



# COSCO News

Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C.

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<https://www.facebook.com/COSCOBC/>

## October 1<sup>st</sup>: United Nations Day of Older Persons



Seventy-five years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the monumental first document articulating fundamental human rights that are meant to be universally

protected. This year, the theme of the 33rd commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP) on October 1st is Fulfilling the Promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for Older Persons: Across Generations. The event spotlights older persons around the world, for the enjoyment of their rights and in addressing violations.

Intergenerational solutions, which are guided by the human rights principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, and equality, empowerment and legality, can rekindle the legacy, relevance and activism of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by empowering both youth and older persons to shift the needle of political will towards fulfilling the promises of the Declaration for all people across generations.

Objectives of UNIDOP 2023:

- To increase global knowledge and awareness of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and generate commitments among all stakeholders to strengthen the protection of the human rights of current and future generations of older persons around the world.

- To share and learn from intergenerational models for the protection of human rights around the world; and
- To call on Governments and UN entities to review their current practices with a view to better integrate a life course approach to human rights in their work, and to ensure the active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, including civil society, national human rights institutions and older persons themselves, in the work of strengthening solidarity among generations and intergenerational partnerships.

Happy UNIDOP everyone!

*Edited information taken from UN website:*  
[un.org/en/observances/older-persons-day](https://un.org/en/observances/older-persons-day)

Seamus O'Regan  
Minister of Labour and Seniors



## Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC (COSCO)

Visit us at [www.coscobc.org](http://www.coscobc.org) &  
<https://www.facebook.com/COSCOBC/>

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pres@coscobc.org

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membership@coscobc.org

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## About COSCO

COSCO is an umbrella organization that brings together 74 different seniors groups, representing approximately 80,000 older adults to work on common issues.

COSCO is affiliated with the 1,000,000-member National Pensioners Federation (NPF) which promotes these issues at the national level.

COSCO is a registered non-profit organization.

Send your letters to the editor or other contributions to:

[cosconews.editor@coscobc.org](mailto:cosconews.editor@coscobc.org)

Disclaimer: Unless otherwise noted, opinions, viewpoints, accuracy of facts submitted by the member is the sole responsibility of the writer, and not necessarily the opinion of the Editor, Executive, or Membership of COSCO.

## Farewell to a Summer Like No Other



As I write, the summer is gradually turning to Fall, bringing cooler crisper days with a hint of rain. Summer has gone so quickly as many of us found time to travel once again, getting together with friends and family from afar, whom we hadn't seen for four years or more. A lot of catching up to do with still some nagging uncertainties – will the virus come back with a vengeance this winter, or will we continue on the bumpy road to a full recovery?

Looking back – first a heartfelt thanks to all the first responders dealing with the record setting fire season that has burnt up so much of our province. Time for us to work climate friendly options into our lives, so we may reduce the CO2 emissions that are causing our earthly home to heat up. Let's start with public transportation – we need reliable intercity bus transportation to ensure all Canadians old and young, urban and rural alike can safely travel to medical and other appointments. COSCO has been thrilled to partner with others on a campaign to improve the HandyDART services so important to ensure persons with disabilities can travel safely. We co-signed a letter to Transportation Minister Rob Fleming calling for accessible, affordable and increased HandyDART transportation as part of the government's commitment to the Accessible BC Act. HandyDART needs to be insourced and become part of Translink and not be outsourced to for-profit private contractors. Our advocacy continues with meeting Mayors in Metro Vancouver to gain their support.

The summer also brought back memories of the childhood game of musical chairs. No I am not only referring to the Federal Cabinet shuffle where we lost one full chair for a dedicated Minister of Seniors to land on the same chair as the Minister of Labour who becomes the Minister of Labour and Seniors. But what about renters – we see many seniors playing a grim game of musical flats (flats being the UK term for apartments). As landlords take over their rental unit to redevelop, to renovate or to allow a family member to move in, long term renters are pushed out into a rental market, one that is unaffordable. With many others competing for low rent accommodation, too many seniors end up homeless. Canada has a housing shortage not just of market housing but also of

much needed social housing for those on middle and low incomes. COSCO has made the point to Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction of the need to ensure that SAFER (Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters) actually does subsidize rents to be 30 % of a senior's income. Many senior renters in BC should be paying rents of no more than \$500 to \$750 per month – and experience shows that new units cannot be built to rent for that amount even with significant subsidies from local government and BC Housing.

