

Seniors Advocate Report: News Articles

Care homes failing seniors, says advocate

Katherine Dedyna / Victoria Times Colonist

April 8, 2015

Nearly half of B.C. seniors in residential care or receiving home care are prescribed nine drugs at a time, says an independent report released today by B.C.'s Office of the Seniors Advocate.

The situation is among several troubling findings based on health assessment records from 25,000 B.C. seniors in residential care and 29,000 seniors receiving home care recently analyzed by the University of Waterloo at the instigation of advocate Isobel Mackenzie.

Mackenzie said the data indicates at least 1,500 seniors living in residential care facilities would be supported in the community if they lived in Alberta or Ontario.

When it comes to people living in those care facilities, B.C. is "woefully underperforming" in the provision of physical therapy and other therapies compared to Ontario and Alberta, she said, even though such therapies are "crucial to the maintenance of function and independence for frail seniors."

For example, she noted that 11.6 per cent of seniors in care in B.C. got physiotherapy in the previous seven days compared to 25 per cent of Alberta seniors and almost 58 per cent of Ontario seniors.

Mackenzie is also concerned about the disproportionate use of psychiatric drugs on 34 per cent of the residential care population when only four per cent have been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder.

The situation reflects a long-standing "culture" contributed to by doctors, caregivers, assessors, family members and patients, "which is to look to medication as the answer to fix something when there are other, arguably more progressive ways now to deal with some of these issues," she said. Those range from providing more single rooms to taking more time with residents to allow them to proceed with tasks at their own pace.

The use of psychiatric drugs has been reduced by about 50 per cent, according to the Ministry of Health in 2011, she said, but clearly, the drugs are still being used where the evidence does not support their use, probably to deal with agitation and aggression by people with dementia.

Side-effects of this medication can include sleepiness, cognitive impairment, muscle and movement disorders and increased risk of diabetes.

Mackenzie questioned the appropriateness of prescribing so many drugs to seniors given their potential to interact and the fact that safety and efficacy studies were not done on frail elderly people taking many drugs at a time.

She said she hopes that the report on the data and comparison with other provinces for the first time moves B.C. toward improvements in both residential and home care for seniors.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/bc-news/care-homes-failing-seniors-says-advocate-1.1817052#sthash.SPGN3yTE.dpuf>

B.C. seniors' advocate says psychotic drugs being prescribed without diagnosis

April 08, 2015

VICTORIA - The advocate for seniors in British Columbia says too many people in government care are prescribed antipsychotic drugs without being properly diagnosed.

Isobel Mackenzie reviewed assessment records for 54,000 seniors in both residential and home care in her report, Placement, Drugs and Therapy ... We Can Do Better.

Of the 25,000 people in residential care, about a third are prescribed antipsychotic drugs, but only four per cent of them have been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder, she said.

"We know we are over-prescribing drugs to seniors," Mackenzie said in an interview on Tuesday. "It's called polypharmacy, too many drugs to the same person at the same time. But this is a very stark presentation of just how bad the situation is and the magnitude out there."

Her report also said just under half of residential care clients are being prescribed antidepressant medications, but only 24 per cent have been assessed with depression. She said seniors are often over-prescribed medications in efforts to help them, their families and caregivers through potentially stressful and harmful situations.

"We should be asking serious questions, given the side-effects of these drugs, as to whether they are the most appropriate for the seniors in question," her report stated.

Mackenzie said up to 15 per cent of seniors in residential care could instead be living independently with the aid of assisted living or in community care.

Her report also said B.C. lags behind Alberta and Ontario when it comes to offering rehabilitation therapies for seniors.

Opposition New Democrat senior's critic Maurine Karagianis said in a statement the report highlights the government's failure to address long-standing seniors-care issues.

"This report is a damning indictment of a Liberal government that has shown no willingness to fix the problems that they've caused in seniors' care," she said.

- See more at: <http://infotel.ca/newsitem/bc-seniors-advocate-says-psychotic-drugs-being-prescribed-without-diagnosis/it18381>

BC seniors advocate concerned about the elderly being over-medicated

Says many are receiving medications without having symptoms

Anita Bathe April 7, 2015

VANCOUVER (NEWS1130) – Over-medication with the elderly is a big problem in BC according to the seniors advocate.

