

# Respecting Your Rights

*A Guide to the Rights of People Living in  
British Columbia Long Term Care Facilities*



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This booklet provides general information and is not legal advice. The resources identified at the back of the booklet can provide you with more information about your rights and responsibilities, along with information on any changes that may occur in the law or rules.

This information is current to the date of publication.

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A care facility is a home where you get health care services, attendant care or help with daily living. If you live in a British Columbia care facility, you have many legal and personal rights.

Whether you live in a non-profit facility or a privately owned facility, these are your rights.

# Is This Booklet for You?

Are you a senior or a younger adult who has moved into a care facility? Are you considering moving into one? Then this booklet is for you!

Here you, your family, and friends will find answers to common questions about living in care facilities (including intermediate care facilities; a multi-level facility; a private care home; or an extended care wing in a hospital).



This booklet is divided into several sections. It explains many of your rights. It explains what you can expect from staff and administration, doctors, other residents, volunteers, etc. so that you can live as well as possible in the care facility, for as long as possible.

You will find sections on dignity and respect, and receiving good care, as well as respecting your privacy, health care decisions, and personal choices. There are also sections on safety and security, personal freedoms, and advocacy (speaking up for yourself, or others speaking on your behalf).

Even the best run facilities can experience problems from time to time. So, the booklet also has a section on how you can effectively deal with any problems if they happen.

Throughout this booklet there are many stories about how others have dealt with their situations. You may get some ideas from these examples.

This booklet does not identify all your rights. You have many others. It simply outlines some of the common ones that people may think about or are not sure about.

At the end of this booklet you can find resources to help you learn more.

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# Introduction

When people move into a care facility, sometimes they feel as if they have left all their rights at the front door. You should never feel this way. You still have all your rights.

You are sharing a home with other residents and with staff. That means there may be new ways of doing things and you may have some new responsibilities too.

Some rights, such as your rights to being physically and emotionally safe, are extremely important to all residents and they are protected by law. Other important rights, such as your rights to privacy and making personal choices, are also protected.

These rights reflect the responsibility of the administration and staff of care facilities to respect and honor you as an adult. You have control over your life. The staff and others at the facility are there to help you live as well as possible.

Whether you live in the community or a care facility, never forget:

- You are an adult and should be treated as such.
- You are an individual worthy of respect.

You have the right to be presumed capable of making your own decisions, and having control over your life.

Your rights come from several sources:

- The fact that you are an adult,
- Municipal, provincial and federal laws and regulations,
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which sets out limits on the ways that government and agencies funded by government can treat people,
- Your contract with the people who run the facility, plus
- Any contracts that the operators of the facility may have signed with government.



## Introduction

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People providing these services in care facilities also have responsibilities to you. The sources of these responsibilities come from:

- Their contractual responsibilities,
- Professional ethics for nurses and doctors,
- The curriculum guide for care aide education,
- Standards for nursing practice and good medical practice, as well as,
- Any licensing and accreditation standards for facilities.

Some of your rights may be written in the Mission Statement of a facility. However, those are not your only rights.

Many of your rights are written into special laws and regulations. We have identified these with this symbol (\*). As legal rights and responsibilities, they are not merely guidelines or suggestions for the facility and its staff. They are what the facility and its staff must do in order to give good care, obey the law and to fulfill their responsibilities.

It can be helpful to remember three things:

- A care facility and its staff are there to help you.
- You keep your rights when you move into a facility.
- All operators of facilities must obey the law in the way that they treat people in care. They cannot do things that are against the law.

A facility and its staff cannot take away or get you to sign away your rights.

If a facility and its staff are not living up to their care obligations, you have a right to complain. The care facility must have a way to deal with people's concerns fairly and responsively.

The Ministry of Health Services, Community Care Branch must ensure that all care facilities are living up to their obligations. See the back of this booklet for more information on complaints.



# 1. Dignity and Respect

All residents in a care facility should be treated as adults and as unique and capable individuals.

Sometimes, people inadvertently treat older adults as if they are children. When they do this, they unthinkingly take away some very important rights.

## **A. You have the right to be treated as an adult.**

As an adult, you have the right to have your own ideas and preferences. You have the right to have your personal choices, your health care choices, and all other choices listened to and respected.

People living in a care facility should never be patronized or treated as if they do not have the ability to think for themselves.

## **B. You have the right to be treated with respect.**

As a resident in a care facility, and as an adult, you have the right to be treated in a courteous and respectful way. Staff and other people show respect by:

- how they speak to you, your family and friends,
- how they speak about you,
- how they act towards you and others that you have chosen to help.

For example, Hannah let the staff know she prefers to be called by her middle name, not her first name; Mr. Henry is more formal and likes to be called by his last name.



You should never feel that you are being ignored or treated like a child. The staff has a responsibility to include you in all decisions about what you need physically and mentally for your own sense of well-being. For example where Margreta lives, the staff makes sure they include her in discussions that they have with family about her care.

### **C. You have the right to be treated as an adult capable of making your own decisions and choices.**

Part of being an adult is making every day decisions and having choices about the things that are important to you. This also means that staff and other people should respect your choices. No one should force you to make choices that they think are best for you. People should not try to persuade you to do something, or push you to make decisions because it will be easier, or more convenient for them.

#### ***Archie's Story***

Archie likes to watch soccer games. Sometimes the international games go on late into the evening when other residents are in bed.

Although only a few residents stay up late at the facility, the staff made some adjustments so that Archie could watch the games without disturbing other people. This is one way of showing respect for Archie and a way of ensuring that he can do things that are important to him.

Staff did not treat watching television late as a privilege.

## 2. Personal Choices

People often find that there are a lot fewer daily decisions to make when they move into a care facility. Many of the things that you once took care of by yourself at home no longer need to be done. For example, you no longer need to make decisions around grocery shopping or cleaning the house.



That is one of the reasons why the remaining decisions and choices that you have can often be very important. Things that other people might not see as important may become very important to you.

The staff and administration in a good facility will help make sure you have choices. They will also make sure that you have the time you need to make choices and decisions. The choices that you are able to make may depend on things such as:

- your health and your current abilities,
- other residents in the facility and their needs.

When you are making choices and decisions, it can be helpful to ask yourself:

- What would I like to do? Do I need someone to help me accomplish this?

Also consider:

- Are my wishes going to affect other residents and their rights?
- Are there risks to the personal choices that I would like to make?
- Am I willing to accept the consequences of taking those risks?

### **A. You have the right to make choices.**

When you live in a care facility, you have the right to make personal decisions about your life and your body. You will have your own ideas about how your day will be organized (for example, whether or not you eat breakfast, what foods you eat, whether you participate in an activity).

## Personal Choices

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You may have preferences about how to wear your hair and clothes. The staff should make sure that they give you time to make your own choices. They should respect your decisions.

### *John and Martha's Story*

John and Martha are brother and sister. They are both in their 80's, but they are very different. John likes to get up at 7; Martha likes to get up at 9. John likes to eat a big breakfast soon after getting up; Martha prefers to simply have a little toast and coffee. Staff knows and respects their differences by providing flexible meal hours.

