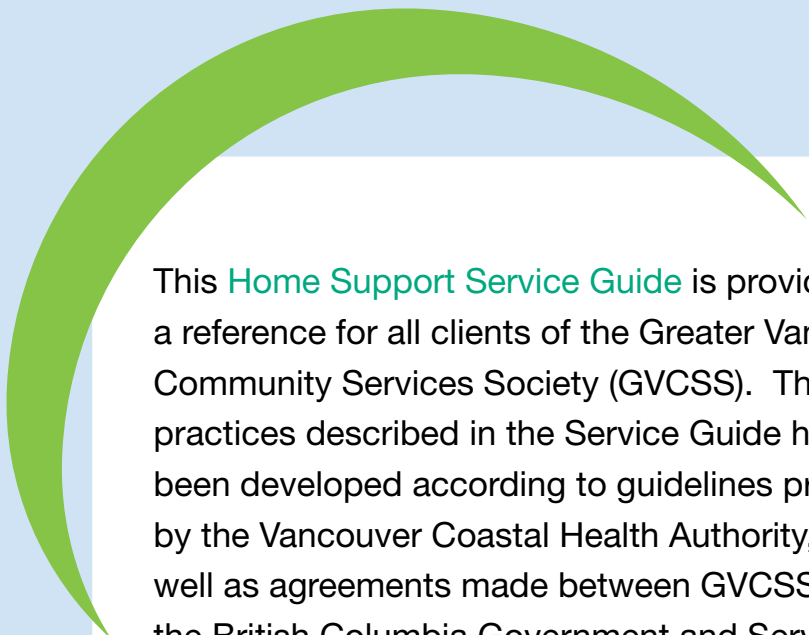



# Home Support Service Guide



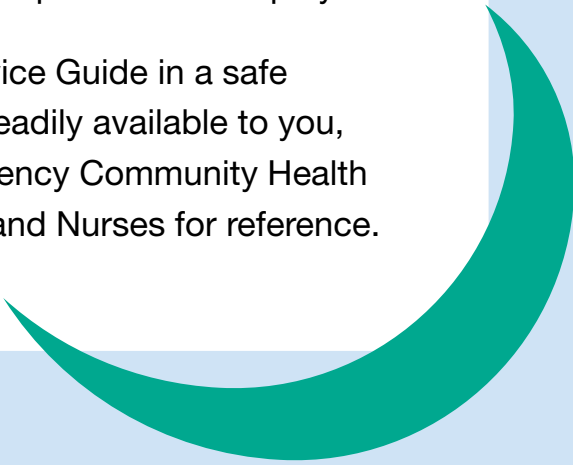
[www.gvcss.bc.ca](http://www.gvcss.bc.ca)





This [Home Support Service Guide](#) is provided as a reference for all clients of the Greater Vancouver Community Services Society (GVCSS). The practices described in the Service Guide have been developed according to guidelines provided by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, as well as agreements made between GVCSS and the British Columbia Government and Services Employees' Union, British Columbia Nurses' Union, and the United Food and Commercial Workers' Union, which represent our employees.

Please keep this Service Guide in a safe place where it will be readily available to you, your family and the Agency Community Health Workers, Supervisors and Nurses for reference.



# Welcome to Greater Vancouver Community Services Society

At Greater Vancouver Community Services Society (GVCSS or “the Agency”), we help people stay as independent as possible, for as long as possible by delivering home support services to the elderly, to people with disabilities, and to people who may only need our services while they recover from an illness or injury.

Our Vision is to build on our tradition of delivering high quality professional care and continue to be a leader and preferred provider of community services in the province.

Our mission is to support independence through client-focused community care services.

In June 2012, the Agency was successfully evaluated for a 3-year accreditation award by the Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), an international body whose role it is to assist us to identify strengths and areas for improvement so that we can better meet the needs of our clients.

