



City of Richmond

6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1
www.richmond.ca

June 27, 2012

City Clerk's Office
Telephone: 604-276-4007
Fax: 604-278-5139

Union of British Columbia Municipalities
#60 – 10551 Shellbridge Way
Richmond, BC V6X 2W6

Re: Provincial Office of the Seniors Advocate

This is to advise that Richmond City Council, at its meeting held on Monday, June 25, 2012, considered a report regarding the above matter, and approved the attached resolution for submission to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities' annual convention.

A copy of the relevant staff report dated June 13, 2012 is attached for background information. Also, an extract from the Minutes of the Tuesday, June 19, 2012, Planning Committee meeting is enclosed to reflect amendments made by the Committee to the staff recommendation.

Yours truly,

Gail Johnson
Acting Director, City Clerk's Office

Att.
pc: Lower Mainland Local Government Association

Title: Provincial Office of the Seniors Advocate

Sponsor's name: City of Richmond

WHEREAS the BC Ombudsperson released "The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors (Part 2)" with 176 recommendations to improve home and community care, home support, assisted living and residential care services for seniors;

AND WHEREAS the Province released "Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan" in response, including the commitment to establish an Office of the Seniors Advocate;

AND WHEREAS the Province conducted public consultations in June and July 2012 to help shape the role and functions of this Office;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM request that the provincial government ensure that the Office of the Seniors Advocate will, to sufficiently address the BC Ombudsperson's recommendations:

- *be an independent officer of the legislature and fully resourced;*
- *focus on home and community care, as well as health promotion services;*
- *provide proactive, systemic advocacy;*
- *ensure that effective procedures are in place regarding seniors' care facility complaints, inspections and reporting;*
- *be accessible and responsive to BC's diverse and growing seniors population; and*
- *support local and provincial seniors' organisations.*



City of
Richmond

Malcolm D. Brodie
Mayor

6911 No. 3 Road,
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1
Telephone: 604-276-4123
Fax No: 604-276-4332
www.richmond.ca

June 29, 2012

Premier Christy Clark
Province of British Columbia
PO Box 9041, STN PROV GOVT.
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Clark:

Re: Office of the Seniors Advocate

The Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee (RSAC) is a Council-appointed citizen advisory committee that advises Richmond City Council on matters of concern to seniors. The RSAC reviewed the BC Ombudsperson's 176 recommendations in the recently released "The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors", as well as the Provincial response, "Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan", with great interest.

As indicated in the Provincial Action Plan, an Office of the Seniors Advocate will be established. As Provincial consultations are currently underway regarding its role and functions, the RSAC considered how this Office's ability to effectively address the Ombudsperson's recommendations might be ensured.

The RSAC brought their concerns to Council's attention and on June 25, 2012, Richmond City Council unanimously resolved:

- (1) *That the following resolution regarding the Office of the Seniors Advocate, as attached to the report "Provincial Office of the Seniors Advocate" dated June 13, 2012 from the General Manager of Community Services, be forwarded to UBCM for consideration at the 2012 UBCM Convention:*

WHEREAS the BC Ombudsperson released "The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors (Part 2)" with 176 recommendations to improve home and community care, home support, assisted living and residential care services for seniors;

AND WHEREAS the Province released "Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan" in response, including the commitment to establish an Office of the Seniors Advocate;

AND WHEREAS the Province conducted public consultations in June and July 2012 to help shape the role and functions of this Office;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM request that the provincial government ensure that the Office of the Seniors Advocate will, to sufficiently address the BC Ombudsperson's recommendations:

- (a) be an independent officer of the legislature and fully resourced;*
 - (b) focus on home and community care, as well as health promotion services;*
 - (c) provide proactive, systemic advocacy;*
 - (d) ensure that effective procedures are in place regarding seniors' care facility complaints, inspections and reporting;*
 - (e) be accessible and responsive to BC's diverse and growing seniors population; and*
 - (f) support local and provincial seniors' organisations.*
- (2) That a letter be sent to the Premier, with copies to the appropriate Minister and Richmond MLAs, regarding proposed roles and functions of the Office of the Seniors Advocate.*

Richmond City Council is thereby requesting that, as proposed by the RSAC, the following key features be incorporated into the role and functions of the Office to ensure that the Ombudsperson's recommendations are effectively addressed.

