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Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

Annual Report 2025-2026

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Chairperson's Message

Hon. Craig Pardy
Minister
Department of Seniors
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Pardy:

As Chair of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (hereinafter referred to as PACAS or Council), I am pleased to present its annual report for the fiscal year 2025-26.

PACAS remains committed to providing advice to the Provincial Government on developing and supporting age-friendly communities and meeting the evolving needs of an aging population. Council does this by ensuring that seniors' perspectives are considered in policy development and in planning for programs and services for seniors and older adults.

This annual report has been prepared and submitted in accordance with Council's obligation as a category three entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. The work undertaken by Council during the reporting period supports the mandate of the Department of Seniors (SEN).

This was the final year of Council's 2023-26 activity plan and Council members continued to provide practical advice to the minister and staff of SEN on three key areas: ageism, food insecurity, and care in the community. These issues are intertwined with the social determinants of health and are key considerations as the Provincial Government continues to advance initiatives to support the overall social and economic well-being of seniors and older adults throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

My signature below is indicative of Council's accountability for the preparation of this annual report and achievement of the results reported.

Sincerely,



Joshua Carey, Chairperson
Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

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Overview

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (PACAS or Council) was established in 2005 to provide advice to the Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors (currently the Minister of SEN) on issues related to older persons and the aging process.

As of March 31, 2026, Council consisted of 13 members (See Annex A) and is listed in Schedule C of the **Public Service Commission Act**. The Public Service Commission, through the Independent Appointments Commission, solicits candidates for vacancies with consideration given to geography, culture, gender, background, experience and skills. Members are appointed for terms of up to two years by the Minister of Seniors. The Seniors and Aging Division of the department serves as secretariat to the Council, including the provision of support for meetings and other activities.

Council members represent a diverse cross-section of individuals, including older adults, many of whom are experienced in working with seniors and stakeholders in areas of critical importance to seniors, including health care, long-term care, mental health, and social and economic well-being. As a result, Council benefits from a membership with a broad base of knowledge in areas of importance to seniors and those who support seniors.

Council incurred no expenditures for 2025-26; more details are provided on page 7.

More information on the Council may be found at:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/seniors/provincial-advisory-council-on-aging-and-seniors>

Lines of Business

The Council's lines of business include:

- Challenge ageism.
- Promote the value and worth of people as they age.
- Foster an environment of understanding within the Provincial Government and the community regarding aging and demographic change.
- Identify areas of opportunity within the Provincial Government to develop and/or adapt legislation, policies, programs, and services to better support an aging population.
- Support the work of the Seniors' Advocate.
- Inform the Provincial Government on the potential impacts of legislation, policies, programs, and services on people as they age.

Highlights and Partnerships

2025-26 provided opportunities for PACAS to explore new ways to collaborate and continue to inform and advise the Provincial Government on issues related to older persons, aging, and demographic change.

Key activities included:

- Assisted in the selection of 2025-26 Seniors of Distinction Award recipients. This annual award recognizes and celebrates the contributions, achievements and diversity of Newfoundland and Labrador seniors.
- Continued to provide feedback on Health Accord NL initiatives and implementation.
- Continued to participate in the Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Working Group to advise and recommend improvements to the Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador Communities Program.

Report on Performance

The Council supports the Provincial Government's strategic directions of improved health and well-being outcomes for individuals, families, groups, and communities, as well as improved and equitable access to economic, cultural and social opportunities for those who experience barriers to inclusion. These priorities include enhancing supports to age well in the right place and building a positive image of aging.

The concept of aging well in the right place means having the health and social supports and services necessary to allow individuals to live safely and independently in their own homes or communities for as long as they wish and are able.

Issue 1: Ageism

The **World Health Organization** refers to ageism as the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) directed towards people on the basis of their age.

Ageist stereotypes negatively impact the physical and mental health of older adults. People such as caregivers, family members, friends or employers can hold ageist stereotypes, or they can be internalized by individuals leading them to act in ways that endorse these stereotypes.

Ageism does not only affect seniors and older adults. The **World Health Organization** outlines negative impacts of ageism for individuals across the lifespan.

For older people, ageism is associated with a shorter lifespan, poorer physical and mental health, slower recovery from disability and cognitive decline. In addition, ageism reduces the quality of life, increases social isolation and loneliness (both of which are associated with serious health problems), restricts the ability to express sexuality and may increase the risk of violence and abuse.

For younger people, ageism manifests across many areas, such as employment, health, housing, and politics, where younger people's voices are often denied or dismissed. Experiencing discrimination at a young age can have long-lasting consequences on well-being, self-esteem and sense of belonging. In addition, it exposes young people to more disadvantages throughout their lives, making them more likely to encounter inequalities later in life.

Ageism has far-reaching impacts on all aspects of our health and takes a heavy economic toll on individuals and society.

2025-26 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Council will have contributed to the review of the Respect Aging education program and provided advice on how to promote positive images of aging.

Indicator	Report on Activities
- Participated in the review of Respect Aging education program. - Provided recommendations to the Minister on promoting positive images of aging.	Council met with the researcher engaged in the ongoing review of the Respect Aging education program to discuss proposed updates to the program. Council had the opportunity to ask questions and provided feedback which departmental staff will share with the authors of the updated program. Council engaged in a discussion around ageism and age-friendly communities where it developed recommendations around the promotion of positive images of aging. These were captured in a record of discussion shared with departmental staff.

Summary

Ageism continues to be a challenge for many seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador, throughout Canada and around the world. Ongoing efforts to create public awareness of the negative effects of ageism and the benefits of age-friendly communities are aimed at reducing elder abuse and neglect, reducing the prevalence of ageism, and supporting better physical and mental health and overall well-being for seniors and older adults.

