



Putting vulnerable adults first

VCH is leading a project to help put together a BC wide process to better track the number and outcomes of reports of abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults, including seniors.

While vulnerable adults – many of them seniors – who experience abuse and neglect receive excellent support and assistance from health care providers, there’s no system across BC – or even within individual organizations – to know the number of cases, or what happens with those reports. Not knowing means we don’t know the full scope of the issue. This gap limits our ability to initiate preventive strategies or best understand how to support staff. Having more complete information will help inform public policy, resource allocation, and prevention efforts and address related workload challenges.

“We are very encouraged by the fact that the [Seniors Advocate](#) asked us to partner with her office on this,” said Darren Kopetsky Regional Director, Client Relations and Risk Management with VCH. “We knew we needed a uniform system so that we can track these data. At the end of this project, we will have a roadmap to gaining a much better idea of the magnitude of this very critical issue in the province.”

The Seniors Advocate, an independent office of the BC Government, has said it will soon require organizations to provide this data regularly.

Darren and his team have been working with the rest of the BC health organizations designated to identify and follow up on reports of abuse, neglect, or self-neglect of vulnerable adults. By next month, they will describe to the Seniors Advocate how each of these organizations currently collects statistics and will recommend improvements. The Office of the Seniors Advocate will then consider next steps.