1. Be an independent officer of the Legislature and fully resourced

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate must be established as an independent office of the BC Legislature with an obligation to report publicly on an annual basis, or more often if necessary. The Seniors' Advocate should be structured similarly to the powers and responsibilities of the Representative for Children and Youth. It is extremely important that the Seniors' Advocate be independent, fully resourced and report directly to the full legislature.

2. Focus on home and community care, as well as seniors' health promotion services

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate should focus on BC's home and community care system as well as health promotion services that have the potential to improve seniors' health and well-being, reduce the use of expensive acute care services, and support seniors to live independently in their homes for as long as possible. The Advocate's mandate should focus on the current services offered through home and community care (home support, home care, assisted living, rehabilitation, residential care, and end-of-life care/palliative care) and, in addition:

- a. Ensure access to social supports for seniors who are unable to maintain social connections on their own (such as outreach programs that reduce isolation, social activities, health education and exercise programs that promote healthy aging) and access to basic services such as assistance with meal preparation, cleaning and house maintenance, and
- b. Ensure appropriate monitoring of the broader determinants of health such as affordable housing and accessible, affordable transportation that support seniors to live independently in their homes for as long as possible.

3. Provide proactive, systemic advocacy on behalf of BC seniors

Rather than be complaints-driven only, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate should be mandated to:

- a. Advocate on behalf of seniors to ensure that home care, community care and health promotion services meet their needs, and that seniors have the ability to advocate for enhancements to these services. The advocate must, in collaboration with the ombudsperson, ensure that all the recommendations in her report, "The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 2)" are implemented.
- b. Ensure that systematic monitoring, review, and public reporting on home care, community care and health promotion services, funded or contracted, are provided by the provincial government and its service agencies.
- c. Ensure that legislated protection is provided to those employees and users of services in health care facilities and concerned members of the public who complain or provide information on instances of abuse, inadequate or lack of care in such facilities.
- d. Ensure that seniors at all levels of care and all ethnic groups receive the same level of service provided by the government in Acute Care, Home Support, Assisted Living and Residential Care.
- e. Work collaboratively with the Ministry of Health, health authorities, service providers and seniors' organizations to improve the integration and standardization of services, and to ensure a responsive and accountable system of home care, community care and health promotion services.
- f. Provide a range of advocacy services to seniors and/or people caring for them, including sufficient resources to support self-advocacy and community-based advocacy, monitoring and addressing problems in existing complaints processes, and in some cases advocating directly on behalf of seniors.
- g. Ensure that the above activities and supports focus on the needs of vulnerable and/or marginalized seniors, including First Nations, immigrant and visible minority seniors, the frail elderly, seniors with low incomes and LGBT seniors.

4. Ensure that effective procedures are in place regarding seniors' care facility complaints, inspections and reporting

- a. There must be specific guidelines and they must be enforceable and enforced.
- b. Inspections of any and all seniors' care facilities should be at random, not known in advance and exemptions from compliance be monitored by either the Advocate or an outside qualified third party.

5. Be accessible and responsive to BC's diverse and growing seniors population

It is important for the Advocate's mandate to reflect the size, diversity and vulnerability of BC's growing senior's population, and the complexity of seniors' health-related needs. Appropriate processes and resources will be required to identify key issues of concern to seniors in local communities across the province, and from different sub-populations (such as frail seniors, First Nations, immigrant, visible minority seniors, and LGBT seniors).

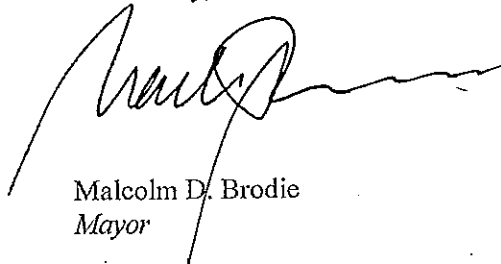
6. Support local and provincial seniors' organisations

- a. Ensure local and provincial seniors' organizations have the resources to conduct outreach to their respective communities in order to identify emerging and long-standing issues of concern, and provide information to these communities about the Advocate's work.
- b. Provide a range of in-person and online opportunities for seniors' organizations to engage with the Office of the Seniors' Advocate, including a yearly in-person meeting with key provincial organizations.

