



Message from the Minister

March 7, 2023

Dear friends,

As Canadians, we take a lot of pride in our universal public health care system. Last month, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met with his provincial and territorial counterparts to work together on improving Canada's health care system. Our government's funding commitment is going to help ensure that our health care system lives up to the expectations of Canadians. You can read more about how we are working together to improve health care for Canadians in this edition of my newsletter.

As we enter March, I also wanted to remind you that tax season is

here. One of my responsibilities as Minister of Seniors is to help ensure that older Canadians are financially secure. It is important to file your taxes so that you can get all the benefits and credits you're eligible for. This newsletter includes some valuable information for filing your income tax return.

As well, every March we focus on fraud prevention. Fraudsters continue to find new ways to trick Canadians out of their money, which is why, during this Fraud Prevention Month, I wanted to share some tips and resources on how to avoid getting scammed. You can find out more about how we have been able to fund organizations across Canada that have fraud prevention projects for seniors through the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

Additionally, I am pleased to announce that Canada has joined the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Ageing's Informal Cross-Regional Core Group. Joining the Core Group is an excellent opportunity to work with our international partners to continue to advance the rights and dignity of all older people. This is another example of our government's commitment to supporting seniors. You can find out more by reading this [recent press release](#).

Lastly, this March also marks the Government of Canada's second official [Irish Heritage Month in Canada](#). Irish Canadians have greatly contributed to the story of our country, and this month is an opportunity to learn more about their history and positive impact.

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

- Five shared health priorities to improve integrated health care for Canadians
- Tax season
- Fraud Prevention Month

- Online consultations about supporting aging at home
- My recent event on national long-term care standards

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



Improving health care for Canadians

On February 7, Prime Minister Trudeau welcomed the premiers to Ottawa and announced a [historic health care funding package](#). Over the next ten years, we will be investing \$196.1 billion to help repair and prepare our health care system.

As a registered nurse, I have seen first-hand the challenges that exist

within our health care system. These funds will help ensure that we are filling the gaps that have persisted for far too long while also supporting the needs of our health care workers.

Specifically, we are working with the provinces on the following key areas to ensure that our health care system is living up to the expectations of Canadians. These areas include:

- expanding access to family health services, including in rural and remote areas;
- reducing wait times and backlogs;
- improving access to quality mental health and substance use services;
- modernizing the health care system with standardized health data and digital tools; and
- creating a minimum \$25/hour wage for personal support workers.

Further, we recognize the unique needs of each province and territory. That is why they will have flexibility in designing their action plans to meet their realities. We will ask them to outline how funds will be spent and how we can expect to see their progress measured.

Helping Canadians age with dignity is another area of priority. Our government knows the importance of aging closer to home, with access to home care or care in a safe long-term care facility.

We will continue to work in the best interest of Canadians, their families and health care workers. For more information, check out the [recent news release](#) on our historic health care funding.

Valuable information for filing your income tax return

It is that time of year again; tax season is now underway. This year I want to ensure that all older Canadians take advantage of all of our government's new and existing tax credits.

I encourage you to find out if you qualify for one of the following benefits and credits: the [Canada caregiver credit](#), the [disability tax credit](#), the [medical expenses credit](#), the [home accessibility tax credit](#), the [age amount credit](#), the [pension income amount credit](#), and the [multigenerational home renovation tax credit](#).

Visit the [tax credits and benefits for individuals webpage](#) for more information on benefits and credits you may be eligible for.

For low-income seniors, it is vital you file your taxes on time. We will use the information for your tax return to review your eligibility for financial supports, like the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Filing on time helps you avoid any disruption to your payments.

And remember, you can avoid delays at tax time by registering for [direct deposit](#) and [filing online](#). You can also use [CRA's My Account](#) to see if you have any uncashed cheques. Finally, if you need help filing your taxes, [free, community-run tax clinics](#) can help you through the process! Please note, the CRA resumed its practice of paying down outstanding balances with the Government of Canada using benefit and credit payments as well as tax refunds.

You can find out more by [watching my video](#). Stay tuned! Over the coming weeks, I will provide more helpful tax tips on the [Seniors in Canada YouTube channel](#) as well as on our [Facebook page](#).

March is Fraud Prevention Month!

