



Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

Annual Report 2022-2023

Please Note:

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Chairperson's Message

Hon. Paul A. Pike
Minister
Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Pike:

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 2022-23.

PACAS remains committed to providing advice to 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 reflected 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 Children, Seniors and Social Development.

In January 2023, the terms of five Council members expired. It is anticipated that new appointments will be made early in the 2023-24. On behalf of Council, I would like to thank the outgoing members for their contributions and commitment and look forward to working with new or reappointed members on initiatives critical to improving the lives of seniors and older adults in 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,



Pamela Anstey, Chairperson
Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

Table of Contents

Overview.....1

Mandate.....2

Highlights and Partnerships.....2

Report on Performance.....4

 Issue 1: Social Isolation.....4

 Issue 2: Elder Abuse.....6

 Issue 3: Financial Literacy and Security..... 8

 Issue 4: Demographic Change..... 9

Opportunities and Challenges.....12

Financial Information.....14

Annex A: Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors Members 2022-23.....15

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 Children, Seniors and Social Development) on issues related to older persons and the aging process.

Until the expiry of five members' terms in January 2023, the 2022-23 Council consisted of 12 members, including a Chair (See Annex A for the Council membership as of March 31, 2023), and is listed in Schedule C of the **Public Service Commission Act**. The Public Service Commission (PSC), through the Independent Appointments Commission (IAC), solicits candidates for vacancies with consideration given to geography, culture, gender, background, experience and skills. Members are appointed for terms of up to three years by the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development. 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 financial 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.

Total expenditures for the Council for 2022-23 were \$20,154.83. More details are provided on page 12.

More information on the Council may be found at:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/seniors/focus/provincialadvisory/>

Mandate

The mandate of the Council is to advise and inform the minister on issues, concerns, and requirements of seniors and those who support them. This includes ensuring that the Provincial Government considers the perspective of older adults when developing both current and future legislation, policies, programs and services. The Council also 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 Council aims to:

- Challenge ageism;
- Promote the value and worth of people as they age;
- Foster an environment of understanding within the Provincial Government and the community with regard to 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; and,
- Inform the Provincial Government on the potential impacts of legislation, policies, programs and services on people as they age.

Highlights and Partnerships

2022-23 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 2022-23 Seniors of Distinction Award recipients. This annual award recognizes and celebrates the contributions, achievements and

diversity of Newfoundland and Labrador seniors

(<https://www.gov.nl.ca/releases/2022/cssd/0704n03/>).

- In May of 2022, Council hosted a workshop, **The Community Sector: Working Together for Age-Friendly Communities**. This workshop brought together representatives from the public and community sectors for a one-day workshop to discuss how policies, services and structures can support and enable people to live in a secure environment, enjoy good physical and mental health, and participate fully in society regardless of age or ability. Twenty-six individuals, representing eleven different community sector organizations, PACAS and CSSD attended the workshop. Council presented an overview of the workshop, including general themes from discussions, and a series of recommendations to the Minister.
- Participated in the COVID-19 Vulnerable Populations Task Group and Seniors' Working Group to better understand challenges faced by seniors, and those who support seniors, during the pandemic.
- Continued to participate in the Public Health Agency of Canada's Pan-Canadian Age-Friendly Reference Group. This group is committed to advancing the age-friendly movement nationally and internationally through the development of flexible national guidelines, the creation of community resources and the coordination of knowledge exchange activities.
- 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.
- Continued representation with the Aging Research Centre-Newfoundland and Labrador (ARC-NL) Advisory Council to establish a line of communication between ARC-NL and PACAS, and to help ensure ARC-NL initiatives are relevant to seniors and older adults in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Continued engagement in and support for the NL Health Accord process and proposed approach (i.e. focus on social determinants of health and primary health care).

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 strategic directions include expanding housing and transportation options to support aging well in the right place, and will help to build a more positive image of aging.

In addition to supporting the strategic directions of Government, Council also received input from other stakeholders to inform its areas of focus and facilitate its ability to provide advice to the Minister.

Issue 1: Social Isolation

Social isolation affects both physical and mental health. In 2019, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced the Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Social Inclusion Initiative with the goal of addressing social isolation. COVID-19 has further demonstrated the importance of social inclusion for seniors and the negative implications of isolation and loneliness. In 2022-23, Council's discussion focused on the lasting impact of social isolation and the accessibility of mental health services for seniors.

2022-23 Objective

- By March 31, 2023, Council will provide advice to the Minister on how to address the ongoing mental health impacts of social isolation and loneliness on seniors.