COSCO did find time to put in a submission to the federal budget consultation. We called for a seniors strategy to address ageism, support for international and national initiatives to develop the proposed UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, for universal pharmacare and dental care programs, for extended health benefits (eye care, hearing aids and mobility devices), for more social housing, for promised increases to the Guaranteed Income Supplement and for the CPP's Survivor Benefit, and finally for a tri-partite national commission with provinces and transit agencies to improve the funding model for public transit. We will look for the results in the Federal Budget next year.

The summer brought continued work with the National Pensioners Federation to plan the lobby day on September 28 on Parliament Hill which will address key priorities for seniors. The Canadian Coalition Against Ageism is working hard to coordinate efforts on a campaign to highlight the toxic effects of ageism. And last but not least we are excited to report that the SFU Gerontology Department was awarded a Social Science and Humanities Research Council Grant to study ways to improve social connectedness and resilience in older adults. COSCO is proud to be collaborating in this project which includes both British Columbia and Quebec. More information to come soon – in the meantime COSCO will be working with a grad student from SFU to build a list of seniors' groups and programs across the province.

Look for more about the work of COSCO in our communities elsewhere in this issue and a huge thank you to all our hard-working Executive members, delegates and other volunteers for making this all happen.

*Leslie Gaudette, President, Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC*

# Massive Improvements Required in Intercity Passenger Transportation

The availability of intercity ground passenger transportation in Canada, particularly in rural and remote areas has been declining for many years. It has now become a chronic problem. While many communities in BC have transit systems serving their own community, people moving between communities and to large centres are forced to do so with a private car or stay home. This is a hardship on low-income seniors and others who for physical or financial reasons cannot operate a private automobile. The issue has finally drawn the attention of some in government, giving hope that the situation may be remedied.

It took a long time to get to this point.



Once the dominant mode of intercity transportation, passenger rail has nearly disappeared in BC. It has been abandoned

on Vancouver Island and on the BC Rail from North Vancouver to Prince George. We now have two return trips weekly between Vancouver and Toronto via Edmonton, and two per week between Prince Rupert and Jasper. Trains operating these services are forced to spend considerable time on sidings waiting for freight trains to pass.

Intercity buses had taken some of that business left by the railways. But by 2000, bus companies began cutting back service and abandoning routes. This included Greyhound.

The provincial government, through BC Transit, stepped in to setup BC Bus North to serve the infamous Highway of Tears, Highway 16. One year before Greyhound left in 2018, the province launched the Community Transportation Grant Program which funded 11 community shuttle bus services in northern BC

to supplement the existing long haul transportation services.

People in the rest of the province looking for intercity transportation are left with few choices. Private operators have popped up in various parts of the province but no cohesive intercity network has developed to replace Greyhound.



The province has widened the scope of attention to intercity transportation from the north to the whole province. Several public consultations are now underway.



Passenger transportation on Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast also involves travel on BC Ferries. This

mode of travel can be very trying, particularly when attempting a trip as a foot passenger relying on transit connections. The major routes from Metro Vancouver are well served by transit to and from those terminals. One exception is Duke Point which has no transit connection. Some of the Gulf Islands have BC Transit service, others have community shuttles and many have no bus service. Powell River has had no reliable ferry/bus service to Vancouver for years.

