

Progress Report Seniors Secretariat

2009-2010



Seniors'
Secretariat
— of Prince Edward Island —



Community Services,
Seniors and Labour

Prince Edward Island Seniors' Secretariat

Progress Report

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Seniors' Secretariat Progress Report

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1.0 Message from the Minister

As Minister responsible for seniors and on behalf of the members of the PEI Seniors' Secretariat, I am pleased to present the 2009 -2010 Progress Report. Over the past year the Secretariat renewed its work plan while moving forward to undertake public awareness events, provide program and policy advice and collect research and information on seniors' issues.



As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, which are detailed in this report, we also look forward to meeting the challenges and opportunities of our One Island Future. Projected changes in population demographics suggest that by 2030, 48 percent of Islanders will be 50 years of age or older. This growth in the population of older adults offers a rich resource of skills, wisdom and experience for our One Island Community to draw upon. As an example, an important area for collaboration with seniors will be in identifying ways to support older adults to remain in the communities of their choice for as long as possible and anticipate the needs of those who are most vulnerable.

We must also continue to recognize and value the contributions of older adults to the social and economic prosperity of Prince Edward Island. I look forward to continuing to work with the members of the PEI Seniors' Secretariat as we address challenges and opportunities to continue to improve the quality of life for older adults in Prince Edward Island.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janice A. Sherry". The signature is written in black ink and has a decorative flourish at the end.

Janice Sherry
Minister of Community Services, Seniors and Labour¹

¹ On January 13, 2010 the Department of Social Services and Seniors was realigned to become the Department of Community Services, Seniors and Labour. During the reporting time, the Honourable Doug W. Currie served as Minister of Social Services and Seniors.

2.0 Message from the Chair



Since 2005 the Seniors' Secretariat has undertaken many activities to improve the quality of life of Island seniors. These actions have included collaborating with partners to recognize World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, participating in the Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance, and the Disability Support Review process. Over time the Secretariat has provided advice on the development of public policy on diverse issues that include housing, home heating, employment, taxation, and drug programs. The Secretariat has also had the opportunity to sponsor public awareness and information initiatives such as the PEI Seniors' Guide, a toll-free information line, and presentations on topics of interest to Islanders.

Over the past year as we renewed our work plan, the Secretariat had an opportunity to carefully consider the many issues of potential interest to Island seniors of today and tomorrow and identify areas for action based on members' knowledge of national, provincial and local issues; research data and emerging issues. This was a challenging task, but we are confident that with the support of seniors, community partner organizations and government that we can continue to work together to address these issues for the benefit of all Islanders.

I would like to thank the members of the Secretariat and their organizations for their dedication and thoughtful work over the past year. It has been a pleasure to have an opportunity to work with you and share ideas.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to work with the many organizations and individuals in the community who have an interest in issues affecting Island seniors. Much has been done and many important issues remain to be addressed. I look forward to continuing to work with the Secretariat members as we work on these issues.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna Duffy".

Anna Duffy, Chairperson
PEI Seniors' Secretariat

3.0 Overview

The PEI Seniors' Secretariat was established as a result of feedback received from the seniors' community. Seniors are one of the fastest growing populations on PEI. The approximately 21,130 Islanders aged 65 years and older currently comprise 15.1% of the population. The population of Island seniors is higher than the overall Canadian average of 13.7% and compared to other provinces, Prince Edward Island has the third highest proportion of the population aged 65 and over.

3.1 *Mandate*

The mandate of the PEI Seniors' Secretariat is to collaborate with government on matters relating to seniors, their issues and concerns, to act as a resource and information centre and to advise government on the development of public policy.

The Seniors' Secretariat has three primary roles and responsibilities regarding the issues and concerns of Island seniors which include:

- Providing policy and program advice to government and community;
- Offering public awareness and education;
- Gathering research and information.

The Seniors' Secretariat achieves results through:

- seeking input and views of Islanders to assist in public policy development regarding seniors' issues;
- encouraging the development of relationships among seniors, government and community-based programs and services that support seniors;
- providing leadership in the promotion of age-related research; and
- developing strong partnerships with seniors' organizations and services.

3.2 *Mission Statement*

The mission of the Seniors' Secretariat aligns with that of the Department of Social Services and Seniors.

To support social and economic prosperity for individuals, families and communities.

In support of this mission, the efforts of the Secretariat focus on supporting the social and economic prosperity of Island seniors, their families and the communities in which they live.

3.3 *Vision Statement*

The vision of the Seniors' Secretariat aligns with that of the Department of Social Services and Seniors:

Healthy individuals, families and communities reaching their full potential.

In support of this vision, the efforts of the Secretariat focus on promoting healthy seniors, families and communities to reach their full potential.

