
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2023MMHA0030-000813
May 26, 2023

Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

More help coming for seniors facing mental-health, addiction challenges in Nanaimo

NANAIMO – Seniors living with mental-health and addiction challenges in Nanaimo and other communities in B.C. who are at risk of becoming homeless will get more help navigating vital supports thanks to ongoing funding from the Province.

The government has provided Seniors Services Society of B.C. (SSSBC) with an additional \$809,000 grant for its Senior Housing Information and Navigation Ease (SHINE) program. The program helps seniors access mental-health and addictions supports as well as connects them with financial assistance. In addition, SHINE provides housing navigation for older adults, helps refer them to supports for maintaining safe housing, provides advocacy in disputes where seniors are being unfairly pushed out of rental homes, and offers housing navigation education and workshops to other agencies helping seniors.

“For many seniors, navigating housing, financial aid, mental-health and addictions and other services can be extremely difficult without assistance,” said Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “Without help, seniors may be at risk of falling into poverty, homelessness, discrimination and inequality. That’s why we’re proud to support programs such as SHINE, to help more seniors with mental-health and addictions challenges in communities across B.C. get the help they need and deserve.”

These services will be delivered through community partners in Nanaimo, Langley’s Aldergrove, Kelowna, Surrey, Vancouver’s West End, Prince George and New Westminster. Three new partners will be added this year in Victoria, Richmond and Penticton.

“SHINE was envisioned as a city-specific, senior-centred network that balances prevention and responsiveness in addressing widening gaps in the systems supporting older adults,” said Alison Silgado, CEO, Seniors Services Society of B.C. “This includes housing, mental health, addictions, attachment to health, exit from health, technology, access to finance, food insecurity, and supports to help them age in place - to name a few. What gives me hope is that key stakeholders are coming together to create a continuum for older adults.”

Enhancing supports for people living with mental-health and addiction challenges is an integral part of A Pathway to Hope, B.C.’s roadmap for building a comprehensive system of mental-health and addiction care for British Columbians.

Quotes:

Sheila Malcolmson, MLA for Nanaimo –

“We all want seniors to live their best possible lives. Nanaimo Family Life helps break through isolation and grief, to help connect seniors with housing and mental health supports. I am so

glad we can fund the SHINE program to continue these vital and caring seniors' services in Nanaimo."

Dr. Naheed Dosani, lead palliative care physician, Palliative Education and Care for the Homeless (PEACH), Inner City Health Associates Palliative Care Physician, St. Michael's Hospital, and Unity Health Toronto –

"The SHINE program is an important intervention that addresses health disparity gaps for elders. It is an inspiring example of what's possible when key stakeholders come together to create person-centred care models. Simply incredible work."

Jane, SHINE client (name has been changed to protect identity) –

"Looking for housing is such a concern and a daunting task when looking toward a future with rapid inflation and failing health. The staff at SHINE were so quick to respond to my inquiry. When we met, instead of just offering information, they helped me understand what was available. Even better, they helped me through the application process. I don't know what I would have done without them."

Quick Facts:

- SHINE has 10 community partners:
 - Seniors Services Society of B.C. (New Westminster)
 - Prince George Council of Seniors
 - Nanaimo Family Life Association
 - West End Seniors' Network Society (Vancouver West End)
 - Seniors Outreach and Resource Centre (Kelowna)
 - Langley Senior Resources Society (Langley/Aldergrove)
 - Brella Community Services Society (Surrey)
 - Westminster House Society (New Westminster)
 - Seniors First BC (provincial resource)
 - Moving Forward Family Services (provincial resource)
- Research has shown that when seniors are able to age in place, or in a residence of their choosing, they tend to show fewer signs of mental-health and addictions issues and tend to have a higher quality of life.

Learn More:

Learn about A Pathway to Hope, government's vision for mental health and addictions care in B.C.: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021MMHA0049-001787>

For more information about SHINE, visit: <https://www.seniorsservicesociety.ca/shinebc/>

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