The end of Greyhound service in Canada also attracted the attention of the federal government. The Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities issued its report on Improving Bus Connectivity in Canada, in May of this year. The report recommends the federal government collaborate with all stakeholders to encourage the coordination of

intercity bus routes with passenger rail and air travel. Other recommendations include a national clearing house to allow for seamless travel between provinces, federal funding for private operators of intercity routes, and harmonization of licensing across the country. Overall, the committee's report sounded good but was weak and unlikely to result in any positive action.

The NDP members of the committee issued a dissenting report calling for much stronger actions that are worth repeating here:

- The establishment of a public, nation-wide bus network;
- Leadership action from the federal government and Minister of Transport to consolidate inter-provincial and territorial bus travel;

- A comprehensive study of the current state of inter-regional bus transit in Canada
- Funding for intermodal connection infrastructure; and
- Expanded eligibility for the Rural Transit Solutions Fund, in conjunction with increased financial resources for the fund.

With both federal and provincial governments looking at solutions to the intercity passenger transportation problem, we can be hopeful that a workable network can be developed. Studies, public input, and planning are of course necessary, they can also be stalling tactics. The rubber must hit the road soon.

*Tim Larsen, COSCO Transportation Committee member, Powell River*

## National Dental Plan Update



Don Davies MP (Vancouver Kingsway) reports that the national dental plan will be tabled in the House of Commons this fall. At present

the dental plan covers children 12 and under. The next step is to expand it to children 18 and under and seniors, followed by a complete expansion of dental services in the future. However, Davies cautions that the program will not be in place for seniors until (likely) April 2024. Once the Bill is passed and winds itself through the House of Commons and the Senate, the plan then will be set up. We might assume that the work of setting it up is taking place now, but maybe not.

There are questions about this plan. Some people have some workplace coverage or other extended

coverage with a private provider. How will that affect the coverage through the national plan? Also, people on the BC dental plan for low-income patients are facing problems accessing dental care. One of the main reasons is that the BC government hasn't adjusted the payment schedules for over 15 years. As a result, the fee the government plan now pays is often 50% lower than the fee the dentist charges. The patient is left with this charge. Many can't afford it so they opt not to get the dental care they need. Or dentists refuse to treat these patients as they will be left with outstanding unpaid bills. So, how will the new plan capture the people on the BC plan? Will the coverage be adequate?

Stay tuned. We will have another update in the December edition of the COSCO News.

*Linda Forsythe*

## Pharmacare: Will the NDP pull the plug on its support of the federal Liberals?



One of the federal cabinet changes made this summer was the appointment of Mark Holland as Health Minister replacing Jean-Yves Duclos. This change could prove helpful in our demand for a national, universal, comprehensive and public pharmacare program. Holland in his former position as Government House Leader became very familiar with the NDP's position on Pharmacare. He's also aware that for the NDP, Pharmacare (and Dental Care) are key to its support of the minority Liberal government. He has stated that passing the Canada Pharmacare Act and the Canadian Dental Care Plan are some of his top priorities.

Of course, the devil is in the details. And the details of a national pharmacare program rest on two different programs. One is the 'fill-in-gaps' program (supported by Bill Morneau and the private insurance and pharmaceutical industry lobbies) that offers public insurance to those who don't have private coverage. It has

been criticized as inadequate and more costly by experts.

The other program is the one championed by the NDP and follows that Hoskins Report calling for a 'single-payer' program. This approach models itself on the Canada Health Act. It is widely supported, including by the Canadian Health Coalition.

The Liberal caucus and cabinet are divided. The NDP health critic Don Davies states the "only a single-payer Pharmacare system will achieve the savings, efficiencies and fairness that is the hallmark of Canadian Medicare. Anything less will be unacceptable to Canadians and the NDP".

Keep your eyes open for details of this program when parliament resumes this fall. And let your MP know what you think. Minister Holland has stated that it will be on the agenda for federal government activities.

*Summary of article by Steve Staples, Canadian Health Coalition August 23, 2023. Complete article is available at [healthcoalition.ca](https://healthcoalition.ca)*



MP Don Davies, NDP health critic, is a tireless proponent of both Pharmacare and Dental Care —pictured here with COSCO First Vice-President Barb Mikulec.

