

Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

Activity Report 2011-2012

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Chairperson's Message



I am pleased to provide the Activity Report 2011-2012 for the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (the Council) in accordance with the requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act* for a Category 3 Government Entity. This report addresses the Provincial Government's strategic directions, as communicated by the Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors and as deemed relevant to the work of this Council.

This Activity Report provides an overview of the Council and the extent to which planned and actual objectives were met during the fiscal period covered by the report and objectives in the 2011-2014 Activity Plan.

As Chairperson of the Council, my signature below is indicative of the entire Council's accountability for the preparation of this report and for the achievement of the specific objectives contained therein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leo C. Bonnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Leo C. Bonnell, Chairperson
Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

OVERVIEW

On November 26, 2004, the Provincial Government announced the establishment of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (the Council), a Ministerial Council on Aging and Seniors, and Division (Office) for Aging and Seniors. The Ministerial Council supports government policy development and activities on behalf of seniors. It is the goal of the Ministerial Council to strengthen relationships among departments that have responsibility for legislation, policies and programs affecting seniors. The Ministerial Council is chaired by the Minister of Health and Community Services who is also the Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors. The Office for Aging and Seniors serves as the Secretariat to the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors and the Ministerial Council on Aging and Seniors.

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors is recognized as a Category 3 Government Entity in accordance with the requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. An Activity Plan (April 1, 2011 – March 31, 2014) was developed. This document provides an overview of the planned and actual objectives met during the fiscal period 2011-2012.

Mandate

The Council assists the Provincial Government in preparing for an aging population by ensuring that a seniors' perspective is reflected in policy development and in planning for future service delivery. The mandate of this Council is to advise and inform the Provincial Government on issues, concerns and needs of seniors. The Council provides a mechanism for seniors to have a strong voice in the development of comprehensive programming to support the independence and well-being of an aging population.

The Council aims:

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

The Council has the opportunity to engage community experts and facilitate discussions in response to emerging issues or concerns that affect seniors.

Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework (PHAPF)

The Council supports the *Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework* launched in July, 2007 and endorses the following six priority directions:

Recognition of Older Persons through increased societal respect and regard for older persons; age-friendly policies, programs and services; and greater social inclusion of seniors in our society;

Celebrating Diversity by ensuring that the diversity of the aging population is seen and valued in provincial policies, programs and services;

Supportive Communities by enhancing the role that communities play to support an aging population;

Financial Well-being by improving the financial well-being of seniors through identification of opportunities; improving knowledge about government services and programs; and encouraging financial and retirement planning;

Health and Well-being by ensuring people as they age have the best possible physical, emotional, social, mental, and spiritual health and well-being; and,

Employment, Education and Research by focusing on the impact of an aging population on employment, education and research.

The Council has participated in the implementation of the *Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework* by providing a seniors lens through participation in various initiatives such as:

- Seniors of Distinction Awards;
- Healthy Aging Research Program in partnership with the NL Center for Applied Health Research, MUN;
- Public awareness campaign to prevent Violence Against Older Persons in collaboration with Women's Policy Office; and,
- Provincial Food and Nutrition Seniors Expert Working Group.

Structure/Membership

The membership of the Council consists of a diverse cross-section of seniors and other individuals who are familiar with seniors' issues. Consideration is given to geography, cultural diversity, gender, background, experience and skills when choosing the members of Council. The Council consists of 12 members in addition to a Chairperson. All members and the Chairperson are appointed by the Minister of Health and Community Services, as the Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors. Members serve up to a three-year term (See Appendix B).

Expenditures

The Department of Health and Community Services reimburses members for out of pocket expenses related to participation in Council activities. In 2011-12, \$9,000 was reimbursed and paid on behalf of members to primarily cover transportation costs such as airfares, mileage, meals, and accommodations. In addition, \$400 was spent on supplies (printing cartridges, and business briefs).

VISION AND VALUES

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 seniors through community consultation and builds on the Department of Health and Community Services' ***vision for individuals, families and communities to achieve optimal health and well being.***

Values

The Council recognizes the following values to which members can aspire in carrying out their role on Council:

Justice: Each member shall abide by rules of equity, equality, fairness and need.