The Province is to be commended for proposing this Office, and for consulting BC residents to ensure its effectiveness. Thank you for the opportunity to help ensure that the BC Ombudsperson's recommendations will indeed be implemented, as the well-being of our seniors is of utmost concern. A copy of Richmond's staff report is attached for reference.

We look forward to hearing the results of this consultation.

Yours truly,



Malcolm D. Brodie
Mayor

Cc The Honourable Michael de Jong, Minister of Health
Mike Farnworth, Opposition Critic for Health
Katrine Conroy, Opposition Critic for Seniors and Long-Term Care
The Honourable John Yap, MLA, Richmond-Steveston and Minister of State for Climate Action
Rob Howard, MLA, Richmond Centre
Linda Reid, MLA, Richmond East
Kim Carter, BC Ombudsperson
Heather Devine, Seniors Action Plan Team



To: Planning Committee
From: Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager
Re: Provincial Office of the Seniors Advocate

To: Planning Comm. June 14,
Date: June 13, 2012 2012
File: /

Staff Recommendation

That:

1. The following resolution regarding the Office of the Seniors Advocate, as attached to the report "Provincial Office of the Seniors Advocate" dated June 13, 2012 from the General Manager of Community Services, be forwarded to UBCM for consideration at the 2012 UBCM Convention:

WHEREAS the BC Ombudsperson released "The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors (Part 2)" with 176 recommendations to improve home and community care, home support, assisted living and residential care services for seniors;

AND WHEREAS the Province released "Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan" in response, including the commitment to establish an Office of the Seniors Advocate;

AND WHEREAS the Province conducted public consultations in June and July 2012 to help shape the role and functions of this Office;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM request that the provincial government ensure that the Office of the Seniors Advocate will, to sufficiently address the BC Ombudsperson's recommendations:

- *be independent and fully resourced;*
- *focus on home and community care, as well as health promotion services;*
- *provide proactive, systemic advocacy;*
- *prepare and enforce procedures regarding seniors' care facility complaints, inspections and reporting;*
- *be accessible and responsive to BC's diverse and growing seniors population; and*
- *support local and provincial seniors' organisations.*

2. A letter be sent to the Premier, with copies to the appropriate Minister and Richmond MLAs, regarding proposed roles and functions of the Office of the Seniors Advocate.

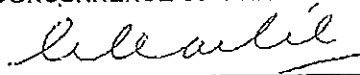

June 13, 2012

- 2 -



Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager

Att. 3

REPORT CONCURRENCE			
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Intergovernmental Relations & Protocol Unit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
REVIEWED BY TAG SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: A	REVIEWED BY CAO	INITIALS: 

Staff Report

Origin

In February 2012, the BC Ombudsperson released an extensive report with recommendations regarding seniors' care, "The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors (Part 2)". The report included 176 recommendations to improve home and community care, home support, assisted living and residential care services for seniors. Key recommendations are outlined in Attachment 1.

Concurrent with the Ombudsperson's report publication, the Province released a response, "Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan". The Plan includes a number of key actions that the Province will undertake to implement the Ombudsperson's recommendations. The first action is appointing a Seniors Advocate "to assist and protect seniors receiving public and private community and health care services and ensure complaints are resolved."

The Province has committed to establishing an Office of the Seniors Advocate, and is currently conducting province-wide public consultations regarding the role and function of the Office.

The Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee (RSAC) had previously requested that Council endorse the Ombudsperson's recommendations but, following discussion with their Council Liaison, decided to make a more specific request. The RSAC subsequently focused on proposed Provincial actions, and drafted a letter highlighting their priorities for the Office of the Seniors Advocate. The RSAC resolved at their June 2012 meeting to request that a letter based on the attached be sent to the Province (Attachment 2).

Analysis

I. Letter Regarding the Office of the Seniors Advocate

The RSAC proposes in Attachment 2 that the Office of the Seniors Advocate:

1. be independent and fully resourced,
2. focus on home and community care, as well as health promotion services,
3. provide proactive, systemic advocacy on behalf of BC seniors,
4. prepare and enforce procedures regarding seniors' care facility complaints, inspections and reporting process,
5. be accessible and responsive to BC's diverse and growing seniors population, and
6. support local and provincial seniors' organizations.