## Federal Government Cabinet Shuffle: An Insult to Seniors



Sweeping changes were made to the federal government cabinet over the summer. What has been overlooked in most reporting is the elimination of a stand-alone Minister of Seniors. Instead, responsibility for Seniors has been combined with Labour, with Seamus O'Regan appointed as Minister of Labour and Seniors.

What is this? It's bad enough that the federal government doesn't see a need for a Minister to represent nearly 20% of the Canadian population, but to put Seniors with the Minister of Labour is outrageous. Labour is a huge portfolio. After all, the Canadian workforce has many pressing issues. We are concerned that adding Seniors programs to the responsibilities of Minister of Labour means that our concerns we will likely be forgotten among the huge demands of workers and the economy. Perhaps for this reason, Darren Fisher was appointed as Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors. But with this structure in place, how strong can the voice of seniors at the cabinet table be?

What does it say about the federal government's understanding of Seniors and our needs? COSCO advocated tirelessly along with many other seniors and retiree groups when the position of Minister of Seniors was first dropped from the federal cabinet following the 2015 election. Since 2018, when Filomena Tassi was appointed as Minister of Seniors we have cherished positive and constructive relationships with her as well as her successors in that role, Deb Schulte and Kamal Khera. We valued the in-person and Zoom meetings often held during the Minister's summer tour

of BC. This April we were pleased to congratulate Minister Khera for her leadership at the United Nations towards a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons and were delighted with her response in part:

*I would like to congratulate COSCO for taking a clear stand against ageism by serving on the Steering Committee of the Canadian Coalition against Ageism. This work is important to address the discrimination facing older persons in different spheres of society due to their age while simultaneously strengthening, protecting and promoting their human rights.*

Yes, we will hear that the federal government pays for Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), large budget items. And we will hear that the federal government provides the New Horizons for Seniors (NHS) grant to seniors' groups throughout the nation. But we are looking for more from the federal government. We are asking for a seniors' strategy that addresses ageism and promotes healthy ageing through coordinated policies for housing, health care, transportation and income needs. We ask the federal government to address the toxic impact of social isolation on seniors' health and well being. Grants from New Horizons of up \$25,000 each, while an important source of income for many seniors' groups, is an amount that doesn't help struggling seniors' centres that do the bulk of the work for isolated and lonely seniors and whose overall budgets may exceed one million dollars.

If you are as concerned as we are at COSCO about the elimination of the stand-alone Minister of Seniors, the next time you are visiting your Member of Parliament's office or have an opportunity to speak to your MP, be sure to raise your concerns about the direction of the federal government in relation to seniors. Some of us will be participating on September 28 at the National Pensioners' lobby of MPs in Ottawa.

*Linda Forsythe and Diane Wood*

## Update: Office of the Seniors Advocate



BC Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie

The following is a list of activities from the very busy OSA.

1. At the end of September, the Office of the Seniors Advocate will release a second provincial review of the contracted long-term care sector in B.C. The report examines industry contracts, annual audited financial statements and financial oversight in one of the largest contracted sectors within government.
2. The OSA Long-Term Care Survey wrapped up over the past month thanks to our province-wide team of nearly 500 Volunteer Surveyors. They collectively contributed over 18,000 hours of volunteer work and interviewed over 29,000 residents in 297 care homes across British Columbia. The results of the Long-Term Care Survey will be published in a report scheduled to be released in November. A big thank you to all the volunteers.
3. In August our office had the opportunity to attend the 47th BC Annual Elders Gathering, the first after a three-year hiatus due to COVID-19. The Elders Gathering has traditionally been a time for people to make connections and exchange memories and knowledge. Our staff members were honoured to attend and gain new perspectives from B.C. elders.