## Our Services

We carefully select the Community Health Workers (CHWs) who provide your service to make sure they have the skills and qualifications to meet your needs. Each of our CHWs has graduated from the Care Aide Certificate program of a provincially recognized school, and belongs to the provincial registry. Although they must have successfully mastered the provincial curriculum before joining our team, after they are hired we provide our CHWs with further education and training. It's important to us, as it is to you, that they are competent in providing your services. Some of the services that we may provide either directly or by referral include:

- personal care including bathing, dressing, toileting and grooming
- medication assistance
- assistance with mobilization
- tube feedings
- blood glucose monitoring
- tracheotomy and ventilator care
- palliative, respite and/or dementia care
- cleaning/laundry/light meal prep

In addition to CHWs coming to your home to provide your care, the Agency will also conduct Supervisory visits to ensure your satisfaction with the care that is being provided.

Our services are not intended to meet all your needs, or to replace activities you can carry out for yourself. Instead, they are designed to supplement your personal abilities and resources. This takes teamwork between you, your assigned CHWs, your Supervisor and your Case Manager. We hope to provide you with a smooth and satisfactory service, and we count on having your cooperation.



# The Home Support Team



## Community Health Workers (CHWs)

Community Health Workers are the front line care providers of your services who are well trained and competent to perform the required services to meet your needs. The CHWs are well versed in client confidentiality and the necessity to maintain professional boundaries with clients at all times. The Agency relies upon them heavily to represent the agency professionally and to report any changes in client condition or unsafe environmental factors that pose a danger to you or the worker.

## Scheduling Supervisors

The Scheduling Supervisors lead a team of CHWs and provide client services within a geographic area. They are available to discuss your scheduling needs according to their days and hours of work which they will share with you. Much of their time is spent on the phone liaising with clients, family members and the care team to best meet your care needs and service satisfaction. They are also responsible for the documentation of all information reported to them by the CHWs or your Case Manager which is kept in your client file.

## Field Supervisors

The Field Supervisors are responsible for conducting initial home visits to introduce our services prior to the start of service or shortly thereafter. They will discuss agency policy and procedure with you and conduct a safety inspection of your home. They are also responsible for responding to and conducting investigations of CHW reported injuries or client reported thefts/concerns.

## Home Support Nurses

Our nurses are responsible for the ongoing training and development of the CHW staff in addition to being an integral part of the overall health care team for the client. They continually assess and monitor the CHW's skills and abilities in all areas of service delivery. The nurses work very closely with Home Care Nurses and Case Managers from the local Health Units and are available for client visits and consultation on health care matters.

## After Hours Supervisors

The after hour supervisors work remotely after 6:00pm on weekends and holidays. Their role is to ensure continuity of home support operations 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, including statutory holidays. Their duties include:

- supporting the CHWs who work in the evenings and overnight
- managing new referrals and hospital discharges after hours
- responding to emergency calls/dealing with emergent situations
- Work Alone checkout of workers



# Getting the Most Out of Your Home Support Service

## Assignment of Community Health Workers (CHWs)

The CHWs we provide to you have been carefully selected to ensure they have the appropriate skills, knowledge and ability meet your needs, and to provide the care you require. We are happy to discuss with you any preferences you may have (cultural or language specific worker) so that an appropriate match can be made between you and your CHW. However, we are also required to consider the seniority of our workers while satisfying a requirement to provide you with consistent workers.

While we are careful to make sure our employees meet specific occupational requirements, we are also known as a fair employer, willing to help employees master new job skills, and to work alongside the unions who represent our employees to address performance issues in a supportive manner that encourages professional growth.

## Service Schedule

If you are referred to us by one of our funding authorities, your Case Manager will suggest an appropriate schedule in which to provide the care plan tasks that have been authorized, including a **specific number of hours and/or days per week** for your home support service.

**GVCSS has limited flexibility in adjusting your hours of service and tasks:** if your health or circumstances change, you may phone your Case Manager or we can assist you by discussing a change in your hours of service with your Case Manager whom we require to authorize any changes.

If you wish to pay privately for additional services or if you are a full fee private paying client, the hours of service will be mutually agreed upon by you and GVCSS, and can be changed with sufficient notice.