Empowerment: Each member provides advice to help government strategically focus work and achieve goals.

Accountability: Each member contributes to reporting on achieved results.

Confidentiality: Each member manages and protects information appropriately.

Collaboration: Each member promotes connectedness, sharing, inclusiveness and trust.

Diversity: Each member recognizes and respects the strengths of other members.

MISSION

Our province is experiencing *population aging*, a process whereby older individuals account for a proportionately larger share of the total population. Currently, more than 160,000 residents of the province are 55 years of age or over.¹

They represent over 30 per cent of the provincial population. Further, there are approximately 82,000 people aged 65 years or older in Newfoundland and Labrador who make up 16 per cent of the population.² The median age is the age above which half the population falls. Newfoundland and Labrador has a median age of 44 years, the highest in Canada.³ It is clear based on population projections that Newfoundland and Labrador is expected to have increasing numbers of residents in the older age groups.

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes that we need to plan for the needs and contributions of two distinct groups of older persons: the seniors of today and those of tomorrow. The Provincial Government is working to address the aging of the population through legislation, policies, programs and services. Council supports the Department of Health and Community Services strategic direction of Population Health, its focus on “healthy aging”, and mission as follows:

By March 31, 2017 the Department of Health and Community Services will have provided leadership to support an enhanced health care system that effectively serves the people of the province and helps them achieve optimal health and well-being.

The performance indicators that accompany the Department’s mission are separate and distinct from those of Council. The mission of the Council is embodied in Council’s Terms of Reference. Its mandate is to assist the Provincial Government in preparing for an aging population and ensure that a seniors’ perspective is reflected in policy development and planning for future service delivery.

¹ Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

² Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, January 2011 & Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

³ Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

Shared Commitments/Partnerships

The mandate of Council is to advise and inform government through the Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors on issues, concerns and needs of seniors. Council members are well positioned to present aging and seniors issues through their membership on a broad range of organizations such as seniors' organizations/retiree groups, municipal governments, and not for profit organizations. Their involvement with the broader community influenced Council's Activity Plan.

The Council met with the Interdepartmental Working Group on Aging and Seniors to share and discuss aging and seniors issues. The Interdepartmental Working Group includes representatives from government departments which are impacted by aging and senior issues.

The Council provided advice related to aging and seniors thereby supporting the Provincial Government's strategic direction of Population Health and the focus of "healthy aging". The Council and the Provincial Government have a shared commitment to achieve "healthy aging" and a more age-friendly province.

Highlights/Accomplishments

The Council provided invaluable, grassroots input into the ongoing implementation of Phase One of the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework as well as the development of Phase Two of the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework . The Council supported cross-government initiatives which fall within the six priority directions: recognition of older persons, celebrating diversity, supportive communities, financial well-being, health and well-being and employment, education and research. Examples of initiatives involving Council members in 2011-12 included the Seniors of Distinction Awards and the Ageless Public Awareness Campaign, both of which raised the profile of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador. Council also participated in advisory consultations regarding changes to drug coverage and participated on a Seniors Nutrition Expert Working Group.

ANNUAL OBJECTIVES

Creating an Age-friendly Newfoundland and Labrador

The Council provides advice related to aging and seniors that supports the Government's strategic direction of Population Health and the focus of "healthy aging". The Council has chosen to develop three annual objectives that cover the three years of this plan. This report addresses progress in the first objective completed in 2011-12. In addition, it provides indicators to describe the second objective to be completed in 2012-13. The Council has a dual responsibility in fulfilling its mandate. While seniors' points of view are presented to the Provincial Government, Council members spend considerable time conveying Government's perspective to seniors. The objective, measure and indicators for 2011-12 are as follows:

Objective: By March 31, 2012 the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors will have strengthened communication with government to ensure a seniors' perspective is presented to decision-makers in the development of policies, programs and services.

Measure: Strengthened communication process.

Indicators:

1. Developed a strengthened communication process.
2. Developed rules of engagement for Council members.
3. Council held a minimum of two (2) meetings per year.
4. Contributed a seniors' perspective to issues.

Indicator Reporting: Objective 2011-12. The following describes progress made in all four indicators.