Indicator	Report on Activities
<p>Conducted focus groups with seniors and mental health professionals.</p>	<p>In lieu of specific focus groups, Council held a virtual session with Barry Hewitt, Systems Navigator for Mental Health and Addictions with Eastern Health in February, 2022. This session provided Council with insight into the demand for and availability of mental health and addictions services for seniors and older adults in Newfoundland and Labrador as well as regional differences with respect to clients' and health professionals' knowledge of available supports.</p>
<p>Reviewed best practices from other jurisdictions in an effort to advise on ongoing mental health concerns and solutions for seniors.</p>	<p>In May of 2022, Council hosted a workshop, The Community Sector: Working Together for Age-Friendly Communities. This workshop brought together representatives from the public and community sectors for a one-day workshop to discuss how policies, services and structures can support and enable people to live in a secure environment, enjoy good physical and mental health, and participate fully in society regardless of age or ability.</p> <p>Council's discussions at the workshop mentioned above considered best and emerging practices from other jurisdictions and were informed by reports and resources from, but not limited to, the</p>

	Federal-Provincial-Territorial Seniors' Forum and the United Nations' Decade of Healthy Aging. In particular, Council focused on the various forms of mental health supports that seniors may need (i.e. counseling versus just prescriptions), and the need for low-tech services for seniors experiencing the digital divide.
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Summary:

Social isolation continues to be a challenge for many seniors in NL with some seniors identifying increased levels of stress and anxiety compounded by social distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Deliberate efforts to support age-friendly communities will help to support social connectedness, which supports better physical and mental health and overall well-being.

Issue 2: Elder Abuse

Elder abuse has been identified by both the Government of Canada and the Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Advocate as a critical issue facing seniors. Additionally, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Seniors Forum is exploring the possible incorporation of elder abuse as a topic in the upcoming work cycle. Elder abuse can include but is not limited to:

- Physical violence;
- Sexual violence;
- Emotional violence;
- Psychological violence;
- Spiritual violence;
- Cultural violence;
- Verbal Abuse;

- Financial Abuse; and,
- Neglect

The challenges faced in the definition of elder abuse are complex and include balancing the concept of vulnerability with independence, autonomy and capacity.

2022-23 Objective

- By March 31, 2023, Council will advise the Minister on ways to enhance and promote the **Respect Aging** Program – part of the province’s Violence Prevention Initiative.

Indicator	Report on Activities
<p>Provided input from seniors on best avenues to promote the Respect Aging program.</p>	<p>In 2022-23, Council discussed seniors’ perspectives regarding the digital divide and seniors’ digital literacy as potential issues of the Respect Aging program (or any other) program existing only online. Council identified the NL 50+ Federation and its member clubs as a potential vehicle to promote the Respect Aging program through in person education.</p>
<p>Reviewed best practices from other jurisdictions to support Council’s discussion.</p>	<p>In 2022-23, Council reviewed best practices from other jurisdictions to support Council discussions at the Community Sector Workshop. Council’s discussions considered best and emerging practices from other jurisdictions, such as public awareness campaigns on ageism, intergenerational activities, and engagement of municipal leaders, and were informed by reports and resources from, but not limited to, the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Seniors’ Forum and the United Nations’ Decade of Healthy Aging.</p>

Summary:

The **Respect Aging** program was designed to educate and train various audiences in the recognition, prevention and intervention of violence against older persons, which can

have damaging, long-term effects. The **Respect Aging** program and its principles should be considered when coming up with new ways to facilitate and support age-friendly communities. Communities need to be part of the solution in collaboration with citizens, the business community and other levels of government.

Issue 3: Financial Literacy and Security

Financial planning and security are a core issue facing seniors. Financial security intersects with a variety of other issues including housing, financial abuse, food security, and transportation.

2022-23 Objective

- By March 31, 2023, Council will contribute to a series of financial literacy tools for seniors.

Indicator	Report on Activities
Identified potential tools to support seniors' financial literacy.	In 2022-23, members of Council continued to support SeniorsNL's ongoing efforts to increase seniors' financial literacy by providing feedback on SeniorsNL's services and their partnership with the NL 50+ Federation and ABC Life Literacy and the courses they offer.
Reviewed best practices from other jurisdictions to support Council's discussion.	In 2021, Council held a focused discussion session to identify best practices from other jurisdictions on seniors' financial literacy, fraud and scams. Potential solutions and resources were shared with the Minister during a meeting with Council in November of

	<p>2022. Suggestions/best practices included promotion of Your Financial Toolkit through Canada.ca (https://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/financial-toolkit.html) and the importance of a life-span perspective to financial literacy.</p>
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Summary:

In today’s increasingly complex financial world, financial literacy is key to helping seniors make better financial decisions. Council has identified educating younger people – the seniors of tomorrow – as a key consideration to supporting seniors’ financial literacy in the future. It is also important to educate today’s seniors on scam and fraud prevention as well as seniors’ financial abuse which can have devastating impacts on the personal finances of seniors and older adults.