## Changes or Cancellation of Service

Once there is mutual agreement on the schedule of service, we will adhere to the schedule as much as possible, and we will notify you if a change in the date or time of service or assigned CHW is necessary.

It is very important that **you provide 24 hours notice if you want to cancel service**, either temporarily or permanently. If we do not receive sufficient notice to cancel the workers, you and/or the funding authority will be charged for the visit because our BCGEU Collective Agreement indicates that once a CHW reports to work for the day, they have to be paid even if the client cancels service.

## Service Design/Care Planning

Home Support Care Plans are developed in collaboration with you and your support system to meet your unique needs. In the case of authorized services, the care plan tasks may be developed by the referral source but the client's participation is paramount to ensuring the desired outcomes are achieved. Clients have the right to direct their care and make informed choices and health care decisions, provided the risks have been explained. The intent is always to maximize the ability for clients to safely care for himself/herself.

Your workers will want to be very helpful but they are not able to do tasks that are not previously authorized and included on the Care Plan. Please **do not** ask your workers to perform tasks which are not listed on the care plan, or to work for anyone (including family members) not included in the referral to the Agency.

**Changes to the care plan will require authorization from your Case Manager.** You may call your Case Manager if you desire an increase or decrease in service hours, or want to make changes to the care plan tasks that have been authorized.

We respect a client's wish to refuse any or all aspects of service. If for some reason you do not want the worker to do any of the tasks included in the care plan, please advise your worker, as we will not impose any service on you unless you are willing and ready to accept it. **It is important to note that your Case Manager may decide to change or reduce your service if you are not accepting the authorized tasks.**

## Statement of Client Rights

The following is statement of client rights can also be found on the agency's website at [www.gvcss.bc.ca](http://www.gvcss.bc.ca)

***As a client receiving Home Support services through Greater Vancouver Community Services Society, you have the following rights:***

- The right to receive service in a courteous and respectful manner that promotes your independence.
- The right to receive service in an environment that is safe and free from harassment or discrimination.
- The right to receive service in a way that respects your dignity and individuality and is responsive to your needs and preferences.

- The right to participate wherever possible, in the planning of your care.
- The right to receive care from fully trained and competent health care professionals.
- The right to raise concerns or recommend changes in connection with your services without fear of interference, coercion, prejudice or reprisal.
- The right to expect that your records be kept confidential in accordance with the law.
- The right to give or refuse consent to the provision of any services.



## Communication with the Agency

The GVCSS offices are open from 8:30am-4:30pm Monday to Friday. Although these are our regular hours of operation, there is someone available to take your calls from 6:30am-10:30pm weekdays and from 7am-6pm weekends/holidays. You should be provided with the direct line of the Supervisor responsible for your schedule and service concerns or you may call the main line at **604.737.4900**.

### Emergency Contact After Hours

After hours on weekdays (10:30pm), the main line is forwarded to an answering service who can take your call. If the matter is urgent and cannot wait until the next business day, it will be forwarded on to the Director of Home Support Services. The answering service has instructions about what constitutes an emergency and will forward the call accordingly. If the matter is not urgent, a member of the Home Support Department will return your call the next day.

After hours on weekends/holidays (6pm), the answering service will put all calls through to an After Hours Supervisor who can address your call.

GVCSS can assist you 24 hours a day by calling **604.737.4900**.

### Problems or Complaints

We welcome your feedback, and we respect your right to freely voice concerns and complaints relating to the delivery of service. If you have a problem or complaint, please call the Supervisor responsible for your schedule and service concerns. The Supervisor has a responsibility to document your concern and promptly respond to it.

If the problem persists or you are not satisfied with the response you are getting, please feel free to contact the

Assistant Director of Home Support Services by calling the main line at **604.737.4900**. The Assistant Director will involve the Director of Home Support Services as necessary.