Planned for 2011 -12	Actual Performance for 2011 – 12
Developed a strengthened communication process.	A strengthened communication process between the Council and the Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors was approved and now implemented. Documentation was prepared after each meeting that identifies the major outcomes from the meeting and was submitted to senior officials in the Department of Health and Community Services and the Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors.
Developed rules of engagement for Council members.	Rules of engagement for Council members have been developed and implemented. They include direction regarding values, conflict of

	interest, and public relations. The Council recommended that the document be titled “How We Conduct Our Business” in order to reflect easy reading and understanding.
Council held a minimum of two (2) meetings per year.	Meetings were held on May 31, October 28, 2011, and February 24, 2012. In addition, the Council provided a seniors perspective to inform policy development related to drug coverage. The Provincial Government has since implemented a new policy which ensures seniors covered by the 65 Plus Plan will pay no more than \$6 per prescription.
Contributed a seniors’ perspective to issues.	Council members have played an active role in identification of aging and seniors issues. This occurred during scheduled Council meetings through roundtables where members identified and discussed issues and concerns. For example, lack of transportation options for seniors and adults living with disability was raised as an ongoing issue. This information from a senior’s perspective contributed to the announcement of the Age-friendly Transportation Grant program (\$1.5 million over three years). Other issues that have been raised include financial well-being, affordable housing, long term care, elder abuse and palliative care.

Discussion of Results: Progress has been made in 2011-12 to strengthen communication between the Provincial Government and the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors. This ensures that a seniors’ perspective is presented to decision-makers in the development of policies, programs and services. This is evidenced through regularly scheduled meetings where “How We Conduct Our Business” guidelines are respected and a strengthened communication process exists. Documentation is now prepared after each meeting identifying the major outcomes from the meeting and submitted to senior officials in the Department of Health and Community Services and the Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors. Issues and concerns raised through roundtable discussions provide important input into decision-making. For example, the Council was consulted regarding changes to the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program, which ensured seniors covered by the 65Plus Plan will pay no more than \$6 per prescription.

The objective, measure and indicators for 2012-13 are as follows:

Objective: By March 31, 2013 the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors will have provided a seniors' perspective in the development of policies, programs and services.

Measure: Provided a senior's perspective.

Indicators:

1. Provided input into the development of Phase Two of the *Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework* (PHAPF).
2. Provided input into a provincially adapted seniors policy lens which is intended to be used in the development of policies, programs, and services.
3. Acted as a resource on issues affecting aging and seniors.
4. Participated in an annual planning day with the Interdepartmental Working Group on Aging and Seniors.

Objective: By March 31, 2014 the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors will have identified potential impacts of population aging on development of policies, programs and services.

APPENDIX A: 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. They summarize the outcomes desired for the population and health sector and are communicated to entities that plan and report in collaboration with the Department. The strategic direction and focus area related to Council are provided below:

Strategic Direction 1

Title: Population Health

Outcome: Improved Population Health

To achieve “improved population health”, focusing efforts on public health interventions that will; promote healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities, prevent acute and chronic illness and injury, and protect people from health hazards, are necessary.

An integrated and collaborative approach, which preserves and promotes health and prevents and controls disease, is needed to:

- reduce the incidence of many of the illnesses that currently contribute to the burden of illness in Newfoundland and Labrador; and
- prepare the health system for illnesses and threats to health that are expected to emerge as society and the physical environment change.

Activities in these areas will decrease the burden of illness and associated health care and treatment costs, and contribute significantly to a sustainable health system. The Council focus area for 2011-2014 is provided below:

Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction 2011-2017	The Population Health Strategic Direction is		
	Addressed by the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors		
	Activity Plan	Operational plan	Work plan
Healthy Aging	√		

APPENDIX B: Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors Members

2011 - 2012

Leo Bonnell, Chairperson - Clarendville

Maggie Chambers - Flowers Cove

Damien Collier - Goulds

Cecilia Hickey - Grand Falls - Windsor

Joan Hutchings - Mobile

Ronald Hynes - St. John's

Doreen Jackman - Grand Bank

Shirley Letto - L'Anse au Clair

Agnes Murphy - Mount Pearl

Minnie Vallis - Meadows

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