Isobel Mackenzie is also concerned about how many people are in care homes when they don't need to be. She says 90 per cent of them do belong in the homes but about 4000 people could be in their own house getting care.

“For those people who could be elsewhere, it's not a very meaningful experience sometimes to live in a residential care facility if you're fully cognitively functioning and you have high physical function.”

Mackenzie's report finds 34 per cent of those living in a care home have been prescribed anti-psychotic medications but just three per cent of them actually have a psychiatric disorder. Nearly half of BC seniors are taking nine or more medications.

“I'm very curious to know how many residents are asked about their medications [or] are involved in their medication decisions, how many family members are.”

She calls it a very risk-adverse culture.

The BC Care Providers Association responded to the report with this statement:

The BC Care Providers Association is re-affirming its commitment to continue to reduce the use of unnecessary medications particularly the over use of anti-psychotics in care homes. Reducing the use of unnecessary medications, including anti-psychotics, has been a priority as significant reductions have already occurred in BC as outlined in the Seniors Advocate report. The BCCPA would also welcome new funding to improve access to important programs such as physiotherapy and recreational therapy to help seniors as identified in the report.

“The Seniors Advocate's report helps to continue shedding a light on the issue of over-medicating seniors,” says Daniel Fontaine, CEO for the BC Care Providers Association. “Over the last decade a number of our members self-identified the need to embrace a ‘hugs not drugs’ philosophy. This philosophy spurred on the development of our Best Practices Guide for Safely Reducing Anti-Psychotic Drug Use in Residential Care which we launched in 2013.”

“By highlighting the Best Practices Guide in her report, it demonstrates that our members have been working to help shed a spotlight on the important issue of reducing the use of anti-psychotics. It's one of the reasons I believe we are moving in the right direction, but that more work needs to be done.”

- See more: <http://www.news1130.com/2015/04/07/bc-seniors-advocate-concerned-about-the-elderly-being-over-medicated/>

More than one-third of B.C. seniors in long-term care prescribed antipsychotic drugs: advocate

Medication often used for dementia patients although it was created for psychiatric illnesses

BY ERIN ELLIS, VANCOUVER SUN APRIL 7, 2015

More than a third of B.C. care home residents were prescribed antipsychotic medications in 2012-13, although only four per cent had been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder, according to a report released Tuesday by the B.C. Seniors Advocate.

While that's down from a peak of 50 per cent of long-term care residents on antipsychotic medications two years earlier, it falls short of a provincial goal to halve the number of seniors being treated with such drugs. Thirty-four per cent of seniors living in care homes were still taking antipsychotic medication.

"On the drug use we really have to work harder on educating our physicians and care providers," Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie said in a telephone interview from Victoria.

"We've brought it down ... but it's still a little bit higher than Alberta and Ontario."

People with dementia — often in their 80s — are sometimes prescribed antipsychotic drugs to deal with paranoia, hallucinations and other symptoms that can be unsettling for them or their caregivers. Critics of the practice say it's used as a chemical restraint to silence and immobilize patients. Doctors who prescribe the drugs consider them a valuable tool when nothing else works to calm the patient.

"It is well known that [antipsychotic] drugs are sometimes used to manage aggressive or agitated behaviours in residents who have dementia," says the Seniors Advocate report. "This was not what they were intended to treat, nor are there robust clinical trials involving frail seniors to properly monitor side effects."

And the problem is not limited to care homes. Vancouver resident Leslie Smith has spoken publicly about the death of her mother in a Vancouver Island hospital in 2013, five months after she was given the antipsychotic Haldol (generic name haloperidol), ostensibly for nausea, over a period of weeks.

"She went in walking and talking she was given an antipsychotic which I believe started her on this decline and she never recovered.

"My impression is that it's a drug they give people to manage them."

In 2012, the Ministry of Health issued guidelines for doctors and other health care workers designed to reduce these prescriptions. The guidelines suggest taking an individual approach to each patient to see if alternatives like calming touch, music, a physical activity or distraction can work.

It also created a project under the B.C. Patient Safety and Quality Council to help long-term care facilities find other ways to treat dementia patients. According to a ministry spokesperson, a final report for the project called CLeAR — Call for Less Antipsychotics in Residential Care — is in the works. Its original goal was to halve the number of such prescriptions by the end of 2014, a goal that has not been reached.