### *Cora's Story*

Cora had a stroke and she is not able to speak very easily. She has difficulty letting staff know how she what she likes or how she wants to look. Staff listens carefully when Cora tries to talk so they can find out her choices. Cora's daughter brought photos into the care facility so staff could see how Cora likes to wear her clothes and do her hair.

Every care facility will have some "rules" that people must follow in order to provide good, safe care for everyone. However, rules should always be fair and should not prevent you from making decisions that are important to you as an individual.

## **B. You have the right to make choices about your personal space.**

The care facility is your newest home. A care facility is often a person's last home. It is a place where you should be able to express your style, and continue to have things that are and have been important to you throughout your life.

You have the right to have things around you that make your feel "at home" in your room, including your own furniture and personal belongings.\*

These personal items may include things like a favorite chair, a lamp, TV, radio, quilt or books. You may also want photos and special things that remind you of the people or things that you love. You can get help from the staff to hang your favourite photos and arrange your plants. Staff can be helpful in suggesting how to arrange your room so that things are useful to you, but won't get in the way when staff are cleaning or helping with your care.

### **C. You have the right to do the things that you enjoy.**

Some people may think that moving to a care facility means giving up doing the things that they enjoy. This doesn't have to happen. The care facility is your new home, and you still have the right to do things that give you joy and comfort.

You may like to:

- go outside the facility to do things with others,
- go to music events, political activities, or on sightseeing trips,
- visit with your friends and family.

You can continue to do all these things.

If you prefer to watch television, listen to music or read, you still have the right to do that when you want. Obviously if you have a roommate, you will need to respect their need for privacy and not disturb them. You have the right to do whatever is important and meaningful to you.

Part of respecting personal choice means that the facility and its staff have a responsibility to all the residents. They must:

- provide programs that are enjoyable and meaningful to the people living there,
- give people a choice in what those programs are, and
- give people the assistance that they need to attend and participate.\*

Residents should be asked what activities they would like to see take place in their facility.

Every resident has the right to participate in the activities and programs. There should not be any favoritism on who gets to go and who does not get to go to activities organized by the facility.

### ***Lui's Story***

At the care facility where Lui lives, there are many different activities, such as music programs and days when a volunteer brings a special dog to visit the residents. Lui enjoys the music and find it relaxing; but Lui's roommate thinks the music is noisy, so he prefers to stay away from this activity.

Lui's roommate has always liked pets, but Lui is afraid of dogs. The staff realizes that residents have different preferences. Staff asks each resident what they like. Staff does not try to force activities on residents, but may check another time to see if they are interested.

### **D. You have the right to be with people that you enjoy.**

When you live in a care facility, you can have friends and family visit you, if you would like. You should be able to visit privately with people in your own room. There should be a lounge, dining room or other area for people to visit privately.\*

Generally, you have the right to have visitors at any time.\* Any care facility rules around visitors need to be reasonable. The rules should be there to respect the rights of other residents and not just for the convenience of staff.

If you are ill, you can have visitors at any time, as long as your illness does not affect their health.

You also have the right to:

- choose who you want to have as friends without fear or criticism,
- visit privately with your spouse or partner, whether or not they are the same sex as you,
- spend time alone with your spouse or partner.

The facility should have a private place for you to be together.

A facility should try wherever possible to arrange for a couple to live together in the facility, if that is what the couple would like.

Relationships, including sexual relationships, are a normal part of life at any age. Sometimes people may tease or make jokes about intimate or sexual relationships between older adults. They should not do that.

As long as you and your partner both want to have a relationship, others should respect your rights.

### **E. You have the right to decide if you want help.**

Many people like to do things for themselves, for as long as possible. There are some things that you may like to do on your own. For example:

- getting dressed,
- eating your meals,
- getting to the toilet,
- going for a walk, or
- tidying your room.



At other times, you may want help. You have the right to decide whether you want a little help, a lot of help, or none at all. You also have the right to change your mind.

Sometimes, family, staff, volunteers, or other people may try to “take over” and do things for you that you would prefer to do yourself. Sometimes they mean well and want to help you. Other times, they simply want to get their work done faster. Whatever the reason, people should always give you the choice of whether you want their help or not.

For example, you can decide how to handle your own money. You may decide to:

- handle it yourself, or
- give this responsibility to someone who you trust.

You may want to give someone you trust a power of attorney so they can take care of things like paying bills. You may choose them as your representative, or you may decide to open a joint bank account with them.

Whatever you decide, you can also change your mind if you don’t like the arrangement (as long as you are capable of making this decision).

If the administration of the facility or someone else is taking care of your money for you, you have the right to ask how much you have. You also have the right to a written statement of how your money was spent.\*



## 3. Good Care

When people move into a care facility, it is usually because they are having difficulty doing some things by themselves and need help.

When you move into a facility, you expect the staff to help you. You are paying each month for the care and services you receive. You have the right to receive good care from the staff.

People should not make you feel grateful for providing your care and accommodation. Providing good care is their job.



### A. You have the right to receive good care.

The people involved in your care have a legal obligation to provide safe, skilful and ethical care. This means that you have the right to expect care that is provided in a way that treats you as an adult and responds to your needs.

Good care means many things. The facility's administration have a responsibility to make sure that their staff are properly trained to understand and help you with your particular conditions.\* The administrator must also ensure that there is enough staff to help all of the residents.\*

Well-trained staff will:

- watch for changes in your health, report the changes to the appropriate person and find the best kind of help for you,
- know how to talk with you and help you even if you are confused,
- respond not only to your physical needs, like bathing, but also to your emotional, social and spiritual needs, and
- understand the different ways that people act when they are in pain or experiencing confusion, and help them.

### ***Mrs. Papago's Story***

Sometimes Mrs. Papago gets confused and occasionally will walk into someone else's room. In her old facility, staff and other residents became annoyed with her when this happened. That frightened her.

At the new facility, the staff helps her when she gets confused. Recently, they placed a special wreath on her bedroom door made up of dried flowers that remind her of the old country, so Mrs. Papago can find her own room more easily. This is part of good care.

Good care happens when the staff meets your individual needs. They can do that by:

- helping you stay as active and healthy as possible,
- helping with your physical appearance,\*
- making sure you have enough, good food to eat,\*
- helping you to make appointments and get to the appointments.\*

Staff also meets your individual needs by taking the time to get to know you. They do this by introducing themselves to you and by explaining things to you. When staff takes time to listen to you, and gets to know what you like and don't like, they can provide the kind of care best suited to you.

### **B. You have the right to have your care needs identified, understood and taken care of.**

#### **You have the right to have your abilities recognized.**

When you first move into a care facility, the staff should meet with you, and your family if you like. Together, you will discuss things that the staff will need to do to make sure that you receive good care. The facility must make and use a "personalized care plan" for you.\* A care plan helps staff understand your needs and helps them plan how to meet those needs.