The RSAC provides rationale for why each area is deemed critical for the Office to undertake. Staff concur that each of these areas is key to ensuring that seniors are supported and cared for in the best possible manner. With our rapidly increasing seniors population, the importance of this Office in ensuring seniors well-being cannot be underestimated.

2. UBCM Resolution

The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) is currently receiving resolutions for consideration at the September 2012 Convention. A draft resolution outlining RSAC priorities for the Office of the Seniors Advocate is attached for Council's consideration (Attachment 3). The UBCM deadline for resolutions is June 30, 2012.

Staff surveyed other Lower Mainland municipalities to determine if others were considering putting forward such a motion, but no affirmative responses were received.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact.

Conclusion

After reviewing the Ombudsperson's recommendations and the Provincial response, the RSAC has identified priority roles and functions for the proposed Office of the Seniors' Advocate. As consultations regarding this Office are currently underway, the RSAC is requesting Council support in shaping how this Advocate can best ensure the well-being of seniors. Staff also recommend Council's consideration of a UBCM resolution supporting the RSAC request.



Lesley Sherlock
Social Planner
(604-276-4220)

LS:ls



News Release

www.bcombudsperson.ca

For Immediate Release
NR12-01
February 14, 2012

IMPROVING THE CARE OF SENIORS: OMBUDSPERSON RELEASES REPORT WITH 176 RECOMMENDATIONS

VICTORIA – Today Ombudsperson Kim Carter released a 400 plus page report on her office's three year investigation into the care of seniors in British Columbia. *The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 2)* is a comprehensive and in depth investigation that makes 143 findings and 176 recommendations. The recommendations are designed to improve home and community care, home support, assisted living and residential care services for seniors.

"Our report focuses on key areas where significant changes should be made with many recommendations that can be implemented quickly," says Carter. "We need to provide a renewed commitment to some of the most deserving and vulnerable members of our communities; a commitment that focuses on their needs, listens to their concerns and respects their choices."

The report makes specific recommendations to the Ministry of Health and the five regional health authorities. These recommendations include:

- Providing clear information to seniors and their families; tracking key home and community care data and reporting it publicly in an annual home and community care report
- Supporting seniors and families in navigating the home and community care system
- Protecting seniors through consistent reporting and tracking of abuse and neglect
- Protecting those who complain in good faith about home and community care services from any adverse consequences for doing so
- Assisting seniors to continue to live at home by assessing the adequacy of current home support programs and analysing the benefits and costs of expansion
- Ensuring objective and enforceable standards of care for home support services
- Ensuring fair and equal treatment by immediately making certain that no seniors in assisted living are charged for services and benefits that are included in the assessed client rate
- Establishing an active inspection, monitoring and enforcement program in assisted living residences
- Ensuring equal treatment, benefits and protection of seniors in residential care by establishing one legislative framework that applies to all residential care facilities
- Ensuring fair treatment by not charging fees to seniors involuntarily detained in residential care under the *Mental Health Act*
- Ensuring objective and enforceable standards of care for seniors in residential care
- Enhancing dementia and end-of-life care services in residential care

During the investigation, the Ombudsperson found that the Ministry of Health has not made sure that seniors and their families have access to adequate assistance and support to navigate the complex home and community care system; has not analyzed whether the home support program is meeting its goal of assisting seniors to live in their own homes as long as it is practical; and that it is ineffective and inadequate for the Ministry of Health to rely on responding to complaints and serious incident reports as its main form of oversight for assisted living. The Ombudsperson also found that the Ministry of Health's decision to maintain two separate legislative frameworks for residential care has resulted in unfair differences in the care and services seniors receive and the fees they pay.



Ombudsperson
B.C.'s Independent Voice For Fairness

News Release

www.bcombudsperson.ca

"Our goal is for there to be consistent, province-wide standards and processes that treat seniors across B.C. in a fair and equitable manner," adds Carter.

While the health authorities have responded to some of the recommendations in the report, the majority of the Ombudsperson's recommendations are currently being considered by the Ministry of Health. The Ombudsperson will monitor progress that is made on the recommendations and report the results through the office's website.

The Ombudsperson launched her systemic investigation into seniors' care issues in 2008. Part 1 of the Ombudsperson's report, *The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 1)* was released in December, 2009. It contained 10 recommendations that focused exclusively on issues affecting seniors in residential care.

The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 2) is available at www.bcombudsperson.ca.

