

## CANADIAN PENSIONERS DESERVE REAL PROTECTION *[adapted, edited from NPF campaign]*

**C**anadian pensioners have worked hard all our lives and deserve to have our pensions protected. The Canadian Federation of Pensioners and the National Pensioners Federation are calling on all MPs to support changes that will safeguard defined benefit pensions.

**There are no real protections for defined benefit pensions when a company goes bankrupt.**

- The risk to defined benefit pensions occurs when a company becomes insolvent and its pension is underfunded.
- When companies are in trouble but haven't yet become insolvent, pensioners are powerless to intervene and secure their pensions. All other creditors can negotiate terms to protect their interests.
- Insolvency law does not treat pensioners fairly. Unlike creditors, pensioners are not

automatically able to negotiate their terms when assets are divided. They aren't even allocated a seat at the table, unless the court grants them one.

- According to the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO), 78% of defined benefit pension plans in Ontario are under-funded. In the event of an insolvency, those pensioners will not receive their full pension. **This puts an estimated 850,000 pensioners at risk.**

### THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST ACT NOW TO PROTECT PENSIONERS

1. Create a **pension insurance program** that insures 100% of the pension liability. This should be fully funded by the plan sponsors. While this would impact only federally regulated pensions, it would create a model for similar plans at the provincial level.
2. Amend insolvency

legislation to extend **super-priority** to the unfunded pension liability. While this would not guarantee pensioners would receive 100% of their pensions, it is an action the federal government should take to provide increased pension security to all pensioners of companies entering insolvency.

3. Establish a **recurring refundable tax** credit equal to the annual pension loss experienced by a pensioner. If legislation is amended to ensure pensioners receive their full pension or if a pension insurance program is created, this credit will serve as a backstop to ensure these changes work to protect pensioners.

For more info go to <https://docs.google.com/document/BRM20Uffv0cem1rb1ueQQ-z9TMgAm61ARP3QaxvVw/edit>

## 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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**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.



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## About COSCO

COSCO is an umbrella organization that brings together 85 different seniors groups, representing approximately 100,000 women and men.

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

Much of COSCO's work is promoting good health. Our COSCO Seniors Health & Wellness Institute trained volunteers provide free workshops on 44 topics. More than 50,000 seniors have now attended these workshops! We update the information in the 60-minute workshops as information changes. Information at: [www.seniorshelpingseniors.org](http://www.seniorshelpingseniors.org).

Send your letters to the editor or other contributions to:  
[cosconews.editor@coscobc.org](mailto:cosconews.editor@coscobc.org) and [pres@coscobc.org](mailto:pres@coscobc.org)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The passing of Art Kube, formerly president of COSCO has occupied some of our thinking about the progression of time to the inevitable conclusion of life that awaits all of us. It is tempting to wallow in sadness about our losses – lets face it, particularly at our age, these are piling up... Of course, it is important for us to grieve. But the deaths also teach us: time is precious; don't sweat the small stuff! Organize so that the work can be carried on even when you take a well-deserved break! Get on with the business of living and use our energy in many ways, where we can truly make a difference.

Art Kube taught us that working together and with others in common cause is the best way to make gains.

Our thoughts of condolence are particularly with Art's wife, Mary Kube, family and friends as they learn to carry on without him.

Sometimes our successes aren't immediately apparent but many of the causes we have championed, some on our own as well with others, are coming to fruition –

some of the progress on the provincial front.

Our provincial government has been busy making improvements on many fronts in BC – with most welcome news and innovations!

**Health:** Opened 6 Urgent Care Centres [more to come] to reduce pressure on our hospitals' emergency departments. Initial reports claim that they are successful.

**Primary Health Care:** There are about 1600 vacancies to be filled and several strategies to encourage doctors to choose General Practice.

**Wait times:** The times waiting for surgeries such as hip and knee replacements, radiation therapy, and cataract surgery continue to shorten.

**MSP:** Medical Services Premiums were reduced by half and are on track for elimination all together by January 2020.

Residential care is incrementally funded to increase resident contact times to uniformly provide 3.39 hrs/day per resident. Of course, we think it ought to be a minimum of 4 hrs but we are pleased about the progress!

Home Care support in Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health is going to be provided by the Health Authorities. The companies currently contracting that service have been given a year's notice that their contracts wont be renewed. The transition is being managed carefully and it is clear that the care workers will still be needed. In fact, it is anticipated that many more will have to be hired.

Housing the homeless and helping people with mental health and addiction problems are getting much needed and overdue attention.

Public transit in BC is on the road of being improved.

This list is much longer ...

Most lasting changes are not made over night and we are challenged to keep our expectations somewhat in check. The agenda is ambitious!

In the meantime, on the federal front, there was a budget of sorts. Frankly we were just a little underwhelmed. It is difficult to see any real pattern other than assuming

that the upcoming election campaign will reveal what is really in store. Seniors have witnessed quite a number of elections. As a result, some bitter disappointments have made us wary about promises...

