



BC ASSOCIATION OF

**Community Response Networks**

*Stopping Adult Abuse and Neglect ...Together.*

December 10, 2021

**OPEN LETTER TO:**

BC MINISTER OF HEALTH, Adrian Dix  
BC PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR SENIORS, Mable Elmore  
BC SENIORS ADVOCATE, Isobel MacKenzie

**RE: "Hidden and Invisible: Seniors' Abuse and Neglect in British Columbia"**

We are writing this letter in support of the Report on Seniors' Abuse and Neglect which was released by the Office of the Seniors' Advocate on December 8, 2021.

The report succinctly describes the pervasiveness of abuse, neglect and self-neglect throughout our province and offers some very real and overdue recommendations to help us all address the issue and work towards preventing it.

The BC Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN) has been funded by the Ministry of Health for the past 10 years to build the awareness of abuse, neglect and self-neglect of vulnerable adults by supporting a coordinated community response at the local, grass-roots level. We have made great strides over the past 10 years in increased awareness through education, coordination among community organizations, and decreasing stigma for those who have experienced abuse. Thus, increasing the likelihood of reporting. We are confident that the increase in reporting, as documented in the Report, is due to the efforts being made by the local Community Response Networks (CRNs). A description of the work being done by the BC CRN is described on page 20 of the Report.

The focus of the BC CRN is concentrated on education and support of service providers, professionals and individuals working in over 241 communities throughout BC. Although, we do not have the capacity to undertake a province-wide active public awareness campaign a campaign of cross-sectoral collaboration would help us to build the community's commitment to address the issue.

The BC CRN has been supporting a developmental evaluation over the last 10 years to try to measure the level of awareness throughout the province. By standardizing the reporting and response systems with good, reliable data available from health, police and the Public Guardian, our ability to measure the impact of our coordinated response would be greatly enhanced.

The BC CRN has a suite of educational and informational training programs which are now available by webinar and in-person. They include "It's Not Right- Neighbours, Friends and Families" and the "Gatekeeper program" for people who are working in the community. These programs graphically show how to recognize abuse, neglect and self-neglect, how to best respond and who to refer to. We are now working on tailoring these programs to specific groups. We just completed a module for the Pharmacists of BC. There are others in the works.

Page 1 of 2



Open Letter supporting the Seniors' Advocates Report  
December 10, 2021  
Page 2

Through the local CRN efforts – often in partnership with other community services such as Better at Home and Meals on Wheels - we support hundreds of community projects and events with funding, programs, and materials about abuse, neglect and self-neglect and reach thousands of British Columbians every year.

All our services are provided free-of-charge. Our army of community volunteers logged over \$1.5 million in volunteer hours.

An additional point raised in the Report was the recommendation that the *Adult Guardianship Act* be updated. We understand that parts of the *Act* have been under review in recent years so a complete revamp would be timely.

With the continued support of the Ministry of Health, the BC Association of Community Response Networks looks forward to, as the Seniors' Advocate closed her report, "Working together to improve the lives of BC Seniors"

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sherry Baker'.

Sherry Baker M.A.  
Executive Director  
on behalf of the BC CRN Board of Directors.

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