

Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

Annual Activity Report

2015-16

Please Note: In accordance with **Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines** (Canadian National Institute for the Blind: n.d.), italics or upper-case letters have not been used for the titles of acts, titles, sub-titles or for emphasis. Bold fonts of medium heaviness as recommended have been used instead.

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APPENDIX ONE – PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING AND SENIORS MEMBERS 2015-16

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



As Chair of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors I am pleased to present its annual report for the fiscal year 2015-16. The annual report has been prepared and submitted in accordance with the obligation as a category three entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**.

The work outlined in this Annual Report supported the goals and objectives of the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, to remove barriers, support inclusion, and advance an integrated approach to wellness.

My signature below is indicative of the Board's accountability for the actual results reported within this Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leo C. Bonnell". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Leo C. Bonnell
Chairperson

OVERVIEW

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors was established in 2004 to provide advice to the Minister responsible for Seniors and Aging, on issues associated with older persons and the aging process. The Seniors and Aging Division serves as a secretariat to the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors, and the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development supports its meetings and activities.

In 2005, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to making “healthy aging” a provincial priority and undertook a provincial consultative process. In 2007, government released the *Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework*. The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors has endorsed its six priority directions: recognition of older persons; celebrating diversity; supportive communities; financial well-being; health and well-being; and, employment, education and research. This framework continues to guide legislation, policies, programs and services for older persons.

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors supports the Provincial Government’s ongoing efforts to reinforce Newfoundland and Labrador’s position as an age-friendly province that responds to the needs of today’s older adults, while planning for tomorrow.

Structure/Membership

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors is made up of a diverse cross-section of older adults and other stakeholders familiar with older adults’ issues. Members, and the position of Chairperson, are appointed for terms of up to three years, by the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. Council consists of 12 members plus a Chairperson. When selecting potential candidates for appointment to the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors, careful consideration is given to geography, cultural diversity, gender, background, experience and skills. Please see Appendix One for Council membership as of March 31, 2016.

Mandate

The mandate of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors is to advise and inform government on issues, concerns and needs of older adults. The Council ensures that the viewpoint of older adults is reflected in the development of government policy and in planning for future service delivery. The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors provides a strong, collective voice for older adults in the development of a wide range of programs to support the independence and well-being of an aging population.

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors aims to:

- promote the value and worth of people as they age;
- foster an environment of understanding within government and the community with regard to aging;
- identify areas of opportunity within government to develop and/or adapt legislation, policies, programs and services to better support an aging population; and
- inform government on the potential impacts of legislation, policies, programs, and services on people as they age.

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors continues to promote the six priority directions as outlined in the *Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework*. As well, Council provides an older adult lens by participating in initiatives, including:

- Seniors of Distinction Awards;
- Healthy Aging Research Program in partnership with the NL Center for Applied Health Research, MUN;
- Age-Friendly NL Community Grants Program;
- Pharmaceutical Drug Program;
- Violence Prevention Initiative;
- Age-Friendly Transportation Program;
- Defining the terminology to best-describe older adults; and,
- Provincial Food and Nutrition Seniors Expert Working Group.

Vision

The vision of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors is:

for individuals, families, communities and society as a whole to foster healthy aging in order to achieve optimal health and well-being.

This vision has been endorsed by older adults through community consultation and builds on the vision of the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development:

All people in the province are equal, included, supported and empowered to achieve their full potential and well-being.

REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – Objective 2014-17

Issue: Promoting Age-Friendly Communities

Population aging is a phenomenon whereby older individuals account for a proportionately larger share of the total population. Population aging is taking place in virtually every country in the world. There are three factors underlying this trend: increased longevity, declining fertility; and, aging of “baby boomers”. Population aging impacts future policy-development, particularly in areas of labour/ workforce requirements and health care demands.

At the global level, the number of those over age 60 is projected to increase from just under 800 million today (11 per cent of world population) to over 2 billion in 2050 (22 per cent of world population).

According to Statistics Canada in July 2015 Newfoundland and Labrador was estimated to have 97,269 people aged 65 years and older which comprised 18.4 per cent of the provincial population. With one in two Newfoundlanders and Labradorians older than 44 years, this province has the oldest population in Canada and is expected to have increasing numbers of residents in the older age groups; it is estimated that by 2026, the number of people aged 65+ will increase to about 26 per cent of the population. With these demographics, Newfoundland and Labrador has identified the importance of planning for the needs and contributions of the older adults of today and those of tomorrow

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors has a responsibility to ensure that the Provincial Government is aware of the viewpoints of older adults; likewise, Council members work to convey the Provincial Government’s perspective to older adults throughout the Province.