## Good Care

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A care plan is also a written record that tells the staff the things that are important to you and what things you may need help with. Care plans should include information about:

- your health,
- the things you can do for yourself,
- the things you may need to have help with,
- the type of diet that you need and what foods you like to eat,
- proper care of your teeth and/or dentures,
- things you like to do for recreation and pleasure, and
- how your social, cultural and spiritual needs can be met.

People's health and their personal situations can change. Care plans should be up-dated as your care needs change. This way, the plan will always accurately let people how to best take care of your particular needs. This is good care.

Another important part of good assessment and proper care is making sure that you are not in pain. The staff should always be watching for signs that may tell them that you are in pain or otherwise need attention.

### ***Mr. Green's Story***

Mr. Green has severe arthritis. Because he also has Alzheimer disease, he cannot tell the staff very easily if he is in pain. The staff knows this.

Each day they watch for changes in Mr. Green's behaviour that might be a sign that he is having pain. They have learned how to move him carefully to avoid pain. They use a variety of techniques to help reduce the pain and keep him comfortable (for example, he receives regular physiotherapy). They also give him medication to relieve his pain and adjust it when needed.

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## **C. You have the right to feel secure about continuing to receive care.**

Often people worry that they may be asked to leave a facility or move to a different part of the facility for some reason. You have the right to stay where you are. You should not be transferred to another facility unless you agree to the change.\*

You can stay in your chosen care facility as long as you wish, unless:

- you no longer need care,
- you need emergency care,
- the facility is closing, or
- your safety is in danger.

Before being moved to another facility or taken to the hospital, you must be told what will happen and agree to be moved. If you cannot make the decision on your own, your family must be asked for their approval.

Your health care needs may change at some time. If this happens, you may need to move to a different part of the facility or a different facility that can better meet your needs. This move should be planned well in advance.

Facilities that receive government funding have a person called a “community care facility liaison.” The liaison can

- help the staff re-assess your needs to see if these have changed,
- see if you need more care or perhaps a different type of care, or
- determine if it would be helpful for you to see a specialist.

The liaison can also help you determine if you need to go to a hospital.

## 4. Health Care Decisions

Making decisions about health care is like a partnership. You know your body, and the things that are important to you physically, emotionally, spiritually and culturally. The doctors and staff know about the types of medical care that you may need. Working together, you, your doctor and the staff can plan ways for you to get the kind of care that you would like.



### **A. You have the right to make your own health care decisions.**

You have the right to direct and control your own body and the care that people give to you. This means that you have the right to decide what is best for you.

There are many types of health care decisions that you can make. For example, you may need to decide about whether to:

- take part in exercise therapy,
- take a certain kind of medication, or any medication,
- follow suggested parts of a care plan (for example, to stop smoking),
- have a certain kind of surgery.

It is important that you have all of the information that you need and want in order to make good health care decisions. When the doctors and the staff discuss and plan any of your care, you have a right to be part of the discussion and the decisionmaking. You can also have family or friends to help you with these decisions.

### ***Mrs. Hanson's Story***

Mrs. Hanson is 87 years old and she is mildly diabetic. Recently a new doctor decided that Mrs. Hanson should not eat sweets because it might affect her health. The gift shop staff was told not to sell her any candy.

Mrs. Hanson was very upset. She asked her son to help her talk to the nurses and doctor about this. When they discussed their concerns together as a group, it was clear that Mrs. Hanson knew and understood the risks.

Mrs. Hanson pointed out, "We all have to die sometime, no one lives forever." She explained how the sweets were one of "life's last little pleasures" for her. The doctor decided to withdraw the "no candies" order.

## **B. You have the right to know about any care that is planned for you.**

You have the right to know if something is medically wrong with you and what can be done to help you.\* This includes the right to have people explain any treatment to you in a way that you understand.

As an adult, you also have the right to:

- have any information explained directly to you, not just to your family,
- have your own ideas respected, and
- have the time to think about decisions and not be hurried.

### ***Mr. DaVinci's Story***

When Mr. DaVinci moved into the facility, he was very concerned about getting his heart medication at the right time each day. He asked if he could keep his medication in his room and take the pills himself.

It took a few days, but his nurse was able to get approval from Mr. DaVinci's doctor for Mr. DaVinci to keep his pills in his room. Now the nurse makes certain that he has the right amount of pills and Mr. DaVinci makes sure that he keeps them in the locked drawer of his dresser.

By helping make these arrangements, the staff have respected Mr. DaVinci's right to do things for himself and to make his own health care decisions.\*

### **C. You have the right to know about matters that might affect your health.**

If a person in a facility becomes ill, sometimes the illness can affect other residents.

Every resident has the right to have his or her health information private. However, the administration and staff of a facility have a responsibility to

- protect all residents from illness,
- let a resident and the resident's family know if a health problem has occurred in the facility, and
- let them know what steps the facility is taking to handle the problem.

Often staff will help a resident find other ways of keeping in touch with family and friends if visiting is not possible because of illness.



## **D. You have the right to see your records.**

Your medical records contain important information about you. That information belongs to you, not your doctor or the facility. You have the right to see your medical information and have a copy of it, if you want. You also have the right to say that certain other people can see your records.

Do you have someone such as your husband or wife helping you make health care decisions? Is your son, daughter, close friend, or someone else helping you? Perhaps you became very ill and could not tell people what you wanted, and someone became a “temporary decision maker” for you.

If so, it is very important that the people who are helping you with health care decisions have access to your medical records and know what is in your care plan, too.

You have the right to have support in making decisions. You also have the right to share any information you want shared. It is not breaking the confidentiality of your information. You are giving staff permission to share this information.

The information in your medical records should be correct. Mistakes in information sometimes get made and it is very important that your medical information is accurate and complete.

## **E. You have the right to accept or refuse care.**

As long as you are mentally able, you have the right to make your own decisions about your health care.\*

As an adult, you have the right to decide whether or not you will follow the “doctor’s orders”. However, you must understand what you are doing and understand the risks when you make that decision.



Your doctor or other health care provider must explain what will likely happen if you agree to the treatment or drug and what will likely happen if you do not want the treatment or drug suggested. The doctor or other health care provider should also explain other alternatives to you.

Your doctor and the care staff must respect your informed decisions. You have the right to decide for yourself. They should help you to get the care you would like to have. The doctor, nurses or your family should not make you feel that you have to do as they suggest.

You also have the right to make choices about your care, even if you are very ill and may die soon. You may not want to think about what will happen when you are nearing the end of your life. However, many people have found it helpful to talk with someone (such as a family member, a friend, or staff member) about what they would like to happen when they become ill or when their death is expected.

Nurses and doctors cannot follow your wishes if it would mean breaking the law.

### ***Mrs. Sandu's story***

When Mrs. Sandu came to Skyline Care Facility, she was asked to sign a form stating she did not want cardiopulmonary resuscitation. In other words, the form would tell people that she did not wish staff or emergency workers to try to start her heart again if it stopped.