You may also contact your Case Manager who will discuss the problem with both you and a representative from our Agency. Your opinions and experiences are very important to us, and offer an important way to help ensure we are providing quality care and service that meets our clients' needs. We will work hard to resolve your concerns quickly, to the best of our ability and without retaliation.

Clients may also make formal complaints about the quality of care they receive to the Patient Care Quality Office. The Patient Care Quality Office can be accessed by:

**Phone: 604.875.5845**  
**Fax: 604.875.5545**  
**Email: [pcqo@vch.ca](mailto:pcqo@vch.ca)**


### Supervisory Visits

A Home Support Supervisor will complete an initial visit with you to introduce our service, and conduct an inspection of your home (risk assessment) to make sure it is a safe worksite for your CHW. After that, the Supervisor may visit you periodically or call you to discuss your progress and your satisfaction with the service we provide.

At least once a year, and more often if required, a Supervisor or a Home Support Nurse may also visit







a CHW while they are working in your home, either to train the worker on a specific task or to assess the worker's performance. If you have any questions or problems regarding your home support service, please do not hesitate to call our office so we can provide the necessary assistance as soon as possible.

## Billing Notification

If you pay for your service privately, or are required by a public funder to pay a per diem (daily fee) for service, you will receive a written notification from GVCSS confirming your daily charge and the billing schedule, before you receive the actual bill. Bills can be paid by cash, cheque or credit card. Unpaid bills present a problem for the agency and could result in an interruption of your service if not paid promptly or fall into arrears.

## Staff Conduct

### Employee Behaviour

Our CHWs are required to be appropriately dressed and groomed, and to behave courteously and professionally while at work, including observing the following regulations:

- Arrive as scheduled and complete assigned care plan tasks
- Provide service in a conscientious, respectful manner
- Do not perform tasks they are not qualified or authorized to do
- Do not give out their home telephone numbers
- Do not give out their last names
- Do not smoke in the home of a client
- Do not purchase or accept alcoholic beverages during their working hours
- Do not use their vehicle or the client's vehicle to transport a client or run errands
- Do not borrow money or articles from a client
- Do not lend money or articles to a client
- Do not become involved in the personal affairs of clients relating to legal or property matters
- Do not burden clients with their personal problems

- Do not move heavy furniture
- Do not accept lunch at a client's home (offers of tea/ coffee may be exempted)
- Do not accept gifts and gratuities from client or client's families (small tokens of appreciation such as baked goods or cards may be exempted)
- Do not make unauthorized visits or phone calls to a client.

### Identification

Our Home Support Nurses, Supervisors and Community Health Workers are required to wear a GVCSS name tag including a photo as identification when they come to your home. They may remove their name tag while they are providing your service.

### Confidentiality

All of our staff protect the confidentiality of client information. They do not discuss client information with anyone except those directly involved in the care of the client, and on a need-to-know basis.

# Delivery of Service

## Client's Presence During Service

For your protection, your Community Health Worker is not allowed to work in your house when you are **not** present. Service will not be delivered when a client is in the hospital.

## Violence, Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited

Our Agency recognizes the rights of employees and clients to work and receive service in an environment that is safe, and that supports personal worth and dignity through mutual respect, cooperation and understanding. We will not tolerate any violent or aggressive behaviour towards our employees, nor will we tolerate any acts of discrimination or harassment that are based on race, colour, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, marital status, family status or political belief.

When CHWs are working with you in your home, please treat them with dignity and respect. Do not make comments or engage in behaviour that would be considered offensive or unwelcome by the workers, such as telling racial or ethnic jokes, or jokes about sex or sexuality. Do not touch or stare at the worker in an intimidating or sexual way.

Violence and aggression are not permitted, including physical force, threatening behaviour or statements which cause injury to a worker or which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe they are at risk of injury.

When you offer your worker a congenial, respectful work environment, they will be able to do their very best for you, and you will receive the maximum benefit from their skills and service. Your



workers have the right to refuse to work if they feel they are being subjected to violence, harassment or discrimination in the workplace. If our follow-up confirms their perceptions, we may have to discontinue service to you.