4. Federal Government Seeks Applicants for the National Seniors Council. The Government of Canada is recruiting candidates with expertise and experience working with older adults or on population aging issues to fill vacancies on the National Seniors Council. Apply by October 3, 2023.  
[Canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news](https://Canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news)

5. OAS has an information and referral line to help seniors navigate services. Call the toll-free number 1-877-952-3181 or email [info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca](mailto:info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca)
6. COVID boosters are available for people living in long term care, or are 80+, or are 70+ and indigenous, or are immunocompromised. The latest booster will be available in late October. For help booking the booster that is right for you call 1-833-838-2323. Translators are available.

*Report from the Office of the Seniors Advocate, August and September 2023. Website: [seniorsadvocatebc.ca](http://seniorsadvocatebc.ca)*



COSCO executive members, **Patrick Harkness, Jerry Gosling, Barry Jones, Leslie Gaudette** and **Terri van Steinburg** at Labour Day event Mill Lake, Abbotsford



## Assisted Living: Highlights from the Seniors Advocate's Report



The June edition of the Seniors Advocate Report speaks to some of the problems of Assisted Living. She also makes some recommendations. This is a critical issue for seniors who want to 'age in place' or stay at home as long as possible.

### Problems

- There is **significant confusion** in the public, within the industry and amongst regulators on what is assisted living covered by the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and what is independent living or supportive living and covered by the Residential Tenancy Act.
- The rate of assisted living units per 1,000 population (75+) has **decreased 15%** in the last five years.
- Despite a **52% funding increase** for publicly subsidized assisted living over the past five years, there has been **no increase** in either the number of units available or service levels.
- The proportional waitlist for publicly subsidized assisted living is **50% higher than that of long-term care** even though assisted living costs the health care system half as much as long-term care and is a fraction of the cost of acute care.
- The current cost of a publicly subsidized assisted living unit at **70% of a senior's annual income** is proving increasingly difficult for low-income seniors given the additional costs residents pay.
- There is **no recognized protection** related to cost increases in private pay assisted living. Seniors have reported annual increases of up to 15% leaving some unable to afford the charges for the additional support services that they need to live safely.
- Currently there are **no regulatory requirements** for staffing levels or staff qualifications,

and no requirement for annual inspections in assisted living in B.C.

### Recommendations

1. **Significantly increase capacity** of publicly subsidized assisted living program with more units and expanded services.
2. **Reduce confusion** seniors and family members experience while navigating assisted living and other congregate living arrangements.
3. **Provide explicit tenancy protection** under the Residential Tenancy Act for all residents in congregate living including assisted living.
4. **Address affordability issues** in both publicly subsidized and private pay assisted living.
5. **Strengthen current monitoring and enforcement systems** to provide quality assurance, resident safety and value for investment in publicly subsidized assisted living.

*Information taken from the June 2023 edition of the Seniors Advocate report.*



COSCO connects with provincial politicians at Labour Day Event at Mill Lake in Abbotsford

L-R: **Bob D'Eith** -- MLA for Maple Ridge-Mission & Parliamentary Secretary for Arts & Films  
**Leslie Gaudette** -- COSCO President  
**Dan Coulter** -- MLA for Chilliwack & Minister of State for Infrastructure & Transit  
**Pam Alexis** -- MLA for Abbotsford-Mission & Minister of Food & Agriculture

## Congratulations 411 Seniors Centre!



In early September, the new 411 Seniors Centre held its Grand Opening with much ceremony and delight. Dignitaries behind speaker and 411 President Marion Pollack included MPs MLAs and Vancouver City officials. The room was packed with 411 members and supporters from other organizations.

An added benefit: There are five floors of seniors' housing above it – AND it's a co-op!

## Rights Don't Get Old: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – June 15, 2023



Did you know that an average of 7.5% of Canadians 55 and older have experienced abuse? Participants at this resource day learned more about elder abuse, how to recognize the signs and how

to combat it. Congratulation to co-sponsors Jewish Family Services and Seniors First among other organizations for holding this event at the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Featured speakers include MLA Michael Lee; BC Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie and Seniors First BC speaker Linda Yauk.