Issue 4: Demographic Change

Health Accord NL has helped to highlight the impacts of significant demographic change on our health and social systems and communities. It states that over the past 30 years, the population has been dropping steadily in most areas of the province. Some regions have seen a drop of more than 70 percent in the number of children under the age of 15, while nearly every region of the province has seen the proportion of the population age 65 plus at least double. Guided by Health Accord NL and reports from organizations like the World Health Organization and the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Seniors’ Forum, Council continues to provide advice on how to meet the challenges and opportunities of changing demographics.

2022-23 Objective

- By March 31, 2023, Council will advise CSSD on ways to integrate age-friendly and universal design principles into municipal and regional planning.

Indicator	Report on Activities
<p>Reviewed best practices on ways to integrate age-friendly and universal design principles into existing community planning processes.</p>	<p>In May of 2022, Council hosted a workshop, The Community Sector: Working Together for Age-Friendly Communities, to discuss new and existing practices to support age-friendly communities. Much of the discussion was dedicated to ways to support and encourage municipalities to consider age-friendly principles in policies, planning and programs. Representatives from the community sector were brought together for a one-day workshop to discuss how policies, services and structures can support and enable people to live in a secure environment, enjoy good physical and mental health and participate fully in society regardless of age or ability. Twenty-six individuals, representing eleven different community sector organizations, PACAS and CSSD attended the workshop. Universal design, healthy built environment and dementia-friendly principles were acknowledged as intertwining with age-friendly principles, and it was noted that initiatives in these areas should be coordinated to avoid duplication and make best use of</p>

	available resources.
<p>Provided recommendations on ways to promote and include age-friendly and universal design principles into existing community planning processes.</p>	<p>In 2022, Council presented an overview of the Community Sector: Working Together for Age-Friendly Communities workshop, including general themes from discussions, and a series of recommendations to the Minister on ways to promote and include age-friendly and universal design principles into existing community planning processes.</p> <p>Recommendations included adding an age-friendly lens to communities' current planning processes, and offering more support and education for communities who wish to start or continue their journey to becoming more age-friendly.</p>

Summary:

Demographics are changing in communities all throughout our province. It is important for communities to plan for aging populations by identifying and developing supports for individuals, families and businesses that help ensure residents can age well in their own homes and communities. Age-friendly and universal design principles help to ensure that businesses, housing options, public spaces and government services are accessible to all as they move through the lifespan. Communities, in collaboration with the business community and other levels of government, need to be involved to ensure an age-friendly lens guides policy and program decisions as communities continue to adapt to demographic change.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities:

- The global COVID-19 pandemic highlighted many challenges but also opportunities with respect to issues facing seniors and older adults. As we emerge from the pandemic, some opportunities have arisen such as:
 - the ability to book medical and other appointments online;
 - options to meet virtually (via phone or internet) with a physician or other professionals; and
 - expansion of online services such as online grocery/retail orders for curbside pick-up or delivery.
 - In February 2022, Health Accord NL's final report was presented to the Provincial Government and included calls to action on improving specific social, economic, and environmental conditions affecting our health; providing better, more timely access to health care; and developing a more integrated, technologically enhanced, and sustainable health system. With the Health Accord and new social well-being plan currently being developed, there is an opportunity to redesign existing and develop new programs and services that will help address many of the issues identified by Council, such as ageism, poverty and access to health and homecare services. Council will continue to be guided by the Health Accord and the goal of greater social well-being in mind as it works to promote greater use of age-friendly principles in government policy and in programs and services in communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.
 - The recently created Cabinet Committee on Seniors will help ensure that the issues of importance to seniors and older adults are at the forefront of Provincial Government decision making and that a seniors lens is applied to all major policy and program decisions. The deliberations of the Cabinet Committee as well as Council 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.
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Challenges:

- 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 in particular. Demand on food banks is the highest it has been in recent memory and the rising cost of living has been hitting everyone hard especially those on a fixed income, many of whom are seniors. People living in poverty tend to have poorer health outcomes and require more public services and interventions. Council will continue to advocate on behalf of seniors and older adults as the Provincial Government works to complete Newfoundland and Labrador's new well-being plan.
- Council will continue to consider and advise on ways to increase the use of technology to help reduce isolation and loneliness among seniors and older adults. Council recognizes that internet access and digital literacy remain challenges for many seniors and older adults and that initiatives that help bridge the digital divide will be essential to helping seniors and older adults take advantage of the conveniences and opportunities presented by technology.