## Travel Time

Please be advised that your Community Health Worker will be traveling between clients and will sometimes have to take public transportation. They are allowed ten minutes of travel time per client for each visit, i.e. your worker is allowed to leave ten (10) minutes early for a visit or to arrive ten (10) minutes late. The Agency does their best to minimize travel time but please understand that your CHW is doing their best to get to you on time and carry out all your authorized care plan activities.

If you are receiving service in a Cluster Model, with many clients residing in one building or within a 4-block radius, the workers do not usually need as much time to travel between clients, and are generally able to walk between clients.



# Records of Service Received

GVCSS has a system called CellTrak to verify when and for how long your visits are occurring. Most Community Health Workers will be carrying a Blackberry device to record their visits and check off your care plan activities as they are completed. The workers may, on occasion, need to charge their devices in your home when they are providing service.

## Statutory Holidays

Service is normally provided on statutory holidays only for those clients who require seven-days-a-week service. Service on a statutory holiday for those who qualify has to be approved by the funding authority. For private pay clients, service on statutory holidays will be charged at time-and-a-half. Please call us well in advance if you are not a seven-days-service client, but do require service on holidays.

If your day of service has to be rescheduled because of holidays, you are encouraged to contact your Supervisor to reschedule your service for another day and time. We will try to arrange for your regular Community Health Worker to provide your service on another day but if that cannot be done, with your agreement, we will arrange a replacement for you.

## Accidental Breakage or Damage

It is the responsibility of both the client and the CHW to exercise caution and avoid the accidental breakage or damage of household goods. We recommend that you:

1. carefully put away antiques and fragile objects such as glass, crystal, ceramics etc., and place objects and ornaments which you do choose to display securely, so they are not at risk when your CHW dusts, vacuums or performs other household duties;

2. give the Community Health Worker detailed instructions about the use of new or unusual equipment or appliances, or cleaning materials not commonly found in the market, and explain the proper laundering of materials where washing instructions are not available;  
**\*Note: We do not recommend the use of bleach when doing laundry and would prefer workers use other solutions such as vinegar instead. Please understand that accidents can happen when bleach is used.**
3. carry appropriate household or tenants' insurance which will cover accidents or damage to your household goods.

Should an accident or breakage happen, please retain the damaged item and **report the incident to the Supervisor as soon as possible** so an investigation can be conducted promptly.

## Home Security

All our Community Health Workers are required to complete a Criminal Record Search prior to starting employment. However, it is always important that you take appropriate measures to protect your personal funds and personal effects. Please keep your valuables in a secure place, and keep close track of your doors and keys. Rather than provide house keys to the worker, the Agency prefers that you set up a lock box in which the CHW can have access to the key, while it is safely kept on your premises.

## Transportation/Escorts to Medical Appointments

Most of our workers take public transportation to, from and between clients. If your CHW is authorized to escort you to a medical appointment, they must go with you by bus, taxi or HandyDart at your expense, unless otherwise

agreed upon by your Case Manager. Please do not ask the worker to ride with you in your car as they are not allowed to do this. Similarly, workers are not allowed to drive you in their car.

## Safety Measures

All Community Health Workers are required to observe safe procedures while performing their duties, and they may refuse to carry out a task which they feel threatens either your safety or theirs. If the CHW identifies an unsafe feature or condition, the Supervisor will discuss it with you and your Case Manager to request your cooperation to rectify it as soon as possible. Some unsafe situations will require us to provide modifications

to your service or potentially discontinue service if the unsafe situation cannot be rectified.

## Shoes

Community Health Workers must wear shoes made of leather or other material appropriate to the foot protection required while at work, including closed toes and heels, in accordance with Work Safe BC Health and Safety Regulations. CHWs can certainly be expected to clean their shoes before entering your home, but please do not ask them to take off their shoes or to wear slippers while working, because this would contravene the legislation.