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors provides advice to the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. Therefore, in its activity plan 2014-17, the Council established the following objective to be reported on in each year. Indicators for 2016-17 will remain consistent. Although the indicator was achieved in 2014-15 and 2015-16, it continues to be an indicator for 2016-17 as this work continues year after year; it is an ongoing goal with an indicator that can be achieved yearly.

Annual Objective:

By March 31, 2016 the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors will have advised the Minister on key issues relating to older adults.

Measure:

Provided observations and recommendations.

Indicators and Activities:

Indicator	Report on Activities
<p>Obtained expert and member expertise</p>	<p>On June 8 & 9, 2015, the Council and the Interdepartmental Working Group on Aging and Seniors (IWG) met to discuss new and emerging seniors' issues as well as relevant departmental policies and programs. The membership of IWG is drawn from various government departments and agencies having seniors as a specific target-group for policies, programs and initiatives. The four regional health authorities also sit on the IWG. Members of the Council bring knowledge on seniors-issues. Council members encourage input from seniors and relay this information back to government. Members of the IWG have specific knowledge of government/agency programs, policies and services impacting seniors. This ongoing knowledge-exchange ensures there is robust communication route between government/agencies and seniors. A primary focus of these joint meetings is a dialogue regarding shared priorities in addressing the needs and concerns of older adults.</p>
<p>Invited stakeholders to provide information</p>	<p>Based on what issues are concerning NL's seniors and the impact of an aging population, Council regularly identifies areas of opportunity within government to develop and/or adapt legislation, policies, programs and services to better-support seniors. As well, Council informs government on the potential impacts on people as they age. To ensure Council is well-informed on new and emerging issues, the Seniors and Aging Division coordinates information and updates via presentations, lectures, position papers, etc. from community stakeholders, government, and agency experts. Council members share this information with older adults in their respective regions at conferences, AGMs, member newsletters, etc. on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>In 2015-16 Council received presentations from SWSD and other stakeholders on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance Costs and Aging • Emergency Prescriptions & Pharmacists • Flu and Shingles Vaccinations • Room-sharing in Hospitals • Long Term Care and Community Supports

Indicator	Report on Activities
	<p>Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors and driving issues • SWSD's new Community Healthy Living Fund • Low-income Seniors • Mammograms for women aged 70+ • Receiving Results from Pathology Report • Home Heating Rebate • Seniors Advocate
<p>Prioritized advice to be provided to the Minister</p>	<p>During meetings, Council prioritized pertinent information that they felt the Minister should be made aware of, and made sure this was noted in notes and/or brought the information directly to the Minister during in-person discussions. Sometimes the information provided to the Minister was from an information-sharing view and other times it was in the form of advice whereby the Council offered an opinion for consideration.</p>
<p>Identified target audience for related age-friendly government initiatives</p>	<p>“Age-friendly” means that policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to help seniors live safely, enjoy good health and are able to continue to be socially and physically engaged. An age-friendly community benefits all people, of all ages. But as people age, their ability to live in their own homes or communities is supported by an age-friendly environment and easily-available supports. Therefore, the primary target audience identified for age-friendly government initiatives is Seniors, their families and community stakeholders; however, are the primary target audience for age-friendly initiatives, but the entire population of the province was identified as a can be considered a secondary target audience for age-friendly government initiatives.</p> <p>Council will be working to more closely involve municipalities on age-friendly living, geographical challenges and sharing of seniors’ activities, services, and programs.</p>
<p>Made recommendations on related government initiatives</p>	<p>Council provided feedback for the Minister on the planned establishment of the Office of the Seniors’ Advocate. Council indicated offered feedback indicating support for an Office of the Senior’s</p>

Indicator	Report on Activities
	<p>Advocate. Further, it provided the following specific feedback :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In establishing the Office, it is important that the Office but also noted the importance of not duplicateing services already provided by the Seniors Resource Centre and the Citizen’s Representative; • The focus of this Office . Council recommended that a fshould ocus be placed on addressing systemic issues that impact seniors in NL; and • The availability of c. Council also suggested that current services be publically promoted to ensure all people, especially seniors and their families, are aware. <p>On an ongoing basis Council provides feedback on the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework (PHAPF). With the Seniors and Aging Division, and the Interdepartmental Working Group on Aging and Seniors, the Council offered input on areas for possible focus for new initiatives for consideration to be implemented under the PHAPF.</p> <p>Council has advised on the need for “age-friendly facts sheet” on issues important to seniors such as vaccinations, housing, etc. The facts sheet will be posted on line, emailed via SWSD’s list serve and distributed through the Seniors Resource Centre’s Information and Referral System.</p> <p>Government had committed to undertaking a Collective Memories Project. Council was a strong proponent of this initiative and offered advice to government on how the initiative might be developed and implemented. Council, in general, agreed to continue to advise on this Project. As well, three members of Council offered to sit on the Working Group which was established to oversee the work of this Project. With the support of \$50,000 from the Provincial Government, during 2016 the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (HFNL) will beginbegan the Collective Memories Project. This age-friendly initiative will havehas three major objectives: to conduct a survey of existing oral history collections; to conduct oral history interviews with seniors; and to create a plan and toolkit for</p>