This year's theme is "Tricks of the trade: What's in a fraudster's toolbox." I want to highlight the most common fraud techniques that target seniors. I will also share tips on how you can avoid getting scammed.

Recently, law enforcement agencies have seen an alarming rise in [grandparent scams](#). This scam involves fraudsters contacting an older person and claiming to be a grandchild who is in serious trouble and needs money immediately. Be prepared! If you get a call, message or text like this, the fraudster may know your grandchild's name. The fraudster will then arrange to either pick up the money in person or have you send them the money.

Other common scams to watch out for include [investment scams](#), [romance scams](#) and [service scams](#).

How can you protect yourself from these scams?

- If you receive a suspicious phone call claiming to be from a family member in serious trouble, hang up the phone and contact them directly using the number you have in your contact list.
- If the caller claims to be a law enforcement official and asks you to pay a fine or bail, hang up and call your local police.
- Before investing in an organization or individual, ask for information about the investment. Verify the registration of the company or individual with your provincial securities agency.
- Be wary of people you meet on social media who ask you to invest in their business or project.
- Listen to that inner voice telling you, "This doesn't sound right."
- Be careful what you post online. Fraudsters can use names and details shared on social media for targeting purposes.

- Use unique and strong passwords for all social media and email accounts.

Think that you have been scammed? Contact your local police and report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre via their [online reporting system](#) or by phone at 1-888-495-8501.

Canadian seniors lose millions of dollars to scams each year. But if you know what to look out for, and if you stay vigilant, you can avoid fraud and scams. To learn more, please [watch my video](#).

New Horizons for Seniors Program – fraud prevention projects

According to the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#), fraudsters continue to find more sophisticated and detailed ways to trick Canadians out of their money. Scams and cybercrimes can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time, which is why it is important to learn how to recognize and report them.

Through the [New Horizons for Seniors Program](#), we have been able to invest in fraud prevention projects all over Canada. Funding has gone toward organizations that put together sessions about fraud prevention and financial abuse, such as the Town of St. Bride's, the Toronto Chinese Alliance Association, the Centre d'action bénévole et communautaire Saint-Laurent, the Muslim Association of Hamilton, the World United Seniors Promotion Association, and more.

With fraud on the rise, it is important to stay up to date with the most recent scams, which is why we've been supporting community-based projects that teach fraud prevention to older Canadians.

Supporting aging at home – expert panel

Canadians are living longer and healthier lives than previous generations. Many older adults prefer to stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible. The Government of Canada has made the commitment to support programs and services that help older adults maintain their quality of life, should they want to live on their own or with others in their community.

On October 6, 2022, Minister Duclos and I announced that the [National Seniors Council](#) serves as the [expert panel to study the idea of an aging at home benefit](#).

As part of their examination of the topic, the National Seniors Council wants to hear from older Canadians, caregivers, care providers, stakeholders, experts and others about ways to further support those wishing to age in place for as long as possible.

In the coming weeks, an online survey will be launched to seek feedback from Canadians. Details on how to participate will be shared through our [Seniors in Canada](#) Facebook page and in next month's newsletter.

To learn more about the National Seniors Council, you can visit the [National Seniors Council webpage](#).

National standards on long-term care

On March 1, Minister Duclos and I visited the Sheridan Villa long-term care centre in Mississauga, Ontario, to formally welcome the new national standards for long-term care from the Health Standards Organization and the CSA Group.

When I returned to volunteer in long-term care at the height of the first wave of the pandemic, I got to see first-hand the gaps that exist in our long-term care. As a nurse, I know these standards will help ensure that all seniors, no matter where they live, receive high-quality care that is rooted in dignity and respect.

We have also transferred \$1 billion to the provinces and territories through the Safe Long-term Care Fund to help improve the lives of those living and working in long-term care. Furthermore, in Budget 2021, we set aside \$3 billion to help the provinces and territories implement these new standards.

However, it is important to note that these standards and the funding outlined above are just one step in our government's ongoing commitment to improving long-term care from coast to coast to coast.



Minister Khera and members of parliament at the Sheridan Villa long-term care centre.



Minister Duclos speaking at the long-term care event in Mississauga.

To learn more, read the [CSA Group standard](#) and the [Health Standards Organization standard](#).

You can also visit the [Statement by Ministers Duclos and Khera on Long-Term Care Standards](#).

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](#).

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