# Practice of Standard Precautions

For your protection and their own, all Community Health Workers practice **standard or universal precautions** in their work to prevent infections that are carried in the blood or bodily fluids such as urine, stool or saliva. Workers will wash hands thoroughly with soap and water on a frequent basis throughout the service and will need to dry their hands with a clean towel or paper towels which should be provided by the client.

GVCSS will provide disposable gloves for workers to wear if they are in contact with blood, bodily fluids, or mucous membranes, or if they touch objects soiled with blood or other body fluids. Disposable gloves are to be used only once and should never be re-used. Under certain circumstances, they may also be required to wear a disposable apron or mask which GVCSS will also provide. Your CHW may bring these supplies with them, or if supplies have to be used often, they may be left at your home.

## Cleaning


Minimal cleaning may sometimes be authorized as part of your care plan. You are responsible for supplying

cleaning materials and **household rubber gloves** for the workers to carry out these cleaning duties if they are authorized. If the workers will be cleaning both the bathroom and the kitchen, you may want to provide two pairs of rubber gloves. The rubber gloves will not be taken from your home. Also, please provide a mop if floors are being washed. In case you are not certain what other supplies to provide, our Supervisors will be pleased to discuss this with you.

## No Smoking

Smoking is not allowed during the provision of services. This pertains to the smoking of tobacco or marijuana. Work Safe BC Regulations prohibit smoking in the workplace, and your home becomes a workplace while a Community Health Worker is present to provide your services.





If you, or any of the people that reside with you in your home or visit you in your home, are a smoker/smokers, you are **required to comply** with the following:

- Stop smoking tobacco or marijuana, and put your smoking materials away, **at least one (1) hour before the worker is expected to report for work at your home**, so the smell and smoke will be effectively removed before the worker arrives.
- Do **not** smoke tobacco or marijuana indoors while the worker is working in your home.
- If you must smoke when the worker is in your home, you can do so in a safe outdoor area like a balcony or patio.

Community Health Workers, Home Support Supervisors and Nurses have a right to work in an environment that is safe. If you do not adopt the above listed measures to ensure smoke free work environment, the GVCSS staff may refuse to provide your service or visit with you.

We thank you for your cooperation in protecting the health of our employees.

## Used Needles

Needles, if not disposed of appropriately, can lead to injury and/or infection if CHWs are poked by them. Please ensure that you dispose of needles in a puncture-proof container to minimize risk to our workers.

## Guns and Weapons

If you have guns or weapons in the home, they must be put away during service times. Guns must be locked away unarmed. Ammunition should be kept separately from the gun.

## Pets

Some workers are allergic to or afraid of pets. We ask that you keep your pets under control by keeping them on a short leash or locking them in a separate room during service times.

## Safe Use of Personal Care Equipment

Safe use of personal care equipment such as wheelchairs, bathtub stools, and mechanical lifts is very important for our workers and for you as a client. We require our CHWs to:

- use only equipment that is included in your Care Plan
- use only equipment they have been trained to use