Linda Yauk from Seniors First and Isobel Mackenzie, the Seniors Advocate for BC, spoke about the need to provide care and empathy for those who are suffering from abuse in its many forms. They suggest contacting SAIL (Seniors Abuse and information Line) at 1 866 437-1940 toll free for further information.

Also, the BC Association of Community Response Networks has a website [www.bccrns.ca](http://www.bccrns.ca) which shares a responsibility to create safe, strong, healthy communities by caring about the people around you, and suggest ways to learn who to talk to if you suspect abuse. Their motto is to celebrate seniors as valuable members of society who contribute a diversity of skills, knowledge and experiences to their families and communities.

## Report on Independent Senior Centres in Metro Vancouver

*By Laura Kadowaki, Andrea Wadman, Anthony Kupferschmidt and Andrew Wister*

Senior centres have historically received little research attention in Canada. However, a new report is shining light on the vital role that senior centres play in supporting community-dwelling older adults. Researchers in the Department of Gerontology at Simon Fraser University recently conducted focus groups with six independent (not run by a municipality), not-for-profit senior centres in Metro Vancouver. These focus groups deliberately engaged members, staff and board members to ensure that the unique perspectives of these three complementary groups were included.

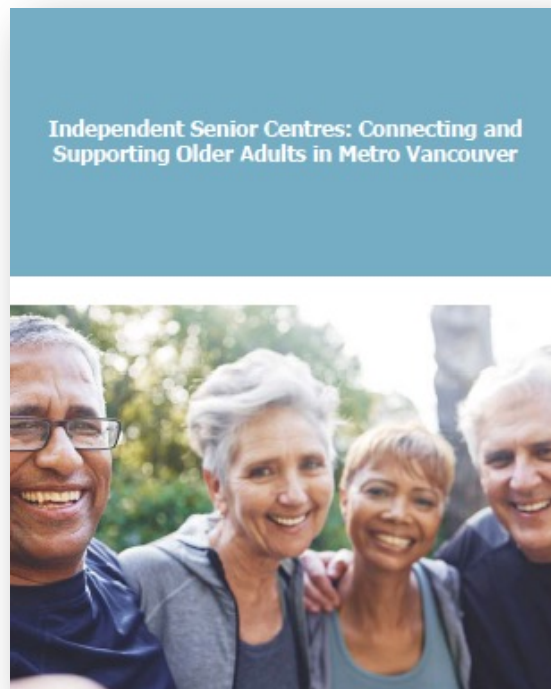
This work found that senior centres provide an important range of programs and services to support older adults. However, this research also identified that senior centres face several challenges to best meeting the needs of older adults, including aging

baby boomers, those who are more vulnerable and/or members of diverse communities. Recommendations include the need for stable funding and stronger collective advocacy to government to ensure that decisionmakers understand the value of the contributions of senior centres to an aging society.

Although senior centres often contribute significantly to academic research through participant recruitment, the results of research are often not translated back to senior centres and their members and service recipients effectively. The report also recommends a research agenda developed jointly by senior centres and researchers to encourage the co-creation of knowledge about the impact of senior centres on the health and wellbeing of older adults.

This work was supported by funding from Michael Smith Health Research BC. For more information and to read the report, please visit:

<https://www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2023/07/research-highlights-increasing-role-of-senior-centres-for-aging-.html>



## World Health Organization and United Nations on Ageing and Health

The following information from the United Nations gives a global version of our issues.

- In 2050, 80% of older people will be living in low- and middle-income countries.
- The pace of population ageing is much faster than in the past.
- In 2020, the number of people aged 60 years and older outnumbered children younger than 5 years.

- Between 2015 and 2050, the proportion of the world's population over 60 years will nearly double from 12% to 22%.
- In 2050, 80% of older people will be living in low- and middle-income countries.