She does not know whether or not she would want that. She talked with her family and the social worker. She learned that she does not have to make this kind of decision in order to get into a care facility.

The care facility administrator respected her decision not to sign the form. Mrs. Sandu was told if she wanted to decide later, she could.

Mrs. Sandu was also told that no matter what decisions she makes about her care, the staff has a duty to make sure that she always feels comfortable and supported.

## **F. You have the right to have someone speak for you.**

You can decide to have someone else make your health care decisions for you and to let others know what your wishes are. This can be important if you become too ill to make decisions, or if you are unable to make decisions for yourself.

In British Columbia, the law allows you to appoint someone you trust, to help you make decisions or to make decisions for you. You can make this appointment with a legal document called a Representation Agreement.\*

In a Representation Agreement you can:

- state what you would like to have happen if you could not make decisions about your future for yourself, or
- choose someone to make decisions for you, based on what you would want.

You can get more information about how to make someone your Representative, from a booklet called “It’s Your Choice: A Guide to Making a Representative Agreement”. To obtain a copy of this booklet, contact the office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of B.C.

**The address is at the back of this booklet.**

### ***What if I don’t have a Representation Agreement?\****

If you decide not to choose a representative and are not able to let people know what you want, the law says the health care provider must ask someone close to you, what you would want.

The law tells the doctors and staff who they should ask first. This will be someone close to you. The doctors and staff cannot simply ask someone else who they think will agree with what they want.

The person who is given the responsibility of making the decision when you are not capable must get along with you. Plus, the person must have had contact with you in the past year. This helps to make sure that the person will likely know your current wishes so that these can be respected.

## 5. Privacy

Privacy is a very important right for most people, especially for people living in a care facility. You may find that there are a lot of other people around, and that your personal space is limited. Sometimes, it can feel as if the only personal space that you have is your bedside table. No wonder, privacy is highly valued.



There are several different types of privacy in a care facility. You have the right to expect that each of these will be respected.

### **A. You have the right to personal privacy.\***

There are many ways that your personal privacy can be respected. For example, your room is your own personal space. To properly respect your privacy, staff should knock before entering your room, and wait for you to answer.

Staff also show that they respect your personal privacy by:

- asking permission before they clean your room or anything else that belongs to you,
- being careful when they need to move anything that is yours,
- asking permission before touching your personal belongings, and
- not using your possessions (e.g. wheelchair or walker) for someone else without your permission.

Searching a person's room without their permission also violates their right to privacy.

Unless there are obvious health and safety concerns, you should be able to lock your bedroom door from the inside to ensure your privacy.\*

The staff must make sure that you have privacy when you are:

- talking on the phone,
- sending or receiving mail, or
- visiting with other people.\*

In a facility, you need to respect other residents' privacy too, by:

- knocking and waiting for an answer before entering another person's room,
- asking permission to use or share someone else's belongings,
- checking to see if you can use their chair or other personal belongings before you do so, (this is important, if you share a room with someone else)
- making sure that your radio or television is not too loud, and
- making sure that your family or friends do not disturb others.

## **B. You have the right to privacy in care and grooming**

You have a right to privacy when any care is being given.\* Staff should always make sure that the curtains are drawn or the door is closed when:

- you are washing, brushing your teeth and dressing,
- you are using the washroom, or when
- they are providing treatments or helping you.

Staff should not provide personal care to you in areas where other people may be present — for example, in the dining room or in the lounge.

### ***Leo's Story***

The Director of Care was surprised to see a staff member putting Leo's dentures into his mouth in the dining room. After lunch, she politely asked the staff member to take Leo back to his room to do that.

At the next staff meeting, the nurse reminded all the staff of the importance of privacy for the residents and that personal care should be done in private. She also asked them to make privacy a priority for all residents.

## **C. You have the right to privacy of your personal and medical information**

You have the right to have your personal and medical information kept private.\* People give out their personal, financial and medical information to the staff at a facility with the understanding it will only be used for certain purposes.

Only your doctor, specific staff at the facility, and people you have chosen should be able to see the information on your medical record.

To respect this right, the staff should:

- keep your personal and medical records in a safe place where only the people who are looking after you can see the records, and
- make sure that any information about you or your care is not discussed where other people can hear.

You can help respect other residents' privacy too. You can do that by not talking about their personal information with other people in the facility.

You also have the right to say it is okay for certain people you trust to receive information about you. You can say whether or not they can see your personal or medical information. You can also say that they can see some information and not other information.

### ***Alma's Story***

Alma has a very good friend, Esther. They've known each other for many years. Esther helped Alma when she was living in her own apartment. She used to make sure Alma was taking her medications regularly. Esther continues to visit Alma now that she has moved into a facility.

Esther would like to know about Alma's health. The staff was not sure about whether they should tell anything to Esther. So, they asked Alma. Alma said it was fine.

However, she said "Please don't tell Esther that I am dying. That would scare her too much." The staff respects Alma's wishes to share information, and to keep some things private.

## 6. Safety and Security

It is important that you feel safe and secure living in your care facility. The people who run the facility have special responsibilities to you, other residents, and the staff to keep things safe.

Safety can mean many different things to people. For example, it can mean:

- feeling safe in your surroundings,
- feeling that you are in control and that your world is manageable,
- knowing your personal safety is protected, and
- knowing someone is there to help if you need it.



Helping people stay safe is very important in a facility. However, safety concerns should not be used as an explanation for everything, or as a way of controlling people's lives.

### **A. You have the right to a safe environment.**

There are a number of ways that a facility can be made to feel reasonably safe for residents. These include having:

- enough space for you to move around easily, even if you use a wheelchair or walker,
- grab bars and rails in the bathrooms and rails in hallways.

There should be good lighting so that you don't fall or have an accident. The building and the equipment should also be in good repair.\*

### **B. You have the right to expect a reasonable response to your needs.**

You should be able to signal for help from staff when you need.\* Every facility must have a way for you to call or ring for help. And the staff should respond to your call in a reasonable amount of time.



## **C. You have the right to be free of any restraints.**

Sometimes, the staff of care facilities may want to use lap belts, bedrails, etc. as a way to try to keep some of the residents safe. These are all restraints. As a resident in a care facility, you have the right to be free of restraints and to move freely.

Sometimes people fall and can hurt themselves. You have the right to take chances that you may fall if you walk alone or do other things on your own. As long as you know and understand the risks associated with your decision, you can decide whether you want this kind of protection or not.

### ***What is a restraint?***

A restraint is anything that limits your movement. Restraints are usually designed to prevent falls or injury but they also limit your ability to move. Restraints can include;

- a lap belt in your wheelchair, a tabletop attached to a wheelchair, or a chair that prevents you from getting up,
- bed rails that stop you from falling out of bed,
- locked areas that prevent you from visiting others, or
- locked areas that keep others away from you,
- any medication or drug (that is given to keep you quiet or change your behaviour),
- electronic devices that identify if you are leaving the building.

