- Salmon Arm.
- Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and Tseil-Waututh Nation.
- Surrey – one location added, one site transitioning from CASI to Better at Home, for a total of three locations in Surrey.
- Terrace/Kitimat.
- Vancouver – five locations added, one site transitioning from CASI to Better at Home, for a total of seven locations in Vancouver.
- Vernon.
- Victoria.

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