Dr. Carol Ward, a geriatric psychiatrist with the Interior Health Authority in Kamloops, worked on the clinical guidelines for antipsychotic drugs in dementia care. That in turn led to the creation of an online questionnaire that health care workers can use to determine if the medications are needed, she said in a telephone interview Tuesday.

“We don’t really know what the magic number is,” said Ward, adding that 25-30 per cent of nursing home patients might be acceptable.

Although dementia is considered a neurocognitive disorder — meaning the brain has undergone physical deterioration that leads to a change in the way the patient thinks — it is also a mental illness that can cause psychotic episodes. A patient might believe they are being poisoned, for instance, or that the person in the mirror is an intruder.

“It’s one of those diagnoses that crosses specialties,” Ward said.

All medications have downsides, added Dr. Maria Chung, who specializes in geriatric medicine at Vancouver General Hospital. She said antipsychotics are used when the patient can’t safely be approached otherwise, to change a diaper, for instance.

“We have to decide whether the risks outweigh the benefits, then we use the lowest possible dose and we always reassess it,” said Chung. “It is used because it allows care to occur.”

Because people are living longer, dementia patients in residential facilities today are further advanced in their disease than in past generations, Chung notes, creating potential for violence against other residents.

“It’s not just the staff you’re worried about. It’s other clients who are fragile and frail and if they’re demented, you can’t say ‘Don’t bother so-and-so because they will react badly.’ ... We can potentially control that behaviour with low-dose, judicious medication.”

Daniel Fontaine, head of the B.C. Care Providers Association which represents long-term seniors’ care facilities, says its members have used provincial guidelines to train staff about other ways to calm dementia patients.

But he’s heard from workers that residents are arriving from hospital already on antipsychotic drugs.

“It starts in the hospital. Once it starts, it’s always hard to take something away,” he said.

Tuesday’s report commissioned by the Seniors Advocate is the first of a series based on information collected from about 25,000 senior citizens living in residential care homes in B.C. and 29,000 receiving home care. It covers their health status, physical abilities, psychological state and medications.

Other key findings:

- 51 per cent of residents in B.C. care facilities take nine or more medications, as do 44 per cent of people receiving care at home. Comparable numbers are even higher in Alberta (68 per cent) and Ontario (66 per cent) in residential care.

- Up to 4,400 seniors living in long-term care in B.C. don't need to be there if they could get adequate help at home. Seniors with minor or moderate physical needs or mild dementia are more likely to still be in their homes in Ontario and Alberta.

Going into a care home “prematurely” creates several problems, says the report. It's not healthy for a mentally active person to be housed with incapacitated residents and it means using a bed that could be occupied by someone more in need.

- 12 per cent of residential care clients in B.C. received weekly physiotherapy, compared to 25 per cent in Alberta and 58 per cent in Ontario.

Mackenzie was appointed as B.C.'s first Seniors Advocate in 2014 to analyze systems affecting seniors' care, inform the public and make recommendations to the minister of health.

- See more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/health/About+third+seniors+long+term+care+prescribed+antipsychotic+drugs+advocate+finds/10951869/story.html>

B.C. seniors overmedicated, placed in care prematurely, advocate finds

WENDY STUECK

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Apr. 07 2015

Thousands of elderly people in B.C. may have been placed in residential care when they would be better off at home, are taking too much medication, particularly antidepressants, and are not getting the rehabilitative therapy they need, B.C.'s seniors' advocate Isobel Mackenzie says in a new report.

The study “lines up with our goals and provides us with some data to work with,” Health Minister Terry Lake said on Tuesday, adding that health authorities around the province are working on programs designed to help elderly people stay in their own homes as long as practical.

The report, released Tuesday, is the second major report released by Ms. Mackenzie since she was appointed last year and is the first to analyze Resident Assessment Instrument, or RAI, records for the whole province and compare them with RAI data from two other provinces, Alberta and Ontario.

In B.C., an RAI is typically done when a client enters a residential care facility and at least every three months after that, or sooner if a major change has occurred. The assessments record health-related information, including which medicines people are taking and whether they are prone to falls. The provincewide RAI analysis turned up what Ms. Mackenzie described as three systemic issues of immediate concern – including the finding that up to 15 per cent of B.C. seniors living in residential care may be incorrectly housed because assisted living or community care would have been more suitable.

The study also highlighted the overuse of medication, finding that about 47 per cent of residential-care clients are being prescribed antidepressant medications, while only 24 per cent of those clients had actually been assessed as having depression.