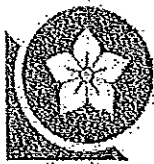
Also released today are two additional investigation reports related to seniors' care issues. Both reports and news releases can be found at www.bcombudsperson.ca. They are:

- *On Short Notice: An Investigation of Vancouver Island Health Authority's Process for Closing Cowichan Lodge.*
- *Honouring Commitments: An Investigation of Fraser Health Authority's Transfer of Seniors from Temporarily Funded Residential Care Beds.*
- *Read the Seniors' Report (Part 2)*
- *FACT Sheet*

-30-

For further information:
Alexis Lang Lunn
Outreach, Information & Education Officer
Office of the Ombudsperson
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250-356-7740
alunn@bcombudsperson.ca



Ombudsperson
B.C.'s Independent Voice For Fairness

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THE BEST OF CARE, (Part 2)

FACT SHEET

Home and Community Care Services

In this report, the Office of the Ombudsperson examined three types of health services for seniors that fall under Home and Community Care Services: home support, assisted living and residential care. Delivering the service is the responsibility of five regional health authorities and while there is legislation that regulates the provision of services, much of the actual operation is guided by policy. Each year, over 50,000 seniors in B.C. and their families are impacted by home and community care services.

Our Role

The Ombudsperson is an independent officer of the legislature appointed pursuant to the *Ombudsperson Act*. In this investigation, we looked into the administrative actions of provincial authorities with the goal of ensuring they deal with people and deliver services in a fair and equitable manner.

The Investigation

The seniors investigation was launched in 2008 and in 2009 the Ombudsperson released the results of the first part of the investigation with *The Best of Care (Part 1)*. That report focussed on three residential care issues – residents' rights, public information, and the role of resident and family councils.

The second part of the investigation looked at general home and community care issues, home support, assisted living and residential care and the role of the authorities involved. Issues investigated include access to services, adequacy of information, standards of care, complaints processes, and monitoring and enforcement. The investigation resulted in a report that makes 143 findings and 176 recommendations. The report, issued in three volumes, can be viewed by selecting: Overview (summary), Volume 1 (full report on home and community care, home support, assisted living) and Volume 2 (full report on residential care).

Authorities Involved with the Investigations

The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Housing, the Fraser Health, Interior Health, Northern Health, Vancouver Coastal and Vancouver Island Health authorities were involved in the investigation.

Key Recommendations (R)

Home and Community Care

- Provide clear information to seniors and their families and track key home and community care data and report it publicly in an annual home and community care report (R) 1 to 5, 9 to 11 and 19
- Support seniors and families in navigating the home and community care system (R) 22
- Protect seniors through consistent standards for training, registration, and criminal records checks for all care aides and community health workers (R) 23 to 26
- Protect seniors through consistent reporting and tracking of abuse and neglect (R) 27 to 32
- Protect those who complain in good faith about home and community care services from any adverse consequences for doing so (R) 33

Home Support

- Assist seniors to continue to live at home by assessing the adequacy of current home support programs and analysing the benefits and costs of expansion (R) 34
- Ensure equal treatment by developing consistent and adequate time allotments for home support activities (R) 35
- Support seniors by establishing a set time frame within which seniors requiring home support will receive services (R) 36 to 38
- Enhance home support by including continuity of care as an underlying principle (R) 40
- Ensure objective and enforceable standards of care for home support services (R) 42 and 43

Assisted Living

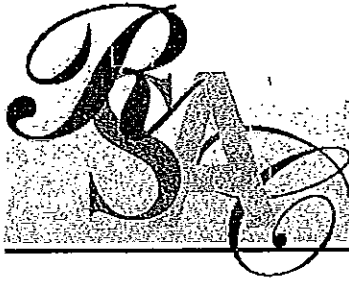
- Ensure the Office of the Assisted Living Registrar ceases to contract with the Health Employers Association for staff (R) 51
- Ensure fair and equal treatment by ensuring immediately that no seniors are charged extra for services and benefits that are included in the assessed client rate (R) 53
- Ensure there is a legal foundation for any expansion of services and a concurrent increase in the monitoring and enforcement powers of the registrar (R) 54 to 56
- Support Seniors by establishing a timeframe within which seniors requiring assisted living will receive service (R) 63 to 65
- Protect seniors by establishing a clear, consistent and fair process for assessing whether they are still able to live in assisted living (R) 59 to 61, 67
- Ensure objective and enforceable standards of care for assisted living (R) 69
- Provide legally enforceable tenancy rights to assisted living residents (R) 82 to 84
- Enhance protection of seniors by establishing a single, accessible process to respond to all complaints about assisted living (R) 75 to 81
- Enhance protection of seniors by improving reporting of serious incidents (R) 85 to 87
- Establish an active inspection, monitoring and enforcement program (R) 88 and 89