Restraints can also include removing something that allows a person to get around freely. For example, taking away the person's wheelchair is a type of restraint. This use of a restraint is not proper.

Sometimes, staff or family members may want to use a particular type of restraint because they are frustrated with a resident or do not know how to handle the situation differently. That is not an appropriate reason for using restraints.

Although people may want to use restraints as a protection for residents, physical or medication restraints often cause unintended harms. For example:

- a person's muscles may weaken,
- a person can become confused, or
- a person may get hurt trying to get out of the restraint.

### ***When Can Restraints be Used?***

Physical and medication restraints can be used for your safety or other people's safety. However, restraints should only be used as a "last resort". That means restraints can only be used after the staff has tried other less intrusive ways of handling the situation. The staff may use physical or medication restraints only if the other ways were tried several times and did not work for you.

#### ***Mrs. Chang's Story***

Mrs. Chang is almost 100 years old and proud of it. She walks slowly with her walker, but is a little bit unsteady on her feet. Some of her family suggested to the staff that she should be in a wheelchair, with a belt to strap her in. They want to "keep our mother safe".

Staff knows that Mrs. Chang's muscles will likely become weaker if she starts using a wheelchair. When the staff and the family talked over different ideas with Mrs. Chang, they came up with a plan. Mrs. Chang agreed to have someone walk with her, whenever she gets up.

Mrs. Chang is happy that she does not have to use a wheelchair. She is willing to ask the staff to walk with her. The family feels that this new plan will help their mom stay independent and keep her safe.

It is important that people do not just focus on a resident's behaviour. If they try to understand the reasons why a resident is behaving in that way, restraints might not be necessary. Use of restraints should rarely, if ever, happen. This is part of good care.

Before you are restrained in any manner, staff has the responsibility to:

- first try other ways to handle the problem – for example, if you were feeling very upset, they might help you have a warm bath or use another method to help you relax, rather than using medication that might leave you confused,\*
- talk with family members to help decide whether you may need a particular type of restraint,
- let you know and your family know why a restraint is being used, and
- let you know about the risks that may occur if you decide against that particular type of restraint.

Restraints cannot be used for the convenience of the staff.\* Restraints should never be used to “punish” anyone.\* And they should not be used as a substitute for not having enough staff or not having good therapy services.

If a restraint is used, it should be done in a way that restricts or limits you in the least possible way.\* Any use of restraints must be documented and regularly monitored.

### **D. You have the right to be free from physical, emotional or mental harm.**

The administrators of your care facility must ensure that you are safe, and are not being abused or harmed by the staff or other people.\* The staff must have proper training to understand what you need and how to communicate with you, so that you are treated with respect and dignity. Everyone must be protected from abuse and neglect.



There are several different types of abuse that may occur in some facilities. The following are all forms of abuse, and they are wrong. If something happens by accident, it is not abuse or neglect.

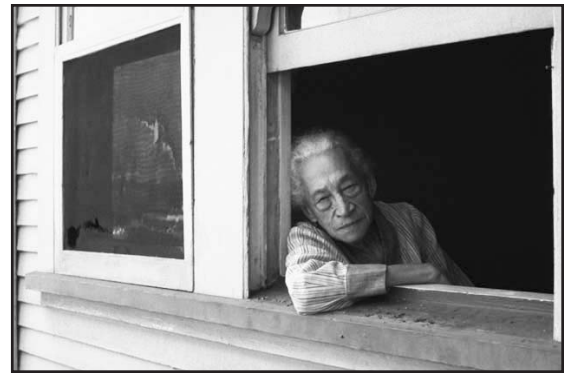
Neglect means that you are not getting the care and assistance that you need. This lack of care can result in serious emotional, physical or financial harm.

**Physical abuse** means the use of physical force or rough treatment that injures or physically harms you. Staff or anyone in the facility should never:

- push, shake or handle you roughly,
- slap, pinch, punch or squeeze you,
- pull your hair or bite you,
- throw things at you or throw you on a bed or chair,
- restrain or hold you down, in any way (other than for your protection), or
- force you to eat or drink, or take any food or medication you do not want.

**Psychological or emotional abuse** means any words or actions that make you feel put down, sad about yourself, or treated less of a person. It may include:

- jokes that hurt your feelings,
- insulting or humiliating you in some way,
- shouting at you or calling you names,
- ignoring you,
- threatening violence or retaliation, or
- keeping you away from other people to punish you.



Almost anything that does not treat you as an adult can be a type of psychological or emotional abuse. That includes people:

- treating you like a child,
- calling you “dear” or “sweetie”, or not using the name that you prefer,
- talking to others in your presence and acting as if you weren’t there,
- not telling you the truth,
- not taking your emotional, physical, social or sexual needs seriously.

**Sexual abuse** means any unwanted sexual behaviour that is directed towards you without your consent or knowledge. It also includes:

- making sexual jokes about you or calling you names, or
- touching you in ways that make you feel uncomfortable.

**Financial abuse** means that someone is misusing your money, property, or your valuables. Even if you are in a care facility, your money and your possessions still belong to you. Financial abuse includes when people did not ask your permission to use your money, property, or valuables. It also includes when people had your permission, but did not tell you the truth.

### **Reporting**

No one should be expected to live with abuse. It is easy for you feel scared if abuse is happening to you or to someone else in the facility. It is important to have it stop.

**If a resident in the facility is being abused and is in immediate danger**, let the staff know right away. Staff will help the person get away from the abusive situation and make sure the abuse does not happen again.

If you suspect abuse of some kind has happened, further investigation is necessary. This should be done by the health care professionals of the facility and other authorities such as the community care liaison and the licensing officer.

**If you are being abused**, it is important that you tell someone. At the back of this booklet, there are number of suggestions for ways to deal with problems. The staff and administration are not allowed to treat you poorly if you make a report about being abused or neglected. They cannot refuse to give you good care because you have expressed concerns.\*

The people who are responsible for the facility must also let your contact person know if something serious has happened to you.\* For example, your family member or friend must be notified if someone became aggressive and harmed you. It is the responsibility of the staff to report serious incidents to the medical health officer, as well.

Some forms of abuse in care facilities are crimes. The care facility staff must report all crimes to the police.

## 7. Freedoms

When you live in a care facility, you still keep all of your rights as a citizen of Canada.

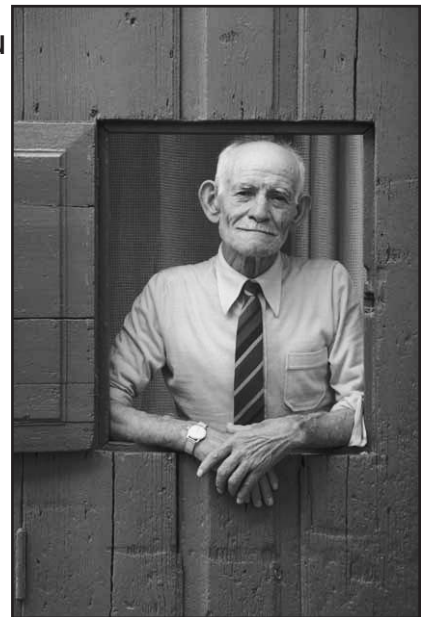
### A. You have all of the rights and freedoms of a citizen of Canada

Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, you have several basic freedoms. These include freedom of:

- religion,
- thought, belief, opinion and expression and
- peaceful assembly, and association.