3.4 *Principles*

The PEI Seniors' Secretariat has adopted the five principles of the National Framework on Aging, developed by the Public Health Agency, Division of Aging and Seniors to guide its work. These principles include:

- **Dignity** - respect for the personal privacy, individual values, preferences, and spiritual beliefs of seniors.
- **Fairness** - equally addressing the distinctive needs of diverse seniors.
- **Independence** - enabling seniors to manage their affairs and participate as fully as possible in decisions affecting their health and security.
- **Participation** - enabling seniors to maintain their social status and connections in the community.
- **Security** - ensuring seniors have sufficient resources to meet their basic needs and lead self-fulfilling lives.

4.0 *Year in Review*

4.1 *Review of critical issues*

There are many issues of importance to Island seniors. Based on an individual's life stage and personal circumstances, some issues may have more relevance than others. As an example, changes to an individual's social and support network may have immediate and long term effects on one's connection within a community and ability to live independently. Emerging issues may also arise to influence the quality of life experienced by Island seniors. Recent changes in the economy and the rising cost of living are examples of issues of national importance that have also influenced the daily lives of Islanders.

The following is a list of the key issues that the Seniors' Secretariat has identified as priority areas for action in its work plan.

Ageism and Promoting Positive Images of Aging

Ageism is any action, attitude or prejudice that subordinates an individual or group of people based on age. The consequences of ageism are similar to other forms of discrimination in that a group of people who are subjected to a negative image tend to adopt the image and behave in ways that conform to the image. The Secretariat attempts to combat ageism by increasing public awareness of this issue, challenging stereotypes (both positive and negative) and realistically portraying the diversity of Island seniors' experiences.

Age Friendly Communities

Focuses on increasing awareness of what seniors need to maintain active, healthy and productive lives within their communities. The Secretariat seeks opportunities to collaborate with community organizations and municipalities to promote age-friendly communities for Island seniors and their families.

Financial Security and Safety

Financial security is central to quality of life and is a determinant of wellness. Income must be secure and livable for an adequate standard of living. The Seniors' Secretariat participates as a member of the federal provincial territorial working group on financial security and works with local organizations and agencies to disseminate information related to financial security.

The issue of safety is multidimensional in that it requires attention to personal safety within age-friendly communities, within homes and institutions; safe use of medication; emergency preparedness, and protection from psychological or emotional abuse, financial or material abuse, physical, sexual abuse, neglect and self neglect. The Seniors' Secretariat seeks to work in collaboration with community groups such as the Island Network for Injury Prevention to raise public awareness on safety issues.

Healthy Aging

A range of programs and services in the health care system and in the community support older adults in their efforts to optimize their health and well-being. The Seniors' Secretariat recognizes that healthy aging is multidimensional and is influenced by the determinants of health. On PEI, the Healthy Living Strategy is a health promotion strategy focusing on healthy eating, active living and tobacco control. The Seniors' Secretariat participates on the Healthy Living Strategy Steering Committee.

The Seniors' Secretariat also collaborates with the Department of Health and community service providers on health service initiatives by offering advice and assistance to improve the quality of services and plan for enhancements that respond to the changing population demographic. The Seniors' Secretariat participates as a member of the federal, provincial, territorial working group on healthy aging.

Housing

The Seniors' Secretariat promotes the creation of supportive housing environments that help people at all life stages and abilities to maintain their highest possible level of functioning.

Affordable, accessible, acceptable, safe and supportive seniors' housing options represent a key determinant of active aging as physical environments make a significant difference between:

- positive social interaction vs isolation;
- comfortable, safe living vs conditions that are unhealthy;
- remaining in a community, at home, longer vs institutionalization.

Active aging shifts the planning of seniors' housing away from a 'needs-based' approach to one that focuses on abilities, the rights of older persons to opportunities and recognizes the responsibility of seniors to participate within the community. As a result of the announcement of capital expenditures to support the development and improvement of seniors' housing on PEI this will continue to be an issue of importance. In support of seniors' housing the Secretariat collaborates with the Housing Division of the Department of Social Services and Seniors and the Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance local working group.

Social Isolation

Social isolation is a complex concept that involves physical, social, emotional and psychological aspects. It has been described as less social contact than an individual wishes. Although anyone can become socially isolated, seniors may be particularly at risk because of physical changes, environmental barriers to social participation, and changes in one's personal and social support networks. The Secretariat provides funding for initiatives designed to reduce social isolation such as funding to the Young At Heart Musical Theatre Company which offers opportunities to engage with older adults in community care and manors.

5.0 Key Roles and Responsibilities

The Seniors' Secretariat has three primary roles and responsibilities regarding the issues and concerns of Island seniors. These three roles of providing program and policy direction; public awareness; and research/information have been designed to provide maximum flexibility in the Secretariat's ability to respond to issues affecting Island seniors. Each of these roles and responsibilities requires the Secretariat to develop and maintain quality collaborations with other individuals and groups to achieve progress in these areas.