The third issue was the significant lack of rehabilitative therapies in B.C. The report found only 22 per cent of seniors had received any recreational therapy in the previous seven days, compared with 42 per cent in Alberta.

On the medication issue, the report said that 34 per cent of clients in B.C. residential care homes are being prescribed anti-psychotic medications while only 4 per cent have been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder.

“One clear indicator of potentially inappropriate medication use in residential care facilities is the extent to which one particular type of psychotropic medication, anti-psychotic drugs, is prescribed to seniors,” the report says. “It is well-known that these drugs are sometimes used to manage aggressive or agitated behaviours in residents who have dementia. This was not what they were intended to treat, nor are there robust clinical trials involving frail seniors to properly monitor side effects.”

The use of anti-psychotic drugs in seniors’ facilities is a continuing concern. A 2011 review by the B.C. government found 50.3 per cent of patients had been prescribed an anti-psychotic drug over a two-month period.

The province has taken steps to reverse that trend. In 2013, a program called CLeAR (Call for Less Antipsychotics in Residential Care) got under way, with the goal of cutting the number of seniors in residential care on anti-psychotic medications by 50 per cent across the province by the end of 2014.

Results of the initiative have not yet been released.

Violence is a leading cause of injury to B.C. care workers and results in more than 1,000 injuries each year, according to WorkSafeBC.

- See more: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/advocate-says-bc-seniors-overmedicated-placed-in-care-prematurely/article23829921/>

Antipsychotic drugs being prescribed to a third of seniors in residential care: Report

By Paula Baker, Online News Producer Global News

According to a report released today by the B.C. Seniors Advocate, 33 per cent of residential care clients are being prescribed antipsychotic drugs even though only four per cent have actually been diagnosed with the disorder.

In addition to over prescribing antipsychotic drugs, the Advocate found about 47 per cent of residential care clients are being given antidepressant medications, while only 24 per cent of those seniors have actually been assessed with depression.

“This is a sizable gap between diagnosis and prescription,” said seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie.

“We should be asking serious questions, given the side effects of these drugs, as to whether they are the most appropriate of the seniors in question.”

The report, which looked at the health assessment records from 25,000 seniors in residential care and 29,000 seniors in home care in B.C., also found other issues that are an “immediate concern.”

One of those immediate concerns involves B.C. seniors being incorrectly housed. Up to 15 per cent of seniors who are living in residential care may be there in error, with assisted living or community care being better options.

Mackenzie said this finding is “troubling” because “most seniors would prefer to live independently than in residential care.” And since there is a shortage of residential care beds in some parts of the province, reallocating the seniors who are able to live independently would free up nearly 1,500 beds.

Another key finding in the report included the significant lack of rehabilitative therapies in B.C.’s residential care facilities compared to Alberta and Ontario.

This is the first time the assessment records have been reviewed and reported on at the provincial level. The Advocate was also able to compare B.C.’s records with both Alberta and Ontario.

- See more: <http://globalnews.ca/news/1926087/antipsychotic-drugs-being-prescribed-to-a-third-of-seniors-in-residential-care-report/>

Too many B.C. seniors stuck in care facilities, says report

Seniors advocate criticizes over-medication, lack of physiotherapy

BY SAM COOPER, THE PROVINCE APRIL 7, 2015

Too many B.C. seniors are being incorrectly placed in understaffed care homes where they are over-prescribed antipsychotic drugs to make them passive, according to a “devastating” new report from B.C.’s seniors advocate.

Critics say the three systemic concerns outlined in the report — lack of home care options for seniors, overuse of drugs in residential care, and lack of rehabilitative treatment in residential care — are interconnected and stem from leadership failures among B.C. politicians and health authority managers.

Seniors advocate Isobel Mackenzie said her report found that up to 15 per cent of B.C. seniors — or as many as 4,400 people — have been incorrectly placed in residential care, when it is known that living at home with proper support is often a more healthy way to age.

Mackenzie said her office needs to investigate why seniors who would be at home if they lived in Ontario or Alberta are prematurely placed in care facilities in B.C.

It’s possible that B.C. home care options have been decreasing in recent years, she said.

Mackenzie also found that while only four per cent of residential care clients in B.C. have been diagnosed with psychiatric disorders, 33 per cent of residents are being prescribed antipsychotic medications.