The Health Authority has a responsibility to see your rights are protected.

Even though you live in a care facility, you have the right to participate in elections and to vote, as long as you are capable. You also can be a member of the political party or other group of your choice.



### B. You have the right to be free from discrimination

You should never be discriminated against when you live in a care facility.

**What is discrimination?** It is when people are treated differently than other people for an irrelevant or inappropriate reason. Sometimes people intentionally act in a way that is discriminatory. Sometimes they unintentionally discriminate. Sometimes rules that apply to everyone in a facility can be discriminatory, if they treat people differently than they would expect to be treated in the community. These are all types of discrimination and should not happen.

Under human rights law in British Columbia, care facilities have a responsibility to reasonably accommodate residents who have mental or physical disabilities. They have a responsibility to try to meet your care needs as long as it does not cause the facility “undue hardship”.

There are several types of discrimination you are protected from:

***You should not be treated differently because you have a particular physical or mental disability.***

You should not be discriminated against or penalized because you have a disability, a particular health condition, or special condition (such as a mental health problem or an alcohol problem).

Facility staff wants to make sure they can meet your needs if you have a disability, health condition or special condition. Often, the facility can ensure that your needs are met by training the staff in the facility about the condition or by bringing in other skilled people to the facility.

***You should not be treated differently because of your race, colour, ancestry, place of birth or religion.***

The people who live in your care facility may come from a variety of backgrounds. No matter what your **race, colour, ancestry, place of birth or religion** is, you have the right to:

- receive the same quality of care as other residents,
- keep your religious beliefs and go to your own religious ceremonies,
- observe practices that are part of your heritage,
- speak in the language that you choose, and
- have foods that are appropriate to your culture and beliefs.

**Discrimination does not mean treating everyone exactly the same.**

Treating people exactly the same and not recognizing that they have different abilities or situations can also be discriminatory.



### ***Mr. Khanna's Story***

Mr. Khanna is a vegetarian. His family brings him special food because he is not used to Western food. At first the Director was uncertain about the family's generosity because she was concerned other residents might feel left out. However, from talking with Mr. Khanna and his family, she knows this food and the family sharing is important in Mr. Khanna's culture. It has a positive influence on his physical and spiritual health. It also helps him remain connected with his family.

You should not be discriminated against because of your **marital status, family status, gender or sexual orientation.**

Whether you are married or single, a man or a woman, or whether you have a particular sexual orientation, your needs should be accommodated within the care facility.

### ***Tess and Jane***

Tess and Jane have lived together since they were young women. Their relationship is much like any couple's. The staff makes sure that they have the same opportunities to be together as Mr. and Mrs. Jones would.

**You should not be treated differently because of how old or how young you are.**

The staff has a responsibility to make sure that the needs of all residents are met. They should not withhold assistance of any kind because they think a person is "too young" or "too old". This can be a type of discrimination.

You have a right to live free of discrimination. At the same time, freedom from discrimination gives everyone responsibilities too. For example, it means respecting the fact that staff and other residents come from many different cultures and religions and being courteous to them.

## 8. Speaking Up

Everyone has the right to speak up about things that are not fair or just. By speaking up about problems or concerns, in a positive way, you may help to make changes that are good for all people living and working in a care facility.

**A. You have a right to have any concerns or problems dealt with fairly and quickly.**



Part of your rights include being able to speak out about problems or concerns. In the care facility, this means that you have the right to:

- speak freely,
- suggest changes to the rules or services in the facility,
- raise your concerns to staff, and
- have your concerns or complaints answered fairly, promptly and effectively.\*

Speaking out may prevent a situation from getting worse. A good care facility will make sure people do not feel afraid to raise concerns. A good facility will also actively support people to make positive changes.

**Speaking freely does not mean speaking to others in a disrespectful way.**

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**B. You have the right to speak out about concerns or problems in the facility without fear of punishment.\***

Many people worry about speaking out. They fear that the staff might retaliate or punish the resident in some way. They worry the staff might not give good care. The law says that staff and administration must not do this.\*

You also have the right to go to government officials or others inside or outside the facility if the staff and administration are not adequately dealing with a problem or concern.

***If a Problem Happens, What Can I Do?***

It is often difficult to know what to do if you have a problem or not receiving proper care. Fortunately, there are things that you can do.

Many times, your problems can be solved by talking with the staff or person involved. Sometimes people may not understand right away how important something may be for you. It is important for you to let others know when something is wrong or bothering you.

No matter how small the problem seems, it is always a good idea to tell someone before it becomes a big problem.

***How Others Can Help You***

If you have a concern or feel mistreated, you also have the right to speak with people who can support and help you, especially if you do not feel comfortable talking to the staff on your own.

A family member or friend can help. The staff also has a responsibility to help and to support you if you have a problem. They also must help you, if they see that you have not been treated properly.\*

Discussing the problem with others often helps to find answers.

### ***Suggestions for Solving Problems***

These suggestions can be helpful whether you are dealing with the problem on your own or if you have family, friends or staff helping you.

#### ***Identify the Problem***

Be very clear about what is wrong. Be very clear about what you think will solve the matter. It is also helpful to write the facts and dates down.

#### ***Talk***

Try to politely discuss the problem with the people involved first. Most disagreements are best settled by friendly conversation and compromise.

If talking to the person does not work, every care facility must have a written policy on how you can make a complaint or voice a concern. The policy must have a process for solving complaints. Try using this.

#### ***Go Up the Ladder***

If talking to the person involved does not solve the matter, bring it to the attention of the person that they report to. You usually do this by making an appointment with the person in charge. The person that they report to may be:

- the head nurse or nurse in charge,
- the Director of Care, or
- the Administrator.

People will need to know:

- What is the problem?
- When and where did it happen?
- Who was involved? (including any witnesses)

It also can be helpful for people to know whether this problem ever happened before.

#### ***Write It Down***

A respectful, well written letter written by you or a helper can also be a very useful way of getting things done. If the letter does not work, and you decide to go to other resources, people may ask to see written proof of your requests.

#### ***Go to Someone Outside the Facility***

Sometimes, you may have to take your complaints or concerns to a higher level or beyond the facility, if the staff and administration do not seem able to resolve them. You can find several resources listed at the back of this booklet.

The staff and administration of a care facility have a responsibility to make decisions and respond to your concerns in a reasonable time.

### **Are There Any Limits on My Rights?**

As a resident, your rights should be respected, but there can be limits to those rights. There are other residents living in the care facility and their rights need to be considered. The facility administration has responsibilities to their staff as well. A facility should try to both meet your rights as well as meet the other residents' and staff's needs. This should not be a situation where one person "loses" and one person "wins." When different people's rights are involved, they can still find solutions that are good for everyone.