**Some items promised:**

1. **Rental Construction Financing Initiative.** The Government is expanding this program to develop rental housing in areas with low supply. The additional \$10 billion extends the program to 2028.

2. **Housing Supply Challenge.** \$800 million is committed to examine initiatives to address barriers that limit new housing development.

3. **Sustainable Affordable Housing Innovation.** Under the Green Municipal Fund, \$300 million will be used to improve energy efficiency in new and existing housing and to support on-site energy generation.

4. **National Housing Strategy.** The Government signaled their intention to introduce legislation "to maintain a National Housing Strategy that prioritizes the housing needs of the most vulnerable." You can find a summary of the Budget's housing-related items

at An Affordable Place to Call Home <http://go.pardot.com/e/306831/hemes-housing-logement-en-html/6sd-nm/87989252?h=9tE-VTo-pHAosyuKypcK7yuFivrGf4H9Fp2hurpFM-o>.

You can also browse the full list of items in the Budget on its Table of Contents [www.budget.gc.ca/2019/docs/plan/toc-tdm-en.html](http://www.budget.gc.ca/2019/docs/plan/toc-tdm-en.html)

We are watching with amazement that school children demonstrate that they care about climate change and the environment. Exciting times! Doesn't that remind you of our 'demos'? It is good to be reminded that we are all in this together and that artificial divisions simply keep us from achieving what we need. Inter-generational work is essential so let us not be ageist – dismissing the youngsters on the basis of their age. We would not want to be ignored just because we are old...

There is much cause for optimism!



**In the works:**

We are helping to set up a summit about deprescribing - safe medication use by seniors. It is by invitation - scheduled on May 17th in Richmond.

Organizing for our major Conference in 2020 has started. The working title for now is "A Seniors' Strategy for Life in the 21st Century". So block off Oct 4th and 5th, 2020 on your calendar. Fundraising will start in earnest so we may be able to keep costs for attendance as low as possible. Accommodating 400 people is going to require some 'serious' money.

"Stay on the Road" - With some funding from the federal New Horizon's program we are able to go on the road again. Already we are oversubscribed with requests generated by last year's successful day-long workshops: "Staying on the Road" (driving beyond 80). Sheila Pither and Annette O'Connor are doing the organizing and are looking forward to getting to the places that could not be accommodated last year. In April we begin with Parksville and Victoria.

COSCO Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute is the

organization which produces and offers our free 60 minute workshops to groups of seniors. A dedicated small group of volunteers have checked and updated all of the 44 workshops to ensure accuracy and relevancy! In addition, two senior coordinators volunteer to coordinate the scheduling and all that is involved with getting requests for workshops met. For the Lower Mainland it is a busy Floyd Smith and for BC beyond the Lower Mainland it is the equally busy Doug Edgar. There is an information box elsewhere in this issue of COSCO News.

We are approaching **VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION WEEK** and are reminded

that without each of us pitching in what we can and each to the extent of their ability, the world would be a much poorer place.

The National Pensioners' Federation, Convention is in Ontario on September 10-12 2019. Resolutions are due by August 1st. The Spring newsletter is available on line and you will be able to read about the various campaigns and lobbying efforts. <https://nationalpensioners-federation.ca/75th-annual-npf-convention-2019/>

COSCO's major areas of focus for 2019 are

- Defeating Bill C27 (federal pension legislation)
- Housing

- Health
- Income Security

We continue to meet with our Members of the Legislature as well as Members of Parliament presenting seniors' perspective on a variety of topics. We engage with CEOs of Health Authorities and others to ensure seniors' needs are addressed at the systemic level. With your enthusiasm, help and support we can achieve a lot. We will try to park negativity and cynicism at the proverbial door and search and advocate for positive changes.

**YES, WE CAN!**

by [Gudrun Langolf](#)

**COSCO Associate Membership**

In addition to my \$25 Associate Membership fee, I wish to make a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to COSCO.

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

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

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

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. Please make cheques payable to COSCO and mail your application to:  
 Linda Forsythe, Membership Secretary, E-Mail: [membership@coscobc.org](mailto:membership@coscobc.org)  
 702 – 4221 Mayberry Street, Burnaby, BC V5H 4E8 Telephone: (604) 444-4300  
 For information about Affiliate (organizational) Membership, please contact the Membership Secretary.

[You can now contribute on our website www.coscobc.org](http://www.coscobc.org)



## ADVANCE NOTICE THE PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF ART KUBE'S LIFE

**June 8, 2019 - 1:30pm**  
**at the IUOE Hall**  
**4333 Ledger Ave, Burnaby, BC V5G 3T3**

**Official announcement will be distributed on**  
**[www.coscobc.org](http://www.coscobc.org), our Facebook and elsewhere.**

Arthur Kube January 09, 1935 – February 10, 2019

Art Kube died this morning – February 10, 2019

The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC – COSCO acknowledges Art Kube's contributions and celebrates his service with and for seniors in the Province.

