

Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

Annual Report

2014-15

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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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



As Chairperson of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors I am pleased to present its annual report for the fiscal year 2014-15. 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 strategic directions of the Provincial Government, as articulated by the Minister of the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, to foster a healthy society that honours, listens to, and includes seniors in building stronger, more dynamic communities.

My signature below is indicative of the Council's accountability for the actual results reported within this annual report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leo C. Bonnell', written in a cursive style.

Leo C. Bonnell
Chairperson

OVERVIEW

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors was established in 2004 to provide advice to the Minister of Health and Community Services, and as of September 2014 to the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, as the Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors, on issues related to older persons and the aging process. The Office for Aging and Seniors serves as a secretariat to the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors, and the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development (SWSD) 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 assists the Provincial Government in its efforts to strengthen Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment as an age-friendly province that continues to be responsive to the needs of older adults of today and plans for the requirements of 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 current Council membership.

Mandate

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors ensures that the perspective of older adults is reflected in government policy development and in planning for future service delivery. Council's mandate is to advise and inform government on issues, concerns and needs of older adults. The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors provides a mechanism for older adults to

be heard as a strong, collective voice in the development of comprehensive programming 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 participate in the implementation of the **Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework** by providing an older adult lens through participation in various 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

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors supports the Provincial Government's strategic direction of stronger, more dynamic communities, where the needs of seniors are met, as well as its three main focus areas: to honour seniors, involve seniors and engage with other Government Departments and agencies. Appendix Two contains the complete strategic direction concerning seniors.

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 (representing 11 per cent of world population) to over 2 billion in 2050 (representing 22 per cent of world population).

Census 2011 found that Newfoundland and Labrador had 82,105 people aged 65 years and older which comprised 16 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 2021, the aged 65+ population will increase to about 115,294 – a 40 per cent increase over 10 years.

Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes the need to plan for the needs and contributions of the older adults of today and those of tomorrow. Older adults will continue to be active contributors to the labour market but tomorrow's seniors are likely to be employed longer, likely have higher levels of formal education, tend to own their own homes, and be more financially stable, albeit with many carrying more personal debt.

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors has a responsibility to present to the Provincial Government the perspectives of older adults. Members also convey the Provincial Government's perspective to older adults throughout the province.

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors provides support to the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development in an advisory capacity. Therefore, in its activity plan 2014-17, the Council established the following objective to be reported on in each year. Indicators for subsequent years may change from one year to the next, but for 2015-16 will remain consistent.

Annual Objective:

By March 31, 2015 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:

- Obtained expert and member expertise
- Invited stakeholders to provide information
- Prioritized advice to be provided to the Minister
- Identified target audience for related age-friendly government initiatives
- Made recommendations on related government initiatives

Report on Activities

Indicator	Report on Activities
Obtained expert and member expertise	From June 9 -10, 2014, the Council and the Interdepartmental Working Group on Aging and Seniors met to discuss new and emerging seniors' issues as well as relevant departmental policies and programs. A primary focus of this meeting was a discussion regarding shared priorities in addressing the needs and concerns of older adults
Invited stakeholders to provide information	<p>Council receives information and updates on programs, services, policies and subject areas of interest to seniors. Members regularly share this information with older adults in their respective regions. Input is regularly invited, and members engage with the seniors in their regions and provincially, on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>In 2014-15 the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors invited stakeholders – and received presentations on - for the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Healthy eating resource for older adults - Adult Protection Act - Targeted Initiative for Older Workers - Newfoundland and Labrador Housing initiatives - Basic standards of information required for

	<p>prescription labels - Old Age Security (OAS) allowance for spouses</p>
<p>Prioritized advice to be provided to the Minister</p>	<p>After each meeting, Council prioritized pertinent information that they felt the Minister should be made aware of, and forwarded feedback to him. Sometimes the information provided to the Minister was from an information-sharing perspective and other times it was in the form of advice whereby the Council offered their opinion on an issue for consideration.</p>
<p>Identified target audience for related age-friendly government initiatives</p>	<p>The target audience for current related age-friendly government initiatives has been identified, and “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 stay involved.</p> <p>An “age-friendly” community is of benefit to people of all ages, as they age, and so while seniors may be viewed as a primary target audience for the age-friendly initiatives, the entire population of the province may be considered a secondary target audience, as everyone in the community benefits (currently or in the future) from age-friendly design and policies.</p> <p>One example of an “age-friendly” initiative is the “Collective Memory Project”. In collaboration with Memorial University’s Department of Folklore, seniors will be invited to record and archive the stories of their youth. Young people will also be involved in an effort to cultivate a climate of mutual understanding and respect connecting the generations while preserving our oral history. Council members are very interested in seeing this important initiative move forward so it is</p>

	<p>spearheading this work, working closely with the SWSD to develop and implement this project. Council has established a working group to oversee this initiative.</p>
<p>Made recommendations on related government initiatives</p>	<p>Council initiated an evaluation of the Seniors of Distinction Awards Program and will bring together a committee to oversee the evaluation.</p> <p>The Council continued to provide feedback on the development of a draft summary document 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>

As of March 31, 2015, Council will continue to provide a seniors’ perspective while identifying potential impacts of population aging for the Provincial Government’s consideration. The Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will meet with the full Council as often as possible and will also communicate with the Chairperson as needed.

In preparation for the needs of our aging population, in 2015-16 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. Council members raised issues that provide the Provincial Government with invaluable frontline opinions from the very population group that the Seniors and Aging Division of the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development and the **Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework** 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 Newfoundland and Labrador 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 public's radar (or certainly more so than ever before). The fact that people are (becoming) aware of Newfoundland and Labrador's population demographics will certainly enhance Council's capacity to connect with other older adults and promote the many available programs and services.
- The possibility of Council and its 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

The Office for Aging and Seniors supports the work of the Council and acts as a secretariat. The Department of Health and Community Services has assigned a portion of the Office for Aging and Seniors' annual budget to cover costs associated with carrying out the business of the Council. In 2014-15, \$15,647.45 was expended on the Council:

Area of Expenditure	Total
Purchased Services (meeting space rentals, food and beverage, etc.)	\$2,011.64
Transportation and Communication (Travel costs, per diems, accommodations, incidentals, etc.)	\$13,635.81
Total	\$15,647.45

**APPENDIX ONE – Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors
Members 2014-15 (As of January 2015 Appointments)**

Leo Bonnell, Chairperson - Clarenville
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

APPENDIX TWO – STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social, or economic outcomes and normally require action by or involvement of, more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents and other communiqués. They summarize the outcomes desired for the health sector and are communicated to entities that plan and report in collaboration with the Department. The direction and focus areas related to the seniors and aging for 2014 -17 are as follows:

Strategic Directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by Government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents, and other communiqués. The **Transparency and Accountability Act** requires departments and public bodies to take into account these Strategic Directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across Government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments. The Strategic Direction that is relevant to the focus areas of seniors and aging within the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development are as follows:

Strategic Direction: Foster a healthy society that honours, listens to and includes seniors in building stronger, more dynamic communities.	
Outcome: Stronger, more dynamic communities, where the needs of seniors are met.	
Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction:	
Focus area:	Addressed by the Entity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honour Seniors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve Seniors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with other Government Departments and agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">