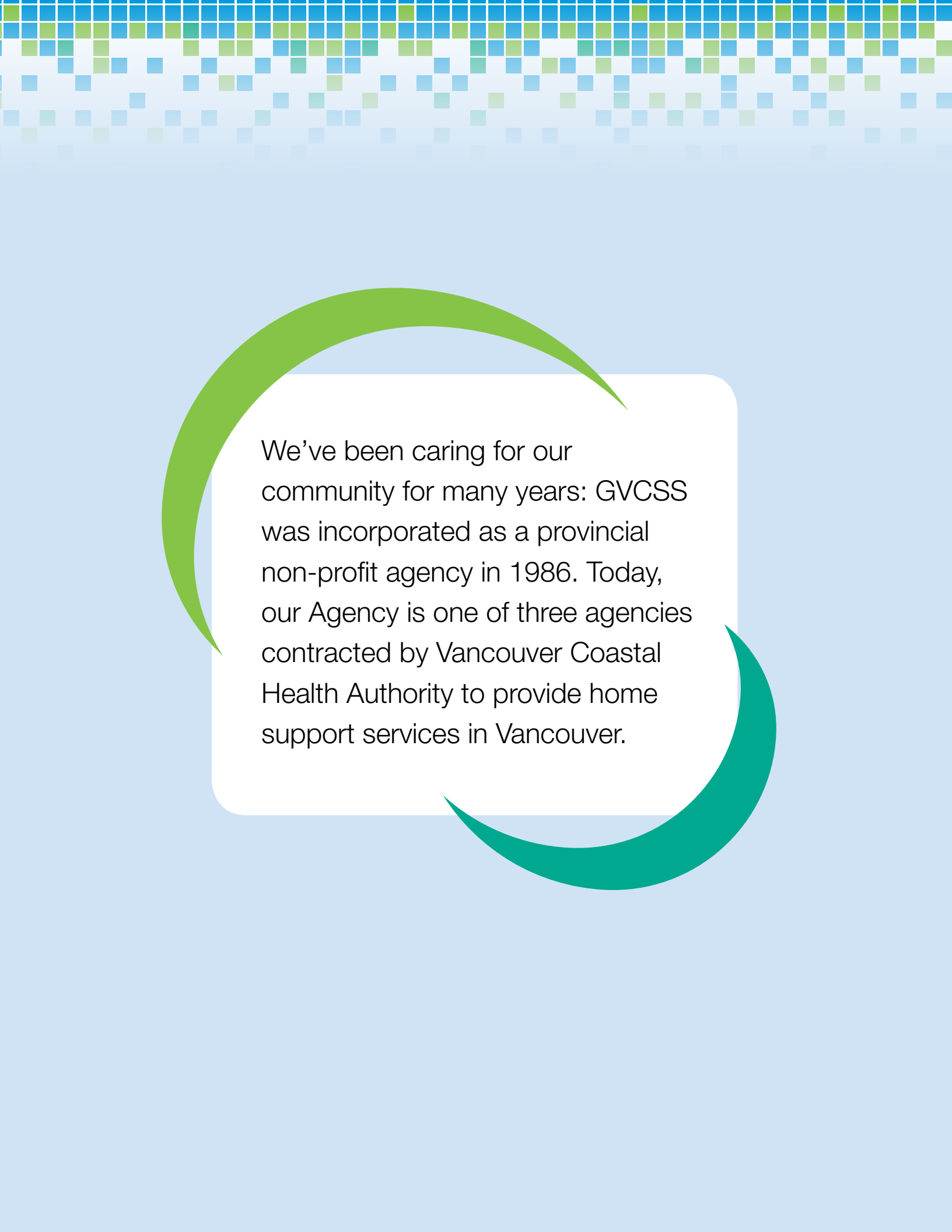

Please have your personal care equipment checked at least once a year. Unsafe equipment will not be used and must be fixed as soon as possible. Please note that CHWs are not allowed to remove, take apart or fix any installed equipment for your personal care.

## 'No Manual Lifts' Policy

In an effort to minimize the risk of injury to you and our workers, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority has developed a policy of no manual lifting of clients by staff. A ceiling lift may be suggested or required, if it is felt that you need assistance when being lifted, transferred or repositioned. Any mechanical lifting equipment and patient handling aids must be approved by GVCSS, and the Case Manager.

## Your Care is Our Priority

Thank you for placing your confidence in GVCSS. We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with a qualified, caring Community Health Worker who will collaborate with you in achieving your maximum independence and physical well-being. If you have comments or concerns, please feel free to contact us at [feedback@gvcss.bc.ca](mailto:feedback@gvcss.bc.ca) or by phone at **604.737.4900**. All concerns will be investigated promptly, and you will receive a timely response from a GVCSS representative who will discuss the matter with you and make every effort to resolve the issues you have raised.



We've been caring for our community for many years: GVCSS was incorporated as a provincial non-profit agency in 1986. Today, our Agency is one of three agencies contracted by Vancouver Coastal Health Authority to provide home support services in Vancouver.





greater vancouver  
community services society

## Head Office

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