

## 10 answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) by Seniors

### 1. What is calling 811, 311 and 211 used for? And when should I call 911?

- a. **811** is BC's 24-hour Health Line, with nurses available to respond to your concerns.
- b. **311** is the City of Vancouver's Hoarding Task Force (outside Vancouver 604-873-7000).
- c. **211** is the Community Information Services Line which can connect you to social, health and government services throughout BC.
- d. **911** is for emergencies, or anything happening "right now" which requires a response from police, fire or ambulance. This includes witnessing a crime, suspicious activity, violence or an accident. If the incident happened earlier, call the non-emergency line to make a report, or the TIPS line if you want to remain anonymous.

### 2. How do I access home care services from my health authority? Or what is a case manager and why do I need one?

- a. You need to register with a Case Manager (CM) in the Community Care section of your local health authority. A CM will be assigned based on where you live. An intake assessment will determine your eligibility for future subsidized care services either in your home, assisted living or full residential care. The CM also determines your eligibility for waiting lists in subsidized care facilities. The intake-assessment is only done once, except for annual changes to your income and/or residence.
- b. If you end up in hospital and require further help at home when released, the hospital social worker plays the same role as your CM, and will communicate with your CM, providing you are registered. They are part of your Medical Health Team along with your doctors and other therapists. Tip: Be nice to your CM or social worker because you need their help. Be aware that they have very demanding case-loads.

### 3. If I live in a co-op and my gross annual income is under \$35,000, can I get any financial help?

Depending on how much below \$35,000 you earn, there are some options:

- a. The GIS (Guaranteed Income Supplement) is a federal program administered through OAS (Old Age Security) when you turn 65. Depending on the region, GIS subsidy top-ups are paid monthly on a sliding scale to seniors making less than \$18,000 a year.
- b. A senior on GIS is eligible to purchase an all-zones bus pass for only \$45 a year.

- c. “Better at Home” is a provincial program with subsidies for older adults 60+ with incomes under \$30,000. It offers light housekeeping, driving services and some yard work (but not personal care). It’s also available for a small fee for those with higher incomes.
    - d. See point #2 above: If you need personal care support, health authorities provide subsidized care for eligible individuals and the income ceiling is around \$35,000.
- 4. I have a Will. Why would I need any other legal documents?**
  - a. A Will is needed after you die and is used to distribute your assets according to your wishes. A Will helps reduce or eliminate disputes that can arise among family members. If you do not have a valid Will, your assets will be distributed in accordance with the rules of intestate succession, as set out in Part 3 of BC’s *Wills, Estates and Succession Act*. Under these rules, only your closest living relatives will inherit your property.
  - b. Along with a Will, you should consider having a Representation Agreement (for personal and health care decisions) and a Power of Attorney (for financial decisions) in case you become incapable of managing your own affairs.
- 5. I think my friend/relative is being abused (financially or emotionally). What can I do to help them?**
  - a. Call the BC Center for Elder Advocacy and Support (BCCEAS) at 1-866-437-1940 or locally at 604-437-1940. Their four Programs include:
    - i. Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL).
    - ii. Elder Law Clinic and Legal Advocacy Program.
    - iii. Victim Services Program: Info, support and referrals.
    - iv. Free Workshops on types of Elder Abuse.
  - b. Fraser Health – Adult Abuse and Neglect.  
Home Health Service Line: 1-855-412-2121.
  - c. Threshold Multicultural Outreach: 604-572-5883.
  - d. Metro Vancouver Multicultural Family Support Services: 604-436-1025.
- 6. My co-op would like me to move now that my kids have gone, saying my unit is too big for one person. How can I stay here when there are no 1-bedroom units?**

You may need to look elsewhere, but one option to consider would be to get a roommate. Be sure you understand your co-op’s rules around over-under-housing, subletting, and procedures for permitting roommates. It may be a new idea for your co-op and require some discussion. If approved, you could consider sharing your home by:

  - a. Finding a roommate(s) who can use your additional bedroom(s) which could help you continue to afford to stay in your current unit, no longer be “over-housed”, and remain in your co-op community

- b. If you are needing physical assistance to age-in-place, an extra bedroom could be used for live-in help. Your co-op may have rules or policies directly related to supporting this need.
  - c. Cohabiting with others, like in *The Golden Girls* TV show, can have social, health and financial benefits.
- 7. My co-op neighbour has become a hoarder. Should I try to help them or report it to the co-op board?**
  - a. You should voice your concerns to your co-op's board so they can take appropriate steps to help the neighbour. Resources include:
    - i. City of Vancouver Hoarding Task Force. Dial 311. Outside of Vancouver, call 604-873-7000.
    - ii. Mental Health Services through your local Health Authority.
- 8. I hope to live out my life in my co-op. But if I can't, what are my choices on a limited income?**
  - a. There is subsidized independent housing through BC Housing programs at [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org). These usually involve waiting lists and registration on the BC Housing Registry. Phone: 604-433-2218. Toll-free: 1-800-257-7756.
  - b. There are subsidized "assisted living" facilities accessed through your Case Manager (See point #2 above). Payment is 70% of your net income. Most have waiting lists and use the triage system, meaning urgent cases go to the front of the list.
  - c. There are subsidies for full residential care, which are accessed through your Case Manager (or hospital social worker). The resident pays 80% of their net income to a maximum of around \$3,500 /mo. This care level also has waiting lists that use the triage system.
  - d. There are some affordable supportive housing options such as Abbyfields in Vancouver and Tsawwassen, or Harmony Court in Burnaby.
- 9. How can we support our elders, especially those showing signs of dementia?**
  - a. The BC Alzheimer Society has a valuable resource site which includes support groups, training and counselling at: [www.alzheimer.ca/bc](http://www.alzheimer.ca/bc). Phone: 604-681-6530 Toll-free: 1-800-667-3742.
  - b. Watch for CHF BC's workshop *Understanding Dementias*, to be held in Vancouver, Spring 2018. Facilitator: Karen Tyrell.
- 10. Where can I find out more?**

Our Aging in Place Committee continues to pursue initiatives to support co-op members to age in place. Check [chf.bc.ca](http://chf.bc.ca) for the latest news and event listings.