Indicator	Report on Activities
	<p>communities wishing to record and collect their own stories at the local level. The research and new recordings collected during this project will form part of a permanent collection with Memorial University of Newfoundland's Digital Archives Initiative. A Working Group has been established to oversee this initiative and HFNL has hired a student to complete the objectives.</p>

As of March 31, 2016, Council continued to provide a seniors' perspective while identifying potential impacts of population aging for the Provincial Government's consideration. The full Council will continue to meet with the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development as often as possible and the Chairperson will also communicate with the Minister as needed.

In preparation for the needs of our aging population, in 2016-17 the Council will continue to inform the Minister on areas where current policies, programs and services may benefit from ongoing review, including education/information sharing to ensure that older adults are educated on the issues impacting them and increasing the number of age-friendly communities by strengthening partnerships and supporting the age-friendly movement as it continues to gain momentum.

Regularly scheduled meetings of this Council follow "How We Conduct Our Business" guidelines and a strengthened communication process. Documentation will be prepared after each meeting identifying the major discussion points and action items, and submitted to senior officials and the Minister. Issues raised by the Council members provide the Provincial Government with invaluable frontline opinions from the very population group for whom the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework, and the Seniors and Aging Division, serve.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors faces a number of opportunities and challenges going forward.

Opportunities:

- The message that NL is experiencing population aging, and that it is happening here at a faster rate than any other province/territory in Canada, appears to be on the radar of the general public (or certainly more so than ever before). The fact that people are (becoming) aware of NL's population demographics will certainly enhance Council's capacity to connect with other older adults and promote the many available programs and services.
- The existence of possibility for Council and its work will likely be highlighted as people become more aware of the population aging and its impacts. With almost half of NL's population aged 44 years or older, the focus on the needs and strengths of our older adults will increase; the importance of our senior population will receive more attention. Efforts becoming more visible to more people is increasing, especially when government places more emphasis on the importance of our senior population and the impact of our aging population.

Challenges:

- Although many inroads have been made, Council continues to challenge ageism. Breaking down the negative stereotypes often associated with seniors and the aging process continues to be a major focus for Council. This work is expected to be a focus for some time, because large-scale societal change takes time.
- Council continues to work on normalizing the aging process and normalizing the many conversations related to aging. Because many people find the idea of aging and death difficult, the important discussions about issues such as wills, estate planning, financial planning, etc. are therefore often not discussed openly.
- Educating and communicating with seniors continues to be a challenge because of the diversity amongst the senior population and the geography of this province. Ensuring that all seniors are aware of programs and services has to be communicated in a multidisciplinary manner which includes, print, radio, internet, word-of-mouth. For example, as time goes by, more and more seniors are becoming more computer literate but in the immediate future there can never be an assumption that all seniors have/use computers.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Members of The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors are appointed from the public and do not receive remuneration. Advisory Council members are reimbursed for expenses and travel costs. The travel expenses and costs associated with the work of the Advisory Council are covered by the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development and are included in its departmental budget. The Seniors and Aging Division supports the work of the Council and acts as a secretariat. \$21,857.99 was expended on Council during 2015-16:

Area of Expenditure	Total
Purchased Services (meeting space rentals, food and beverage, etc.)	\$ 1,808.80
Transportation and Communication (Travel costs, per diems, accommodations, incidentals, etc.)	\$20,049.19
Total	\$21,857.99

APPENDIX ONE – Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors Members 2015-16

Leo Bonnell, Chairperson - Clarendville
Maggie Chambers - Flowers Cove
Damien Collier - Goulds
Cecilia Hickey - Grand Falls-Windsor
Joan Hutchings - Mobile
Shirley Letto - L'Anse au Clair
Wayde Rowsell – St. Lawrence
Linda Oldford – Gander
Patricia Burton – Paradise
Josephine Waddleton – Trepassey
Shirley Boone – Mount Pearl
Winston Childs – Pasadena
Maisie Clarke - Campbellton