5.1 Program and Policy Direction

The Secretariat fully engages the wisdom and expertise of its members and their respective organizations to provide timely, quality advice that supports the planning, development and implementation of programs, policies and services that improve the lives of Island seniors. This expertise is available to any department, agency or board of provincial, municipal or federal governments; community organizations and/or individuals with an interest in issues affecting seniors. The Secretariat measures achievements in this area by assessing the volume and scope of opportunities that the Secretariat addresses.

5.2 Public Awareness

The Secretariat takes action to increase seniors' awareness and knowledge of topic areas as identified in the review of critical issues (see section 4.0). By offering continuing opportunities to increase knowledge, skills and awareness, Island seniors will be better prepared to reach their full potential for social and economic prosperity in their communities. The Secretariat measures achievements in this area through the number and scope of public awareness initiatives that are undertaken, the alignment with the Secretariat's work plan and evaluates the effectiveness of these initiatives through the use of evaluation tools.

5.3 Research and Information

The Secretariat undertakes research to inform decision making and enhance the quality of program and policy advice that is provided to external groups. This research may include, but is not limited to: literature reviews, focus groups, surveys, public consultations, supporting research initiatives and consultations with other government departments and agencies on PEI and in other jurisdictions. The Secretariat measures achievements in this area through the number of completed research and information gathering projects and the dissemination of findings to relevant stakeholders.

6.0 Results/Outcomes Achieved 2009-2010

6.1 Program and Policy Direction - to provide timely, quality advice that supports the planning, development and implementation of programs, policies and services that improve the lives of Island seniors.

Outcomes Achieved

- Secretariat members participated in the review process to offer advice on the Community Legal Information Association's development of older adults and the law brochures.
- The Secretariat provided advice and field tested draft colorectal cancer screening promotional and information materials from the Department of Health.
- The Secretariat reviewed and provided advice on a student nurse project related to end of life planning.
- Secretariat members were represented on several committees and working groups to provide information, program and policy advice. These included health care redesign (hospital discharge planning), the PEI Healthy Living Strategy steering committee, manor replacement committee, the Premiers' Committee on Family Violence Prevention and dementia strategy planning,
- A discussion paper on mandatory retirement was prepared to inform future discussions on this topic.
- The Secretariat coordinated the PEI field testing of federal financial literacy fact sheets to provide advice on the development of these materials.

6.2 Public Awareness - to increase seniors' awareness and knowledge

Outcomes Achieved

- The PEI toll-free seniors telephone and email services received over 100 contacts per month from Island seniors, their families and/or caregivers.
- The PEI Seniors' Guide provided information on programs and services of interest to seniors in seven areas: active living, financial matters, health services, housing, life-long learning, personal security and legal services, and transportation. This year the Secretariat sponsored an evaluation of the guide to measure general awareness of the guide, its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Many helpful suggestions were received from respondents and an updated guide is scheduled for release in 2010.

- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is recognized each year on June 15 with a special event to increase public awareness of this important issue. This year the Seniors' Secretariat collaborated with the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day planning committee to present a social drama on hoarding and neglect, one of the most prevalent reasons for referrals to Adult Protection Services.
- To mark national fraud prevention month (March), a public presentation on awareness of frauds and scams was presented in collaboration with the Bank of Canada and the RCMP Commercial Crimes Unit.
- The Secretariat hosted a series of information booths during the year to distribute information and increase awareness of the work of the group. These opportunities to distribute information included hosted a booth during the Department of Health's annual long term care conference in October 2009, at a falls prevention event hosted by the Island Injury Prevention Network, PEI Senior Citizens Federation Annual meeting and the annual meeting of the Canadian Association for Retired Persons.
- In partnership with Murphys' Pharmacies, a presentation series providing information during national nutrition month on "Healthy Eating for Island Seniors" was offered in O'Leary, Summerside, Charlottetown, Montague and Souris.
- In partnership with the Island Network for Injury Prevention, the Secretariat supported a meeting on age-friendly communities in March 2010. Dr Elaine Gallagher, a lead researcher on age-friendly communities in British Columbia was the keynote speaker at this event. The intent of this forum was to provide information and create opportunities for new collaboration on the development of age-friendly communities.
- The Secretariat submitted monthly articles to *The Voice for Island Seniors*. Over the past year these articles have recognized national events (National Nutrition Month, International Day of Persons with Disabilities), safety and security (family violence prevention, elder abuse awareness) and lifestyle topics (planning for life transitions, driver retirement, housing and influenza prevention).
- The Secretariat offered letters of support to several organizations who were seeking funding for projects that aligned with the Secretariat's workplan. As an example outcome, the project *Abuse of Older Adults PEI Network Response* was successful in receiving funding support from the federal fund New Horizons for Seniors.

6.3 Research and Information - to undertake research to inform decision making and enhance the quality of program and policy advice.

