



# REPORT, ARRC B.C. Webinar Nov 22, 2023

“Quality of Life in Long-term Care – the Seniors Advocate’s Perspective”

Isobel Mackenzie, B.C. Seniors Advocate

ARRC’s sixth Quality of Life webinar presentation took place from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. on November 22, 2023. It featured B.C.’s Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie who presented findings from her office’s recently released report on the experiences of residents living in long-term care in 294 publicly subsidized B.C. care homes in 2022 - 2023. The webinar was hosted by ARRC Leadership Team member Kathleen Jamieson and there were 31 participants in attendance.

This “Long-Term Care Resident and Visitor Survey” is the second one published by Ms. Mackenzie’s office; the previous one was released six years ago. The full report can be found at: <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/2023/11/OSA-LTC-SURVEY-REPORT-RESULTS-2023.pdf>. Over 500 volunteers throughout B.C. acted as surveyors and the survey was offered in multiple languages

Of note, Ms. Mackenzie stated that “not a lot has changed in six years.” She discussed a number of findings to survey questions and highlights include the following:

- 54% rated the overall quality of the care and services received in the home as ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ however 40% do not want to live in their care home. Also, 48% of residents feel their care home ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ feels like home.
- Almost 80% of residents felt they could express their opinions ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’.
- 81% of residents decide how to spend their time.
- 85% of residents felt their privacy was respected during care ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’.
- 88% of residents feel safe when they are alone ‘almost’ or ‘most of the time’.
- 87% of residents reported they trust staff to take good care of them and staff treat them like a whole person ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’.
- 50% of residents reported they ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ had the same care aide most weekdays and 51% of residents said staff only ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ make time for a friendly conversation or ask how to meet their needs.
- 33% of residents report that they only ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ get help to eat when needed. As well, 64% indicated that they only “sometimes, rarely or never” get their favourite food.
- One-third of residents ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ get to decide when to get up.
- 29% of residents only ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ get help right away if needed although 79% report they could get the services they need ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’.
- Almost two-thirds of residents only ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ find enjoyable things to do on evenings and weekends or find opportunities to explore new skills or interests.
- 47% of residents rarely or never have another resident as a close friend.



- 45% of families responded that they are “sometimes, rarely or never” encouraged by staff to ask questions and 36% were not aware of Resident/Family Councils in their facility.

Isobel provided detailed and thoughtful analysis of many of these statistics, for example the impact of inconsistent and rotational staffing patterns on quality of care and therefore, on quality of life for residents. She also reviewed eight recommendations arising from the report which included the need for:

- Staffing levels to be increased to 4.1 resident care hours per day as well as increased flexibility of staff scheduling.
- Increased social connections for residents and improved food to meet residents’ preferences.
- Implementation of compulsory professional continuing education related to cultural safety and emotional health and wellbeing.
- Mandated right of residents to name their essential visitor and improved accessibility and available of community services for those still living in the community.

Following the presentation, participants posed excellent questions and some interesting discussions took place, for example related to the ability of communities in rural B.C. to provide “close to home” facility care and the impact of this situation on seniors and their families. Isobel also provided some insightful comments and advice on steps to take to bring various advocacy groups together in an effort to effect change in long-term care.

Kathleen made clear and compelling closing remarks and thanked Isobel for her thoughtful, realistic and compassionate comments about the status quo. ARRC thanks them both for an excellent webinar.

The next webinar will be held on January 10, 2024, from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. The presentation will be entitled “Strengthening Long-term Care Communities from Within – Residents and Families Make a Difference What They Have – Their Voices” and will be presented by the ILTCCABC. ARRC wishes everyone a joyous holiday season and a happy, health New Year!