Residential Care

- Ensure equal treatment, benefits and protection of seniors in residential care by establishing one legislative framework that applies to all residential care facilities (R) 94 to 96
- Provide choice and offer flexibility in moving into residential care (R) 100, 117, 119 and 120
- Act transparently by providing seniors and their families with the information they need to make decisions about placement (R) 102 to 107
- Enhance the transparency of the admissions process by establishing a standard admissions agreement and by bringing Part 3 of the *Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act* into force (R) 86-87
- Ensure fair treatment by not charging seniors involuntarily detained in residential care under the *Mental Health Act* fees (R) 130 to 132
- Ensure objective and enforceable standards of care for seniors in residential care (R) 133 and 134
- Establish consistent rules on the use of restraints (R) 135 to 137
- Ensure there are clear legal requirements that apply to obtaining consent for the administration of medication (R) 139 to 141 and 154
- Establish specific staffing standards for residential care facilities (R) 142 to 143
- Enhance dementia and end-of-life care services in residential care (R) 145 to 147
- Provide a simple and responsive complaints process (R) 148 and 149
- Improve the reporting of incidents, inspections, monitoring and enforcement practices (R) 152, 153, 156 to 167
- Establish more transparent and flexible processes for moves between facilities and moves on closure of facilities (R) 168 to 176

Additional Notes on the Recommendations

Recommendations can also be accessed by selecting links to the following: [home and community care](#), [home support](#), [assisted living](#), [residential care](#), and by [region](#). The full list is available in the [Overview](#) and [Volume 2](#)



Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
Serving Richmond since 1991



June 13, 2012

Richmond City Council
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

Re: Provincial Office of the Seniors Advocate

At the June 13 meeting of the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee (RSAC), it was moved:

"That the RSAC request that Council send a letter to the Province regarding the role and function of the Office of the Seniors Advocate as suggested in the attached document."

Please find attached a proposed letter for Council to consider sending to the Province, as consultations regarding the role of the proposed Office of the Seniors Advocate are currently underway. The suggestions contained therein reflect priorities identified by our Committee with the well-being of Richmond, and indeed all BC seniors, in mind.

Thank you for considering this request.

Kathleen Holmes
Chair, Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee

:ls

June 13 , 2012

Seniors Action Plan
Ministry of Health
PO Box 9825, STN PROV GOV
Victoria, BC V8W 9W4

Re: SENIORS ADVOCATE

We write to support the provincial government's recent announcement that an Office of the Seniors' Advocate will be established, and to outline key features needed for an effective mandate.

The creation of an effective advocate position is an important step towards implementing the BC Ombudsperson's comprehensive recommendations for improving access and accountability in BC's system of home and community care. As the Ombudsperson's recent report (The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia -- Part 2) makes clear, the need for an advocate is not simply the result of isolated incidents of abuse or inappropriate care, but rather reflects widespread systemic problems. As such, it is vital that the new Office of the Seniors' Advocate have an independent, proactive and systemic mandate, including a focus on health promotion, and also be accessible and responsive to BC's diverse seniors population.

1. Independent and Fully Resourced

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate must be established as an independent office of the BC Legislature with an obligation to report publicly on an annual basis or more often if necessary. The Seniors' Advocate should be structured similarly to the powers and responsibilities of the Representative for Children and Youth. It is extremely important that the Seniors' Advocate be independent, fully resourced and report directly to the full legislature.

