

OLDER AND WISER: Helpful information widely available

[Margaret Coates](#) / Contributing writer

October 14, 2016 11:37 AM

Older and
WISER
Margaret Coates



Have you ever thought or said, “That service is the best kept secret on the North Shore?”

Are you looking for a service for your parent or yourself but are confused about where to start?

Access to information for seniors is crucial. Informed seniors are healthier, more involved in their communities and are knowledgeable about available services and benefits important in maintaining their independence. Knowing what your benefits are after you retire ensures you receive the most income from government sources. Knowing if you qualify for home support for personal care, home care nursing or rehab, palliative care, day programs for adults or respite for caregivers can ensure you receive the critical care you might require as your health needs change.

Having a variety of formats for seniors to access is important – seniors who don’t use the Internet need to be able to phone for information. They also need to obtain information at easily accessible sites such as seniors’ centres or libraries.

The provincial government has several sources of information for seniors that can be accessed by the Internet or phone. The Office of the Seniors Advocate, which can be accessed at [seniorsadvocatebc.ca \(http://seniorsadvocatebc.ca\)](http://seniorsadvocatebc.ca) or toll free at 1-877-952-3181, provides the B.C. Seniors’ Guide, available in several languages. It is a comprehensive source for information on programs and services available to B.C. seniors.

“Whether you’re a senior, caregiver, family physician or patient, trying to navigate the world of pamphlets and phone numbers to find the appropriate service or program can be a time-consuming challenge in this era of information overload,” according to the Vancouver Coastal Health website.

VCH, after a series of North Shore forums that recognized the importance of access to information and health services, created a short, concise and easily accessible formatted sheet called 7 Numbers Every North Shore Senior Needs. This sheet, modelled after a Fraser Health document, is a one-pager of key phone numbers that will quickly direct seniors, caregivers and others to the right resource in the community.

“We’re hoping seniors or their caregivers will keep this sheet in an easy-to-access location on their fridge or bulletin board in the kitchen for instance,” says Laurie Leith, director of home and community care.

The attractive and easy-to-read one-pager has seven numbers for information about personal health, home health, mental health, seniors' resources, community services, health information and emergency services. It can be viewed at vch.ca/about-us/news/7-numbers-every-north-shore-senior-needs (<http://vch.ca/about-us/news/7-numbers-every-north-shore-senior-needs>) and is available at vch.eduhealth.ca (<http://vch.eduhealth.ca>), catalogue No. GT.22.S59, August 2016. If you would like a paper copy and don't have Internet access, check the library or your nearest seniors centre.

The North Shore News in partnership with North Shore Community Resources (604-985-7138) publishes the 2016 Seniors Directory, a comprehensive guide to resources for seniors living on the North Shore. The guide is widely available in seniors centres, Seniors' One Stop Information Program at NSCR, North Shore libraries, the North Shore News office and elsewhere.

"Information is critical for seniors and having a consolidated place for information, particularly for older adults, is immensely helpful," says Nancy Hollstedt, manager of information and volunteer programs at North Shore Community Resources.

Watch for the 2017 Seniors Directory to be published in February.

There is a wide variety of information out there for seniors in a variety of formats. If you can't find what you're looking for don't be afraid to ask questions. There are groups and organizations ready to help you make sure that no service or organization on the North Shore is kept a secret.

Margaret Coates is the co-ordinator of Lionsview Seniors' Planning Society. She has lived on the North Shore for 47 years and has worked with and for seniors for 20 of those. Ideas for future columns are welcome. Email: lions_view@telus.net (mailto:lions_view@telus.net). Info: lionsviewseniorsplanning.com (<http://lionsviewseniorsplanning.com>).

© 2016 North Shore News

[Sign up for the North Shore News FREE digital newsletter to receive top headlines from each issue in your Inbox.](http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe) (<http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe>)