Outcomes Achieved

The Secretariat began collecting information on financial issues and Island seniors with a focus on the impact of HST, tax structures and retirement to inform its work in providing program and policy advice.

- Focus groups were completed and a discussion paper on pets in seniors' housing was prepared and submitted to the Department of Social Services and Seniors to inform the planning of policy development.
- The Secretariat began collecting information on models for home support and home care services to inform its work in providing program and policy advice.
- The Secretariat continued to collect information on the promotion of healthy lifestyle behaviors including recent research by the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity on promoting physical activity to women 55-70.
- An updated *Portrait of Island Seniors 2010* statistical review was produced.

7.0 Accountability and Operational Structure

Refer to Appendix B, Accountability Chart

In accordance with the mandate and structure of the Secretariat, an annual report to government is submitted through the Minister of Social Services and Seniors.

An annual work plan is developed/updated at the beginning of each fiscal year and submitted to the Minister.

8.0 *Budget*

The Department of Social Services and Seniors supports the work of the Secretariat by providing administrative, finance, human resources and information technology support.

Seniors' Secretariat	Budgeted 2009/10	Actual 2009/10
Administration	\$2,500	\$634
Materials, supplies and services	\$2,000	\$2,401
Travel and training	\$6,900	\$1,652
Grant	\$68,000	\$23,286
FPT Grant	\$1,000	\$1,100
	\$80,400	\$29,073

Seniors' Secretariat

Projects funded during the 2009/10 fiscal year by the Secretariat included a project to investigate literacy and health literacy in older adults, an evaluation of the PEI Seniors' Guide, an initiative to address social isolation in long term care through the work of the Young at Heart Musical Theatre Company, and community education and awareness events on topics such as healthy eating, fraud awareness, and age-friendly communities.

Appendix A

Mandate and Structure of the PEI Seniors' Secretariat

1.0 Mandate

The mandate of the P.E.I. Seniors' secretariat is to serve as a focal point for seniors to collaborate with government on matters relating to seniors, their issues and concerns, to act as a resource and information centre and to advise government on the development of public policy.

2.0 Role and Functions

The Seniors' Secretariat has three primary roles and responsibilities regarding the issues and concerns of Island seniors which include:

- Policy and program advice to government and community;
- Public awareness and education
- Research and information.

The operational success of the Seniors' Secretariat relies on the following actions:

- seeking input and views of Islanders to assist in public policy development regarding seniors' issues;
- encouraging the development of relationships among seniors, government and community-based programs and services that support seniors;
- providing leadership in the promotion of age-related research; and
- developing strong partnerships with seniors' organizations and services to assist in organizing seniors' voice.

3.0 Membership

The Seniors' Secretariat is comprised of member organizations and three ex-officio members as follows:

- Mental Health Association (with seniors expertise)
- Dental Association
- Community Legal Information Association (CLIA)
- Hospice Palliative Care Association of PEI
- Seniors Citizens' Federation
- Royal Canadian Legion, PEI Command Branch
- Seniors' United Network
- Department of Health (Long Term Care)

- Department of Social Services and Seniors (Director of Pharmacy, Housing, Dentistry and Seniors Division)
- Women's Institute
- Les Francophone L'age D'or de Î.P.E.
- MCPEI
- Three members at large chosen from retirees' associations

Ex-Officio (non-voting):

- Adult Protection Officer

The terms of service are three years. Terms are staggered to ensure continuity.

Secretariat members from the community can serve up to two consecutive terms and must be active members and appointed by the organization which they represent.

The Chair shall be selected through the following process:

There shall be an interim chair appointed until such time as the Seniors' Secretariat is constituted, at which time the chair shall be selected by/from the membership.

Community members appointed to the Secretariat serve as volunteers and receive no remuneration other than authorized expenses incurred to attend meetings. Members are expected to attend meetings regularly.

If a member finds it necessary to resign from the Secretariat, a letter to that effect should be sent to the Minister of Social Services and Seniors.

4.0 Accountability

4.1 Annual Report - An annual report to government will be submitted through the Minister of Social Services and Seniors.

4.2 Annual Work Plan - An annual work plan will be developed/updated at the beginning of each fiscal year and submitted to the Minister of Social Services and Seniors.

5.0 Meetings

5.1 The Seniors' Secretariat will meet a minimum of six times per year, with a minimum of one meeting with the Minister of Social Services and Seniors.

5.2 Additional meetings may be held at the call of the Minister or the Chair.

6.0 Support

- 6.1** The Seniors' Secretariat and its work will be supported by the Director of Pharmacy, Housing, Dentistry and Seniors and by the Seniors' Policy Advisor.
- 6.2** The Seniors' Secretariat may hold public meetings from time to time at their discretion with support from the Department of Social Services and Seniors.

Appendix B

