



Employment and
Social Development Canada

Emploi et
Développement social Canada

Canada



Message from the Minister

January 10, 2023

Hello,

As we welcome in the New Year, it's time to celebrate and reflect on all that we have accomplished in 2022.

As Minister of Seniors, I am committed to improving the lives of older Canadians. This includes working to make life more affordable as inflation continues to raise prices across the globe. Last year, we took concrete action to support and empower seniors, families, students, workers and renters through targeted measures. This year we will build on this work as we continue to foster an economy that works for all Canadians.

These measures include a one-time top-up to the [Canada Housing Benefit](#), which aims to help low-income renters with the cost of renting. I also want to take this opportunity to remind you that the

application period is [open](#) until Friday, March 31, 2023.

In addition, we have doubled the GST credit for six months which has put an average of \$225 more in the pockets of seniors and has helped 11 million Canadians. The last payment was just issued on January 5, 2023. Last July we also made a historic increase to the Old Age Security by 10 percent for seniors 75 and older, representing \$800 for full pensioners. This change has strengthened the financial security of 3.3 million seniors, 56% of whom are women. It is important to note that OAS and CPP benefits are indexed to inflation to ensure that they can keep up with the cost of living.

The month of January marks several important dates and observances that are meaningful to Canadians, starting with recognizing January as Alzheimer's Awareness Month. With the rise of diagnoses of dementia in Canada, I wanted to share some resources with you including [this video](#) to help raise awareness about dementia and how you can better support someone you know who has been diagnosed.

This month is also Tamil Heritage Month and Canada is proud to be home to one of the largest Tamil communities in the world. This month we honour the significant contributions made by Tamil Canadians to our country.

On January 22, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and other East Asian communities all around the world will mark the beginning of the Lunar New Year. Symbolizing kindness and courage, the Year of the Rabbit is marked by festivities like parades, lion dances and fireworks. I extend my warmest wishes to all those celebrating Lunar New Year. May this year of the Rabbit bring you luck, health and prosperity.

Lastly, on January 29, we mark the National Day of Remembrance of

the Québec City Mosque Attack and Action against Islamophobia. On this day, we honour the memory of the victims and recognize the importance of building an inclusive and equitable society. As we move forward into the New Year, let's continue to work towards creating a safer and more welcoming country where every person is able to participate and succeed fully and safely.

In this edition of my newsletter, you will find information about:

- How seniors can start the new year off on the right foot
- Benefits and Credits available to seniors
- Dementia and mental health resources
- National Seniors Council updates
- Respiratory illnesses

Please take a moment to share this link with friends and colleagues so that they can [sign up to receive my updates](#).

Thanks for reading and sharing.

Kamal Khera
Minister of Seniors



New Year brings new opportunities!

Let's begin 2023 by recommitting ourselves to the values of respect, openness and compassion that define us as Canadians.

As an older adult, getting involved in your community is beneficial. You may become more knowledgeable about what's around you and be able to make an impact on the people around you.

You can get involved by volunteering, joining an organization, being part of a local event and more. One great way to get involved as a volunteer is through the New Horizons for Seniors Program. Projects funded through the Program's community-based stream focus on volunteerism and connecting seniors with their communities in order to promote healthy aging.

Let's start this New Year off right, together! For more information on how to get involved as a senior, visit [programs and services for seniors](#).

Learn about the benefits and credits that are available to you

The Government of Canada has a number of benefits and credits aimed at making life more affordable for seniors.

The Old Age Security (OAS) pension provides seniors aged 65 and over with a minimum income, which helps reduce the incidence of low income among seniors in Canada. Just last year, we increased the OAS by 10% for seniors aged 75 and over to improve the financial security of over 3.3 million seniors.

In addition to this, we also have the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), which is for seniors living on a low income. Even though the amount GIS recipients receive may change each year depending on

income, this provides more stability and support for older Canadians.

To keep up with the cost of living, both the OAS pension and the GIS are indexed to inflation. It is important to note that benefits will only ever increase, they do not decrease. The next OAS and GIS payments are scheduled to go out on January 27.

As mentioned above, we recently doubled the GST credit for six months. Seniors may also be eligible for a number of other tax credits, including the:

- [Canada Caregiver Credit](#): You may be able to claim the CCC if you support your spouse or common-law partner with a physical or mental impairment.
- [Disability Tax Credit](#): The DTC helps reduce the income tax that people with physical or mental impairments, or their supporting family members, may have to pay. It aims to offset some of the costs related to the impairment.
- [Home Accessibility Expenses Credit](#): HATC is for qualifying expenses incurred for work performed or goods acquired in respect of a qualifying renovation of an eligible dwelling of a qualifying individual.
- [Medical Expenses Credit](#): An individual is entitled to MEC for medical expenses paid for himself/herself, his/her spouse or a dependent during a 12-month period ended in the year 1 and which was not used in the prior year.
- [Age amount credit](#): You must be 65 years of age or older on December 31, 2022, with a net income of less than \$90,313. The unused portion of this credit may be transferred between spouses or common-law partners.
- [Pension Income amount Credit](#): Allows you to claim up to \$2,000 if you reported eligible pension, superannuation or annuity payments on your tax return. Income from Old Age Security

benefits, Canada Pension Plan benefits and Quebec Pension Plan benefits are not eligible for this credit.