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. As detailed in the table below, the costs for 2022-23 totaled \$20,154.83.

Area of Expenditure	Total
Purchased Services (meeting space rentals, food and beverage, etc.)	\$10,064.57
Transportation and Communication (Travel costs, per diems, accommodations, incidentals, etc.)	\$10,090.26
Total	\$20,154.83

Annex A: Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors Members 2022-23

Pamela Anstey, Chair (St. John's) Pam Anstey has worked in community and non-profit development for more than 20 years. Holding a Master of Social Work from Dalhousie, she has an extensive background in disability policy, poverty, and food insecurity, along with a knowledge of social enterprise and small business. Pam currently works as a case manager with the Community Food Helpline, as a counsellor with the Athena Health Centre, and as Executive Director of the St John's Farmers' Market. She also sits on the Board of the Centre for Health Information, the Board of the NL Federation of Cooperatives, and as an active member of the Provincial Food Insecurity Working Group.

Joshua Carey (Corner Brook) Joshua Carey holds a Bachelor of Community Studies from the University of Cape Breton, a Diploma in Adult Education from St. Francis Xavier University and a Diploma in Community Studies and Project Management from Bay St. George Community College. As a career public servant, Joshua's work focused on economic, industrial and community development. He has also been heavily involved in the community, having served on municipal councils and as a member and chair of many provincial, regional, and community boards and committees.

Megan Ford (St. John's) Having a background in human rights and social work, Megan Ford has been providing clinical oversight to adult care in both the private and non-profit sectors for the past 10 years. She is a feminist and a lifelong volunteer in the Girl Guide movement, as well as being a member of the Board of Directors for Old School, a non-profit organization aimed at bridge the generational gap between youth and seniors through the arts.

Noreen Careen (Labrador City) Having an undergraduate degree in women's studies, Noreen Careen was Executive Director of the Labrador West Status of Women's Council for more than 20 years. She served in a variety of roles with the Hope Haven's Women's Shelter for over 20 years and was involved with many other initiatives, from family resource centres to the Labrador West Housing and Homelessness Coalition and the Newfoundland and Labrador Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse through SeniorsNL. In 2019, she was named one of Newfoundland and Labrador's Seniors of Distinction.

Helen Handrigan (St. John's) Helen Handrigan received a Master of Social Work degree in 1978 and is now a retired social worker, having 35 years of practice in acute care, family court and tenant relations. Her last position was Senior Housing Officer with the City of St. John's. Since 2013 she has served on the Board of Directors with SeniorsNL.

Judy Pardy (Cartwright) Judy Pardy has a lengthy history in socioeconomic development with communities in Labrador. She was previously Executive Director with the Southeastern Aurora Development Corporation and has served in many capacities including archaeology and recreation roles. She is currently involved with the Sandwich Bay 50+ Club and as a peer volunteer with SeniorsNL.

Marie Brennan Downey (Stephenville Crossing) Marie Brennan Downey holds a Bachelor of Social Work from Memorial University and has worked in a variety of health care related positions throughout her career. In addition to working as a Social Work Clinical Leader, Marie also served as Outreach Services Coordinator, and Program Manager of Rehabilitative Services in acute and long-term care facilities. Marie currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Western Health and continues to be active in her community through volunteer activities.

Dr. William Eaton: MD, FCFP, (PC) (St. John's) Earned MD and MSc (Clinical epidemiology) degrees at Memorial University. Dr. Eaton worked clinically for 40 years in Family Medicine, long-term care, and Palliative Care and for 36 years of those years at Memorial's medical school. He is a retired Associate Professor of Family Medicine, a former Chair of the Alzheimer Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, and a former Program Director for Family Medicine at Memorial University. He has six children and eleven grandchildren.

Roseanne Leonard (Paradise) Holds a Master of Business Administration from Memorial University and serves as Managing Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Community Business Development Corporations. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Alzheimer Society of Newfoundland and Labrador and a former Chairperson of the Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council. Roseanne also holds a Masters Certificate in Project Management from York University.