

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

Barb Mikulec - 3rd Vice President & Housing Chairperson Report

With **COVID-19** vulnerable people in shelters/tent cities may find distancing very difficult and moving into modular housing or some of the single room options with supportive health care may be an option. Challenges during **COVID-19** may include costs increases for food, medication, transportation or telecommunication.

The impact on seniors may include the closing of fitness centres, recreation centres, senior centres and libraries. There may be delays in getting some healthcare such as foot care, surgery or visiting those in long term care.

Good news: Seniors will receive \$300 in July from the federal government. You do not need to apply, if you receive OAS, the \$300 will be automatically paid to you. If you receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) you will receive an additional \$200.

Financial challenges -GIS is a monthly non-taxable benefit to OAS pension recipients who have a low income and are living in Canada. A single senior whose annual income (excluding OAS) is below \$18,408 is eligible to receive some amount of GIS.

In addition, provinces/territories provide senior financial benefits: (2019 rates)

BC - Seniors' Supplement \$49.30

Alberta - Seniors Benefit \$285.92. maximum

Manitoba - 55 Plus Program \$53.93 maximum

New Brunswick - Low-income Seniors' Benefit \$33.33

Newfoundland and Labrador - Seniors' Benefit \$109.42 maximum

Northwest Territories - Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit \$196.

Nova Scotia - Seniors' Provincial Income Tax Return \$833.33 maximum

Nunavut - Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit \$200.

Ontario - Guaranteed Annual Income System \$83. Maximum

Saskatchewan - Seniors Income Plan \$270. Maximum

Yukon - Seniors Income Supplement \$258.82

With housing costs, hydro and utilities, there is little left over in the budget for medications, transportation, clothing and food. This may lead to a risk of homelessness. Some provinces/territories are working with the federal government to provide modular supportive housing units to vulnerable populations.