You can find all the payment dates for the OAS, GIS and GST credit [here](#).

2023

Federal benefit payment calendar

- Canada Pension Plan (CPP),
Old Age Security (OAS)
and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)
- Goods and services tax / harmonized sales tax (GST/HST) credit
- Climate Action Incentive payment (CAIP)

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Take care of your mental health

Mental health is an important part of our overall well-being. Good mental health can help you enjoy life, while coping with its challenges. On the other hand, poor mental health can lead to mental and physical illness, including chronic physical conditions.

There are many factors that can affect our mental health, and they aren't all within our control. But there are some actions we can take to care for ourselves and help protect our mental health.

As January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month, I encourage you to become familiar with the signs of dementia. These can include a decline in memory, planning language and judgement; physical changes such as loss of coordination, weak and stiff muscles and trouble standing or walking; and changes in mood or behaviour. Visit [this page](#) to learn more about dementia and how it can be prevented.

And for free and credible resources that you can access at any time, from anywhere visit [Canada.ca/mental-health](#).

These resources include:

- information about mental health issues
- therapy programs you can do at your own pace
- moderated support groups with peers
- one-to-one counselling with qualified health professionals

If you are feeling long-lasting emotions of anger, loneliness, sadness or worry, or if they are interfering with your daily routines, it's okay to ask for help.

For First Nations, Inuit and Métis people seeking emotional support, crisis intervention or referrals to community-based services, contact

the [Hope for Wellness Helpline](#), reachable by telephone or online chat, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Minister Khera's Alzheimer's Awareness Month
video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSV3mL2u8qU>

Updates on the National Seniors Council

In December, Minister Jean-Yves Duclos and I announced that Dr. Olive Bryanton was appointed as a member of the National Seniors Council (NSC). Dr. Bryanton has been a fervent activist for seniors' well-being for all of her professional life. She has been appointed to the NSC for a three-year term.

Minister Duclos and I also had the pleasure to announce that current NSC member Nora Spinks' term has been extended to June 30, 2024, and that she will serve as the Chairperson for the remainder of her term. We want to thank Dr. Suzanne Dupuis-Blanchard for her work as NSC Chairperson since 2018. Read more about recent appointments to the NSC [here](#).

The NSC is made up of experts on issues relevant to aging and older

adults. In November, they were tasked to serve as [the expert panel](#) to explore an aging at home benefit. Members engage with older adults, stakeholders and experts to provide advice to the Government of Canada on matters related to the health, well-being and quality of life of seniors.

Help reduce the spread of respiratory viruses

Respiratory viruses increase in the fall and winter when people spend more time together indoors. This year, respiratory virus season started earlier than usual and with a higher than expected increase in cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and the flu, in addition to ongoing spread of COVID-19.

Although everyone is at risk of getting sick from respiratory viruses, some people can experience serious complications, including those who:

- are aged 65 years or older
- have chronic health conditions; and
- reside in nursing homes or other care facilities.

Different viruses can spread through different ways.

It's important to:

- stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations;
- get your annual flu shot;
- stay home when sick;
- wear a well-constructed and well-fitting mask correctly when in crowded indoor public settings;
- improve indoor ventilation, when possible, by opening a window or a door;
- wash your hands often;

- cover your mouth when you cough, and sneeze into a tissue or the inside of your elbow; and
- clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and objects frequently.

By reducing the spread of these viruses, we can help protect ourselves and our most vulnerable, and help decrease pressure on our health care system.

Pay attention to public health alerts and advice in your area and make informed decisions about using individual public health measures.

Information resources

- Fact sheet: [Stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations](#)
- Poster: [Help reduce the spread of COVID-19](#)
- Poster: [Plan to get your flu shot](#)
- [Canada.ca/covid-vaccine](#)
- [Canada.ca/flu](#)

Spread the word:

I hope you will take a minute to ensure that this message reaches as many older adults (and the people who support them) as possible. Please share it with your networks through social media, email or your newsletter. You can now sign up and invite others to [sign up for the newsletter online](#).

For regular updates, please follow:

Twitter: [@ESDC_GC](#)

Facebook: [Seniors in Canada](#)

If you would no longer like to receive updates from the Minister or if you would like to add another email address to this distribution list, please reply to nc-stakeholder_relations_intervenants-gd@hrsdc-rhdc.gc.ca.