Many of these seniors seem to be overprescribed drugs because they become agitated. Mackenzie also found that antidepressants are being given to seniors in residential care at double the rate of actual diagnosed cases of depression.

Over-prescription of drugs for behaviour issues risks a number of side effects, the report says.

“I think we need to think about whether the cure is worse than the disease,” Mackenzie said in an interview. “The short story is that when someone is acting out, we are prescribing antipsychotics basically to make them passive.”

Mackenzie said lack of staffing and inadequate training are factors that cause over-prescription of drugs in B.C. senior care facilities.

Mackenzie also found that only 12 per cent of seniors in B.C. are receiving physiotherapy — which helps seniors stay active and engaged — compared to 25 per cent in Alberta and 58 per cent in Ontario.

Rick Turner, co-chair of the B.C. Health Coalition, said he sees all three systemic issues in Mackenzie’s report as interconnected and solvable if B.C. would change its system to fund more home care, and spend the savings to fund adequate staffing levels and better programs in residential care.

According to the coalition, a home care option costs about \$40 per day to fund, while residential care costs from \$150 to \$200.

Many B.C. politicians recognize the need to alter the senior care system, Turner said, but “our suspicion is that people in various management positions in health authorities don’t want to see any dollars taken from their programs.”

NDP health critic Maurine Karagianis slammed the provincial government’s “leadership failure” for issues outlined in the report.

“One of the devastating warnings that has come out of this report is the issue of over-medication, and improper use of medication is a very significant concern,” Karagianis said.

“And the fact that seniors are not mobile enough in these facilities, it really does paint the most horrible picture you can think of for your senior family member.”

Health Minister Terry Lake was not made available for an interview.

- See more:
<http://www.theprovince.com/health/many+seniors+stuck+care+facilities+says+report/10952716/story.html>

Updated: B.C. seniors not receiving right level of care, advocate says

Vancouver, BC, Canada / (CKNW AM) AM980

Sean Leslie

April 07, 2015

Seniors in residential care are being over-medicated and many shouldn't be there at all.

So says BC's Seniors Advocate in a devastating new report.

Isobel Mackenzie says up to 15 per-cent of BC seniors in residential care may be incorrectly housed-with assisted living or community care being more appropriate options.

She says proper placement could free up 15-hundred residential care beds.

Mackenzie is also worried about over-medication of seniors in care, noting 33 per-cent are receiving anti-psychotic drugs even though only four per-cent actually have a psychiatric disorder.

"We are continuing to advance in our knowledge of how to work with seniors, particularly those with dementia, to manage agitation, which is one of the big things we prescribe anti-psychotics for. It's not what they were intended for. And we clearly need to keep doing more work around that."

Mackenzie is also disappointed that seniors in care in BC are not receiving physiotherapy or recreational therapy at the same level as seniors in Alberta and Ontario.

Mackenzie says solutions must come not just from the BC government but also doctors and the private care home industry.

Health minister Terry Lake says he's concerned about the issues raised by BC's Seniors Advocate around care in residential facilities.

Lake says he wants to meet with Isobel Mackenzie to discuss her report, which flags over-prescription of medication to seniors and a lack of physiotherapy and recreation for seniors in care.

"Physical therapy, occupational therapy, making sure people are continuing to move is critically important for older people to prevent them from becoming frail, otherwise they will fall, end up in the emergency department, sometimes not come home from the hospital."

Lake says government is already consulting with stakeholders about improving what he says is a good system of seniors care.

- See more: <http://www.cknw.com/2015/04/07/devastating-report-issued-by-the-seniors-advocate-in-british-columbia/>

BC's advocate releases 'troubling findings' in new report on senior care

Coralie McLean, CTV Vancouver Island

Published Tuesday, April 7, 2015

VICTORIA - British Columbia's seniors advocate released a startling new report highlighting three issues, which she stresses are of immediate concern.

Isobel Mackenzie says the findings suggest many seniors have been incorrectly placed in residential care, which is taking up valuable spots "If we are filling even 5 per cent of these scarce beds with folks who could live independently that is 1500 beds that could open up province-wide."

The second concern is overuse of medication. Findings in the report suggests 34 percent of seniors living in residential care are being prescribed antipsychotic medication, while only four percent of these seniors have been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder. And nearly half of seniors in this category are being prescribed antidepressants, while only a quarter of them have been diagnosed with depression.