### **Are There Ways to Prevent Problems?**

Preventing small problems from becoming big problems is always a good idea. All care facilities must have a way in which residents and family members can meet to discuss concerns that may affect residents.

Some facilities arrange for a Residents' or Family Council to do this. If you discuss problems or concerns about the facility at the Resident/Family Council, you may find that others have experienced similar problems. As a group, you may come up with ways to solve problems and make changes that are helpful to all residents.

## 9. Resources and Contacts

Below, are some general tips for contacting the right person if you have a concern about **a long term care facility**. Finding the right resource to help you is not always easy. You may need to be patient and a bit of a detective to find the contact you need. Several government resources are listed here. The community resources listed can be very valuable too.



### Government Resources

To find a particular government department in your region or another region, contact **Enquiries BC** at 604-660-2421. Dial 1-800-663-7867 if you are calling outside of Greater Vancouver.

The **Health Authority** in your area can assist you in contacting the provincial program or service that you need. Under the Community Care Facilities Act, the Medical Officer of Health is responsible for ensuring that care facilities meet the adult care regulations. This includes things such as:

- the regulation of residents' care,
- the regulation of staff,
- the safety of the care facility, and
- the investigation of complaints.

### Where to Start

If you have a concern about care in a facility that has not been adequately handled by the facility's staff and administration, you may want to contact the **Community Care Liaison Officer** for that facility.

Look in the Blue Pages of the telephone book under Health Authority. The numbers can usually be found under the heading "Health Unit".

Every regional Health Authority has community care liaison officers who are responsible for dealing with concerns in government funded or subsidized long term care facilities. The liaison officer may help you resolve problems related to quality of care issues (for example, if a resident is not getting the medications that he or she needs), as well as health and safety matters.

**For reports of suspected abuse:** Contact the Health Authority in your area and ask for the **Chief Licensing Officer**. The care facility Licensing Officer for the Health Authority must respond to all complaints alleging that a licensed facility has breached its health or safety obligations. All long term care facilities in British Columbia caring for three or more people must be licensed.

Care facilities have a responsibility to report crimes to the police. You can also report a crime to the police.

Both the **Community Care Facility Liaison Officer** and the **Licensing Officer** are responsible for looking into abuse or neglect reports in care facilities.

### Who Do I Call?

Addresses and phone numbers for each of the health authorities are given below. Also check your Blue Pages.

Health Authorities may use slightly different names for the same type of department or contact person. Also, local and provincial government departments sometimes move or change their name. Some regions use the phrase “community care facility” and others will use the phrase “long term care”.

#### **Fraser Health Authority**

300–10233 153rd Street,  
Surrey, BC V3R 0Z7  
Phone: 604-587-4600  
Fax: 604-587-4666  
Website: [www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

**Community Care Facility Liaison Officer:** Contact “Home Health” (Long Term Care), which can be found under the Health Authority heading in the Blue Pages of the telephone book.

**Licensing Officer:** Fraser Health Authority is divided into three areas (Fraser North, Fraser East, and Fraser South). Depending on your community, the Licensing Office may be found under one of these Fraser Health Authority headings:

- “Public Health Protection/Licensing”,
- “Home Health Facilities- Licensing”, or
- Health Unit, [“Environmental Health - CCF Licensing”].

CCF is the abbreviation for Community Care Facility.



### ***Interior Health Authority***

2180 Ethel Street,  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 3A1  
Phone: 250-862-4200 [Corporate Office]  
Fax: 250-862-4201  
Website: [www.interiorhealth.ca/default.htm](http://www.interiorhealth.ca/default.htm)

**Community Care Facility Liaison Officer:** Ask for the “Community Care Program’s facility liaison”.

**Licensing Officer:** The phone number can be found in the Blue Pages under the Interior Health Authority heading “Public Health”. Ask for the “community care facility licensing program”.

### ***Northern Health Authority***

2000 15th Avenue, Prince George, BC V2M 1S2  
Phone: 250-565-2649 [Corporate Office]  
Toll free: 1-866-565-2999.  
Fax: 250-565-2640  
Website: [www.northernhealth.ca](http://www.northernhealth.ca)

**Community Care Facility Liaison Officer:** You can reach the officer for your particular facility, by contacting the Health Unit in your area.

**Licensing Officer:** Ask for “Public Health Protection” to get in touch with the Licensing Officer for a particular facility.

## ***Vancouver Coastal Health Authority***

Suite 200, 520–West 6th Ave.  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4H5  
Phone: 604-875-4252 [Corporate Office]  
Fax: 604-874-5729  
General Inquiries: 604-736-2033  
Toll Free 1-866-884-0888  
TTY: 604-736-6259  
Website: [www.vcn.bc.ca/vrhb/](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/vrhb/)

**Community Care Facility Liaison Officer:** To contact a liaison officer, ask for “Continuing Care-Long Term Care.” The Chief Liaison Officer can be found in the “Priority Access Office of Continuing Care.”

**Licensing Officer:** The Care Facility Licensing office number can be found under the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority heading of “Environmental Health” [Community Care Facility Licensing].

## ***Vancouver Island Health Authority,***

2101 Richmond Avenue,  
Victoria, BC V8R 4R7  
Phone: 250-370-8699 (Administration)  
Fax: 250-370-8750  
Website: [www.vancouverislth.ca](http://www.vancouverislth.ca)

**The General Inquiries line for the Vancouver Island Health Authority is 1-888-533-2273.** They can give you the phone number for the Licensing Officer for long term care facility in your particular area, as well as the phone number for the Community Care Liaison Officer for your facility. Sometimes, you may have to leave a message and they will get back in touch with you.

For example in Victoria, the Licensing Officer can be reached at 250-475-2235.

### ***Provincial Health Services Authority***

#300 – 1195 West Broadway,  
Vancouver BC V6H  
Phone: 604-660-4089  
Website: [www/phsa.ca/default.htm](http://www/phsa.ca/default.htm)

This Health Authority is responsible, for among other things, the BC Centre for Disease Control.

### ***BC Human Rights Tribunal***

BC Human Rights Tribunal deals with human rights complaints that are covered by the Human Rights Code. The Tribunal screens, mediates, and makes legal decisions on human rights complaints. The Tribunal gives people the opportunity to try to resolve the complaint through mediation. If the parties don't resolve the complaint, the Tribunal holds a hearing.

1170 – 605 Robson Street  
Vancouver, B.C.  
V6B 5J3  
Phone: 604-775-2000  
Fax: 604-775-2020  
TTY: 604-775-2021  
Toll Free: 1-888-440-8844  
Website: [www.bchrt.bc.ca/](http://www.bchrt.bc.ca/)

## **BC Ombudsman Office**

BC Ombudsman Office receives inquiries and complaints about practices and services provided by public bodies such as hospitals or a regional health authority. They may investigate complaints to determine if the public body has been fair to the people it serves.