All countries face major challenges to ensure that their health and social systems are ready to make the most of this demographic shift – *Canada is no different.*

### Factors influencing healthy ageing: World Health Organization (WHO)

A longer life brings with it opportunities, not only for older people and their families, but also for societies as a whole. Additional years provide the chance to pursue new activities such as further education, a new career or a long-neglected passion. Older people also contribute in many ways to their families and communities. Yet the extent of these opportunities and contributions depends heavily on one factor: *health*.

Evidence suggests that the proportion of life in good health has remained broadly constant, implying that the additional years are in poor health. If people experience these extra years of life in good health and if they live in a supportive environment, their ability to do the things they value will be no different from that of a younger person. If these added years are dominated by declines in physical and mental capacity, the implications for older people and for society are more negative.

Only some variations in older people's health are genetic, with most due to people's physical and social environments – including their homes, neighbourhoods, and communities, as well as their personal characteristics – such as their sex, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. The environments that people live in as children combined with their personal characteristics, have long-term effects on how they age.

Physical and social environments can affect health directly or through barriers or incentives that affect opportunities, decisions and health behaviour. Maintaining healthy behaviours throughout life contribute to reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases, improve physical and mental capacity and delay care dependency.

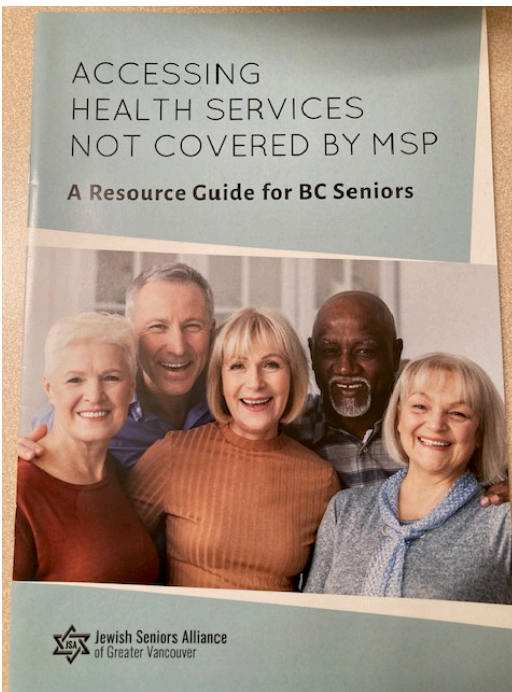
Supportive physical and social environments enable people to do what is important to them, despite losses in capacity. The availability of safe and accessible public buildings and transport, of safe homes and places that are easy to walk around, are examples of supportive environments. In developing a public-health response to ageing, it is important not just to consider individual and environmental approaches that ameliorate the losses associated with older age, but also those that may reinforce recovery, adaptation and psychosocial growth.



*Edited from the World Health Organization website, 2023.*  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>



## Jewish Seniors Alliance New Resource Guide



The Jewish Seniors Alliance has just produced a resource guide for BC Seniors. This guide is entitled 'Accessing Health Services not covered by MSP'. It covers topics such as Vision Care, Hearing Loss and Care, Dental Coverage, BC Fair PharmaCare, Supplementary Medical services, Assistive devices and equipment, and supplementary private health insurance.

The guide is available at JSA, 800 East Broadway or by calling 604-732-1555.

Website: <https://jsalliance.org>

## Tin Cup Movement Launched

COSCO life time member Gudrun Langolf was present at an event organized by Sharon Elliott which highlighted the plight of the 250,000 seniors in BC living on incomes of \$21,000 or less, According to a CTV story, Elliott decided to start an advocacy group led by seniors, for seniors called the Tin Cup Movement, to focus is on access to health-care benefits and affordability.

"Seniors should live in dignity," she said. "Seniors lifting tin cans out of the garbage and going down the alleys to pick up bottles and standing in food bank lineups is not dignified."