The report says overuse of medication is a major concern for seniors living in residential care facilities.

Incidence of psychiatric disorders and mood disorders with medication prescriptions, B.C. residential care population. (Seniors Advocate Placement, Drugs, Therapy Report)

Lastly, the third issue highlighted is a lack of rehabilitative therapies in the province's residential care facilities.

"Getting seniors moving properly and keeping them moving is absolutely key to maintaining function and independence. The downward spiral can begin very quickly if a frail senior is immobilized in bed for a week or more and having trained staff to work with them in recovery and building back strength is fundamental," Mackenzie said in a statement.

The report's findings are based on health records of 25,000 British Columbian seniors living in residential care and nearly 30,000 seniors living in home care.

- See more: <http://vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca/bc-s-advocate-releases-troubling-findings-in-new-report-on-senior-care-1.2315989>

Seniors get too many drugs, too little therapy: B.C. advocate

Katherine Dedyna / Times Colonist

April 7, 2015

B.C. seniors are prescribed too many drugs that could cause harm and too few visits from therapists who could improve their lives, says a report from B.C.'s Office of the Seniors Advocate.

About one-third of seniors in care were prescribed anti-psychotic drugs but only four per cent were diagnosed with psychiatric illness, indicative of scenarios that continue to be "seriously wrong" in seniors' care, said Isobel Mackenzie in her report, Placement, Drugs and Therapy ... We Can Do Better, released on Tuesday.

“This is a clear indicator that these medications are being used to treat other, non-psychotic conditions, and are probably a tool to treat behaviour issues related to cognitive or mood disorders rather than actual psychotic disorders,” the report said.

The report, based on health assessment records from 25,000 seniors in residential care and 29,000 receiving home care, cites the overuse of drugs, lack of access to rehabilitative therapies and the premature admission of seniors to residential care as its top three issues.

Mackenzie noted that the use of anti-psychotic drugs has dropped from about 50 per cent in 2011, but said, “Clearly, there is more work to be done.”

The presence of side effects — which can include sedation, cognitive impairment, muscle and movement disorders — can also lead to misdiagnoses of dementia and Parkinson’s, resulting in even more wrongly prescribed drugs, the report says.

The widespread use reflects a long-standing convention by doctors, caregivers and families to look to medication when there are more progressive ways to deal with acting out, Mackenzie said.

“There’s arguably growing evidence to support maybe we don’t need to fix it,” she said. “The cure is worse than the disease.”

Research indicates strategies such as moving residents to single rooms, providing familiar caregivers and giving people time to do things at their own pace instead of rushing them can de-escalate agitation, she said.

Island Health spokeswoman Suzanne Germain said prescription drugs are “an ongoing challenge” at health authority facilities and efforts have been made to use them only when appropriate.

“We have implemented a number of initiatives to reduce the use of anti-psychotic drugs,” she said. “This includes education/training in managing the needs of residents with dementia and working with GPs, pharmacists and the interdisciplinary care team to reduce the use.”

Mackenzie also noted that between 1,500 and 4,400 B.C. seniors in long-term residences would be supported in their communities if they lived in other provinces.

“I am concerned about people being in residential care who don’t need to be there,” she said, adding that some might be able to return to the community if they got the amount of physical therapies given to seniors in other provinces.

Physiotherapy was among several “crucial” therapies received by only 11 per cent of B.C. residents in care compared with 25 per cent of Alberta seniors and almost 58 per cent of Ontario seniors, the report said.

Germain agreed that too many seniors have been inappropriately placed in long-term care, but said some were admitted many years ago under different criteria and would be supported at home today. Placements do not occur without the agreement of individuals or families, she added.

Health Minister Terry Lake said Mackenzie made “some interesting findings,” many of which are under discussion.

“We established the Office of the Seniors Advocate to identify issues that may be systemic and to work with the ministry to improve care for seniors in this province in a sustainable way.”

Improving care for seniors has been an ongoing priority for the government, said Lake, adding funding of home and community care has risen to \$2.8 billion from \$1.2 billion since 2001.

“Over the coming months, we will examine the data and findings in more detail as we continue to work to improve residential care in this province.”

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/seniors-get-too-many-drugs-too-little-therapy-b-c-advocate-1.1816098#sthash.lw2mKFO5.dpuf>