2. Focus on home and community care as well as health promotion services for seniors

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate should focus on BC's home and community care system as well as health promotion services that have the potential to improve seniors' health and well-being, reduce the use of expensive acute care services, and support seniors to live independently in their homes for as long as possible. The Advocate's mandate should focus on the current services offered through home and community care (home support, home care, assisted living, rehabilitation, residential care, and end-of-life care/palliative care), and in addition:

- a) Ensure access to social supports for seniors who are unable to maintain social connections on their own (such as outreach programs that reduce isolation, social activities, health education and exercise programs that promote healthy aging) and access to basic services such as assistance with meal preparation, cleaning and house maintenance.
- b) Ensure appropriate monitoring of the broader determinants of health such as affordable housing and accessible, affordable transportation that support seniors to live independently in their homes for as long as possible.

3. Proactive, systemic advocacy on behalf of BC seniors

Rather than be complaints-driven only, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate should be mandated to:

- a) Advocate on behalf of seniors to ensure that home care, community care and health promotion services meet their needs, and that seniors have the ability to advocate for enhancements to these services. The advocate must, in collaboration with the ombudsperson, ensure that all the recommendations in her Report, "The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 2)" are implemented.
- b) Ensure that systematic monitoring, review, and public reporting on home care, community care and health promotion services, funded or contracted, are provided by the provincial government and its service agencies.
- c) Ensure that legislated protection is provided to those employees and users of services in health care facilities and concerned members of the public who complain or provide information on instances of abuse, inadequate or lack of care in such facilities.
- d) Ensure that seniors at all levels of care and all ethnic groups receive the same level of service provided by the government in Acute Care, Home Support, Assisted Living and Residential Care.
- e) Work collaboratively with the Ministry of Health, health authorities, service providers, and seniors' organizations to improve the integration and standardization of services and to ensure a responsive and accountable system of home care, community care and health promotion services.
- f) Provide a range of advocacy services to seniors and/or people caring for them, including sufficient resources to support self-advocacy and community-based advocacy, monitoring and addressing problems in existing complaints processes, and in some cases advocating directly on behalf of seniors.
- g) Ensure that the above activities and supports focus on the needs of vulnerable and/or marginalized seniors, including First Nations, immigrant and visible minority seniors, the frail elderly, seniors with low incomes and LGBT seniors.

4. Complaints, Inspections and Reporting Process

- a) There must be specific guidelines and they must be enforceable and enforced.
- b) Inspections of any and all seniors' care facilities should be at random, not known in advance and exemptions from compliance be monitored by either the Advocate or an outside qualified third party.

5. Accessible and responsive to BC's diverse and growing seniors population

It is important for the Advocate's mandate to reflect the size, diversity and vulnerability of BC's growing senior's population, and the complexity of seniors' health-related needs. Appropriate processes and resources will be required to identify key issues of concern to seniors in local communities across the province, and from different sub-populations (such as frail seniors, First Nations, immigrant, visible minority seniors, and LGBT seniors).

6. The new Advocate's mandate should:

a) Ensure local and provincial seniors' organizations have the resources to conduct outreach to their respective communities in order to identify emerging and long-standing issues of concern, and provide information to these communities about the Advocate's work.

b) Provide a range of in-person and online opportunities for seniors' organizations to engage with the Office of the Seniors' Advocate, including a yearly in-person meeting with key provincial organizations.

We look forward to participating in further dialogue in regard to the Office of the Seniors' Advocate.

Sincerely,

Richmond City Council

Cc The Honourable Michael de Jong, Minister of Health
Mike Farnworth, Opposition Critic for Health
Katrine Couroy, Opposition Critic for Seniors and Long-Term Care
Kim Carter, BC Ombudsperson
Heather Devine, Seniors Action Plan Team

Proposed UBCM Resolution: OFFICE OF THE SENIORS ADVOCATE

WHEREAS the BC Ombudsperson released "The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors (Part 2)" with 176 recommendations to improve home and community care, home support, assisted living and residential care services for seniors;

AND WHEREAS the Province released "Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan" in response, including the commitment to establish an Office of the Seniors Advocate;

AND WHEREAS the Province conducted public consultations in June and July 2012 to help shape the role and functions of this Office;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM request that the provincial government ensure that the Office of the Seniors Advocate will, to sufficiently address the BC Ombudsperson's recommendations:

- be independent and fully resourced;
- focus on home and community care, as well as health promotion services;
- provide proactive, systemic advocacy;
- prepare and enforce procedures regarding seniors' care facility complaints, inspections and reporting;
- be accessible and responsive to BC's diverse and growing seniors population; and
- support local and provincial seniors' organisations.