



Victoria fails to act on majority of recommendations from Ombudsperson's report on seniors' care

The B.C. government has taken action of only six per cent of 176 recommendations to improve seniors' care made by B.C. Ombudsperson Kim Carter in her landmark report, "The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia", released in February 2012.

A new report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in B.C. (CCPA BC) – policyalternatives.ca/nonresponse – chronicles government response based on an update published by the Ombudsperson's office in June 2013.

The Ombudsperson's Report on Seniors Care: A Brief Analysis of the Government's (Non)Response released by the CCPA BC on November 14, finds that:

- Six per cent of recommendations have been fully implemented;
- 24 per cent have been partially implemented or are under consideration;
- 66 per cent have been ignored, meaning that the provincial government have not acknowledged, responded to or acted on these in any way;
- Three per cent have not been acted upon despite a government commitment to do so; and
- One per cent have missed an Ombudsperson recommended timeline for implementation.

Several critical areas of the Ombudsperson's report still require attention: province-wide quality standards including adequate or minimum staffing levels, public reporting and transparency, advocacy and support for seniors and families to access the home and community care system, changes to complaints processes and improved home support services.

As a result of public pressure, particularly from seniors, families, and community organizations like the BC Health Coalition, the B.C. government has passed legislation establishing a Seniors' Advocate. While not independent of government, Health Minister Terry Lake has said that the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have "considerable independence plus the flexibility to work within government and across sectors to promote positive change for seniors."

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