For further information, see <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/b-c-woman-launches-advocacy-group-led-by-seniors-for-seniors-1.6555110>. You may contact Sharon Elliott directly at [tin-cup2023@outlook.com](mailto:tin-cup2023@outlook.com)

*Note: COSCO has written to key Provincial ministers and met with Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction in June 2023 to advocate for programs to improve the economic situation of low-income seniors.*



## Medd Award



**Nathan Wedgewood Medd**

The Nathan Wedgewood Medd Trophy is awarded every two years by the National Pensioners Federation (NPF) to an individual or group member of an affiliated seniors' organization for outstanding work. It was instituted in honour of Nathan Medd who initiated the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation in 1945. In 2021, during the NPF Convention held virtually, then COSCO President Sheila Pither was honoured to receive the award on behalf of the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of British Columbia (COSCO). On accepting the award, Sheila Pither, President said "that she was thrilled to accept the award and that it was a great honour and an inspiration to those of us who try to make a difference in terms of the wellbeing of older adults". Sheila added that her parents were homesteaders in Northern Saskatchewan after they arrived in Canada in 1926 and she had been born in the 30's and that it had been a very hard life and that she was taught early in life to count her blessings and that this was one of them.

Here is the COSCO Executive saying its last good-byes to the Award, as it will be returned to the NPF to present to the next recipient at the NPF Biennial Convention at the end of September.



### Members Present in Person:

Back row: Marion Hartley, Al Lemmonier, Jerry Gosling, Barb Mikulec, Patrick Harkness  
Seated: Agnes Jackman, Leslie Gaudette, Linda Forsythe, Diane Wood

On Zoom: Stéphane Lapierre, Lousie Holland, Wilf Brodrick, Barry Jones

Regrets: Annette O'Connor, Don Bayne, Rod McIvor, Navin Godburdhun, Jean Sickman, Terri van Steinburg



# STAY ON THE ROAD

- Are you nearing 80?
- Wondering about driver assessment?

***You should attend our virtual workshop.***

This practical guide for senior drivers will help you learn more about driver assessment. It will be of particular interest to drivers who are nearing the age of 80. However, drivers of any age are welcome to attend virtually and the workshop will be useful to everyone. Participants will learn about the ICBC and Road Safety B.C. assessment which determines whether they can continue to drive.

The workshop is a joint presentation of the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C. and the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia.

This free workshop will be held via Zoom on:

**Thursday, October 12 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

To register, click the link below.  
If the link doesn't work for you, copy and paste it in your browser.

<http://forms.gle/4tv61yMWrbUCV5v8>



## News from COSCO's Health and Wellness Institute



**The Aboriginal Elders Gathering** at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre in August was a gathering of 1,800 First Nations and Metis elders

from many parts of BC to share their knowledge and experiences. One facet of the convention was the workshops put on by the Seniors Health and Wellness Institute-COSCO. The workshop facilitators were invited to be part of the choice of events during the two-day gathering. Sylvia Helmer presented **Falls Prevention**, Patrick Harkness presented **Emergency Preparedness**, Barb Mikulec presented **Safety in the Home** and Royce Shook presented

**Keeping Seniors Safe.** All workshops were well received and the participants received a summary of the main points to take home and share with their peers. Congratulations to the Institute for being featured in the Elders Gathering, and they have already been invited to participate in the event next summer.

Further information about the free workshops and booking:

[workshops@seniorshelpingseniors.ca](mailto:workshops@seniorshelpingseniors.ca)

*Barb Mikulec, President,  
COSCO Health and Wellness Institute*



### COSCO Associate Membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**COSCO does not share mailing lists with third parties unless we are required by law to do so.**

Associate Membership is \$25 a year. Join on the COSCO website: <https://coscobc.org/> or make cheques payable to **COSCO** and mail with this application form to:

**Linda Forsythe**, Membership Secretary, Box 81131 Stn S. Burnaby, Burnaby, BC V5H 4K2  
Telephone: (604) 444-4300

For information about **Affiliate (organizational) Membership**, please contact the Membership Secretary at [Membership@coscobc.org](mailto:Membership@coscobc.org)