Issue 2: Food Insecurity

The University of Toronto's interdisciplinary Food Insecurity Policy Research program defines household food insecurity as the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints and describes it as a serious public health problem in Canada. Their **Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2021** report shows the prevalence of household food insecurity in Newfoundland and Labrador at 17.9 per cent.

The province's Seniors' Advocate's report, **What We Heard: Engagement with Seniors, Family Members and/or Caregivers, and Service Providers**, supports the notion that food insecurity is a significant issue that continues to affect seniors. Forty per cent of seniors responding to a survey administered as part of the Seniors' Advocate's engagement process reported not being able to afford food or eating healthy. This is also in line with the reported experiences of provincial food help lines, which continue to report unprecedented calls for assistance (even higher than during the Covid-19 pandemic) from an increasing number of seniors.

2025-26 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Council will have advised the minister on progress made on the solutions identified in 2025.

Indicator	Report on Activities
• Requested update from Food First NL on status of report recommendations. • Provided update to Minister on status of Food First NL recommendations related to seniors.	Council received an update from Food First NL on the status of the recommendations from its 2023 report and incorporated it into a written update to departmental staff.

Summary

Food insecurity continues to be an issue for seniors and older adults as well as the overall population. This situation has been exacerbated by inflation and the increased cost of living. The Seniors and Aging Division is represented on the Provincial Food Security Working Group, made up of government and community stakeholders including Food First NL, which discusses opportunities and challenges around food security in Newfoundland and Labrador. The division will continue to bring Council's input forward as measures to address this issue are discussed.

Issue 3: Care in the Community

Council supports the Provincial Government's efforts to promote the development and maintenance of age-friendly communities. In May 2022, Council held an engagement session with community sector stakeholders to discuss ways to better promote and support age-friendly communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. This engagement identified the important role that municipalities play in this endeavor, as they are responsible for the design and delivery of many of the programs and services in the communities where people live. It was also recognized that municipalities need education and support to apply a senior and older adult lens to identifying, and facilitating planning for, age-friendly initiatives.

As people age, the level of support they require to remain in or near their own homes can change. It is important that people are empowered to make decisions about their own care and that our support systems are adequate to meet the needs of people as they age throughout the lifespan.

Section eight of Health Accord NL's final report speaks to the health of older adults and provides calls to action to support healthy aging. Among the recommendations is a call to implement and support an integrated continuum of care to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of care delivery, improve health and social outcomes for older adults and older adults with disabilities, and support older adults to age in place with dignity and autonomy.

2025-26 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Council will have facilitated a workshop on gaps and solutions in home care.

Indicator	Report on Activities
- Facilitated a workshop on gaps and solutions in home care. - Provided summary of workshop findings to Minister.	Council held a workshop with representatives of the Seniors Health Care Division of SEN to discuss perceived gaps and potential solutions in home care services in Newfoundland and Labrador. SEN staff summarized notes from the discussion to be considered in future policy changes.

Summary

The Provincial Government continues to promote the concept of age-friendly communities through the Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador Communities Program and initiatives found in Health Accord NL. Engaging with communities on the benefits and importance of using age-friendly principles and thinking in municipal programs and planning, and seeking ways to improve access to and the quality of home care services helps to support individuals across the lifespan.

Opportunities and Challenges

- Ageism remains one of the last socially accepted forms of discrimination. This is true on a global scale. Through the Respect Aging Campaign, participation in the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors' Ageism Working Group and other opportunities, the Provincial Government is contributing to initiatives that help to reduce the prevalence of ageism. PACAS will continue to provide input and advice on this issue.

- Poverty continues to be among the most significant social determinants of health, and it continues to be a significant issue for single seniors and older adults. The past few years have been a period of high inflation and significant increases in the cost of living. Current geopolitical and international trade issues add extra layers of uncertainty to the Canadian economy. This has potential to further exacerbate issues such as access to safe and affordable housing and food. The Provincial Government's Poverty Reduction Plan and Seniors' Health and Well-Being Plan continue to guide efforts to help seniors, older adults and the broader population. PACAS will continue to observe the impacts of ongoing geopolitical and economic change and the programs and policies of the Provincial Government and provide advice wherever possible.
- The Department of Seniors continues to promote issues of importance to seniors and older adults to help ensure they are at the forefront of Provincial Government decision making and that a seniors' lens is applied to all major policy and program decisions. Initiatives of the Provincial Government, as well as Council's efforts to engage municipalities in age-friendly planning, will help to ensure that, as people move through the lifespan, they will be supported to age well in the right place in age-friendly communities.

Financial Information

Members of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors do not receive remuneration. Council members are reimbursed for expenses and travel costs. Council's budget is included in the Seniors and Aging Division's budget and it is not required to submit audited financial statements. Council met virtually during 2025-26 and did not incur any costs.

Annex A: Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors Members 2025-26

Membership is listed as of March 31, 2026.

Name	Role	Appointment Date	Expiry Date
Pamela Anstey	Member	2025-08-07	2027-08-07
Katherine Brinston-LeRoy	Member	2025-08-07	2027-08-07
Mark Brown	Member	2023-04-05	2026-04-05
Joshua Carey	Chair	2025-08-07	2027-08-07
Melissa Coish	Member	2025-08-07	2027-08-07
Mildred Darlene Colbourne	Member	2025-08-07	2027-08-07
Veronica Dale Colbourne	Member	2023-04-05	2026-04-05
Shelly Collins	Member	2025-08-07	2027-08-07
Dr. William Eaton	Member	2023-04-05	2026-04-05
Doreen Blanche Neville	Vice-Chair	2025-08-07	2027-08-07
Lori Osborne	Member	2025-08-07	2027-08-07
Doris Sacrey	Member	2023-04-05	2026-04-05
Laura White	Member	2025-08-07	2027-08-07