Free telephone access:

1-800-567-3247 (all of BC) 1-800-667-1303 (TTY)

### **Vancouver**

BC Ombudsman Office,  
Suite 200–1111 Melville Street.  
Vancouver, BC V6E 3V6  
Fax: 604-660-1691

### **Victoria**

Third Floor,  
931 Fort Street,  
Victoria, BC V8V 3K3  
Fax: 250-387-0198  
Website: [www.ombud.gov.bc.ca](http://www.ombud.gov.bc.ca)

## **Public Guardian and Trustee**

The Assessment and Investigation Services department takes referrals and reviews allegations of abuse of vulnerable adults in the community to determine if formal authority is required.

You can find more information about Representation Agreements from the care facility where you live or by contacting:

Public Trustee of British Columbia  
700-808 West Hastings Street,  
Vancouver, BC V6C 3L3

Phone: 604-775-0202 (Investigative services)

Phone: 604-660-4444 (Main office)

Fax: 604-660-0374

Email: [mail@trustee.bc.ca](mailto:mail@trustee.bc.ca)

Website: [www.trustee.bc.ca/index.htm](http://www.trustee.bc.ca/index.htm)

## Community Resources

### ***Advocates for Care Reform***

Advocates for Care Reform is a volunteer organization that establishes and supports family councils in long term care facilities.

3348 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V6R 2B2  
Phone: 604-732-7734

Website: [www.vcn.bc.ca/acr](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/acr)

Their phones are handled by an answering system, your call will be returned within 48 hours during the week.

### ***Alzheimer Society of BC***

Alzheimer Society of BC provides support and information to caregivers. Caregivers are family, friends or professionals who provide care and support to people with Alzheimer disease. They run nearly 100 support groups across B.C. They also have Resource Centres in many communities to help you find the appropriate government contact in your community and other resources.

#### ***Provincial Office***

#300–828 West 8th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1E2  
Phone: 604-681-6530  
Toll-free: 1-800-667-3742  
Fax: 604-669-6907  
Email: [info@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:info@alzheimerbc.org)  
Website: [www.alzheimerbc.org/contact.php](http://www.alzheimerbc.org/contact.php)

### ***BC Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors (BCCEAS)***

BC Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors (BCCEAS) has an information and referral service for seniors experiencing abuse or mistreatment. A legal information advocate is available by phone.

#304–5050 Kingsway Street  
Burnaby, BC  
Phone 604-437-1940  
Fax: 604-437-1929  
Email: [ceas@telus.net](mailto:ceas@telus.net)  
Website: [www.bcceas.ca](http://www.bcceas.ca)

### ***BC Coalition of People with Disabilities***

BC Coalition of People with Disabilities provides information and support for people with disabilities. They are particularly involved in raising awareness and advocacy around the issues of restraints.

#204–456 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3  
Phone: 604-875-0188  
Website: [www.bccpd.bc.ca](http://www.bccpd.bc.ca)

### ***BC Human Rights Coalition***

BC Human Rights Coalition provides legal advice and support for people who have experienced discrimination. They also provide technical assistance for people who are filing a human rights complaint.

“Age discrimination” under the Human Rights Code in British Columbia only covers people aged 19 to 64, but a resident in a care facility may still be protected on another basis, such as physical or mental disability.

#### ***Vancouver***

#1202–150 West Hastings Street,  
Vancouver, BC V6B 1L8  
Phone: 604-689-8474  
Toll-Free: 1-877-689-8474  
Fax: 604-689-7511  
Website: [www.human-rights-coalition.bc.ca](http://www.human-rights-coalition.bc.ca)  
Email: [info@bchrcoalition.org](mailto:info@bchrcoalition.org)

**See also:** Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition in Victoria. This Coalition provides advocacy and information.

#### ***Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition***

# 418–620 View Street,  
Victoria, BC V8W 1J8  
Phone: 250-382-3012  
Email: [vihrc@telus.net](mailto:vihrc@telus.net)

### ***Law Students' Legal Advice Program (LSLAP)***

Law Students' Legal Advice Program (LSLAP) offers free legal advice and representation to people in the Greater Vancouver Regional District who cannot afford a lawyer. They are law students at the University of British Columbia and are assisted by accredited members of the bar who provide them with legal advice and guidance for each client.

The Law Centre is a similar service provided by the University of Victoria, Faculty of Law. Both services deal with several types of matters, including human rights.

They do not provide advice over the phone. The University of Victoria program students will visit a person in a hospital or a care facility to obtain instructions from them.

### ***UBC Law Students' Legal Advice Program***

University of British Columbia  
Faculty of Law, Room 158  
1822 East Mall  
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1  
Phone: 604-822-5791  
Fax: 604-822-1661  
Website: [www.lslap.bc.ca/](http://www.lslap.bc.ca/)

### ***The Law Centre***

1221 Broad Street  
Victoria, BC V8W2A4  
Phone: 250-385-1221  
Fax: 250-385-1226  
Email: [reception@thelawcentre.ca](mailto:reception@thelawcentre.ca)  
Website: [www.thelawcentre.ca](http://www.thelawcentre.ca)



## ***People's Law School***

People's Law School provides legal information on a variety of topics. The information is in plain language and available to the people of British Columbia.

You can find the publication "Take Charge- It's Your Life (Make a Representation Agreement)" on the People's Law School Website at: [www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/representation/index.htm](http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/representation/index.htm)

People's Law School,  
150-900 Howe Street,  
Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2M4  
Phone: 604-331-5400  
Fax: 604-331-5401  
Website: [www.publiclegaled.bc.ca](http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca)  
Email: [staff@publiclegaled.bc.ca](mailto:staff@publiclegaled.bc.ca)

## ***Representation Agreement Resource Centre (RARC)***

Representation Agreement Resource Centre (RARC) is a non-profit society that provides information about the legal tools that allow you to make your own plans in the case of injury, accident, or disability: the power of attorney and the representation agreement.

Their website answers questions about both documents (how to make them and where to register them). Booklets and some documents are online.

411 Dunsmuir St.  
Vancouver, BC V6B 1X4  
Phone: 604-408-7414  
Fax: 604-801-5506  
Website: [www.rarc.ca/](http://www.rarc.ca/)

## **Where Do My Rights Come From?**

There are several laws that identify some of your rights as an adult and as a resident. Some of the important laws that state your rights include:

- Community Care and Assisted Living Act
- Adult Guardianship Act, Part 3
- Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act
- Human Rights Code
- Freedom of Information and Privacy Act
- Representation Agreement Act
- Standards for nursing and medical practice in British Columbia





### **Every Resident Has the Right to:**

- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Make personal choices about the way they will lead all aspects of their lives
- Receive good care from qualified staff
- Make their own health care decisions and to receive the support and direction that they need
- Privacy of both their personal life and their medical information
- Live in a safe and secure environment – free from all harms, abuse or neglect
- Live free from discrimination and with all the rights of a Canadian citizen
- Speak up about problems within the facility and to have those problems dealt with quickly and effectively



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