We have much to be thankful for!

Following his retirement in 1995, Art's volunteer work with seniors spanned almost 30 years! A remarkable record that included presidency of the New Vista Society, Seniors On Guard for Medicare and various executive positions culminating in his presidency of COSCO.

In all of Art did, he worked in collaboration with others, both in his own organization and other organizations. His capacity for seeing the larger context - the big picture was an essential quality.

Seniors housing, health care, transportation, pensions and advocacy were all issues of concern to Art and the object of his work. Principles of equality and fairness guided his work.

He was pivotal in helping to develop COSCO's Health and Wellness Society, the organization that delivers workshops to/with seniors all over the province, free of charge.

In 2015 Art received the **Order of Canada** in recognition his many good works.

## BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

**B**orn in Poland in 1935. Uprooted at the age of eight by the brutality of World War II. Making his way to Canada, on his own, when he was 19.

These are experiences that would mark a lot of people for the rest of their days. Yet Art Kube lived his life filled with optimism and boundless determination to build a more civil society.

“I have tried to make it my life’s work to improve the quality of life for people.”

Art had an uncanny ability to bring people together and encourage them to take action.

As David Rice, retired regional director of the CLC once told me, “You can’t say no to Art.”

Brother Kube was, of course, the driving force behind Operation Solidarity and the Solidarity Coalition formed to counter Premier Bill Bennett’s 1983 assault on unions, basic human rights and public services.

“It was the broadest social movement, not just the largest, but also the broadest that the province has ever known,” said Father Jim Roberts, one of the co-chairs of the Solidarity Coalition.

The Harrison Winter School, originally held in Parksville, started under Art’s direction when he was regional director of the CLC. He believed union members should not be asked to work all week and then give their weekends to labour education.

“It also involved a political party,” Art told me in a 2014 interview. “Every week of the Winter School, Dave Barrett was there.

“(General sessions) impressed upon workers the importance of recognizing that they’re just as good as anybody else. Many people realized for the first time that they’re part of a bigger movement,” he said.

Art was a tireless advocate for seniors. When a group of union retirees was denied the right to appear before a House of Commons committee holding hearings on patent protection for pharmaceuticals, he told them they needed “a sexier name.” “I went home... called up my friends and said, ‘You’re now on the executive of Seniors on Guard for Medicare.’ Then I made up a letterhead and sent a letter to the chair of the committee. A day later I got a phone call asking when we could appear,” said Art with a huge smile.

Art served as director, President and Ombudsperson for the Council of Senior Citizens’ Organizations (COSCO), supporting and expanding its advocacy, lobbying and education work and helping to organize educational conferences. He was a life member of BC FORUM and a member of the Order of Canada.

He attended Labour Day celebrations every year, and constantly reminded union leaders of their responsibility to support social activism.

The annual Christmas celebrations hosted by Art and his family were often standing room only. They brought together hundreds of people, and frequently inspired conversations of past and future campaigns for a better world.

Art, you were a good friend and a steadfast ally. We miss you. We will cherish and do our best to live up to the inspiration you have given us.

**by Soren Bech - Editor, The Advocate**

Reprinted from BC FORUM News - From The Advocate, Spring 2019. Soren Bech served as Editor for the COSCO News for a number of years

# COSCO IN THE COMMUNITY



Honorary Lifetime Member Mohinder Grewa



Honorary Lifetime Member Pat Brady



At the Peace Arch Hospital announcement of construction of improved Emergency department and primary care



Jerry Gosling, Linda Forsythe, John Wynne

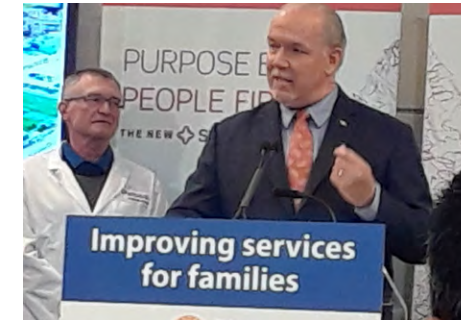


Seniors Advocate Isobel McKenzie at COSCO's Annual General Meeting



This is a distinct pleasure! December 2018 - the annual Seniors Appreciation lunch with the Retirees of LiUNA 1611. Left to right standing: Bruce Ferguson, Annette O'Connor, Gudrun Langolf, John Wynne - seated left to right: Sheila Pither, Barb Mikulec

# COSCO IN THE COMMUNITY



The politicians highlight substantial investment in care of vulnerable seniors. More funding to be applied to increase in personal contact hours & bring the services to a standard across the province.



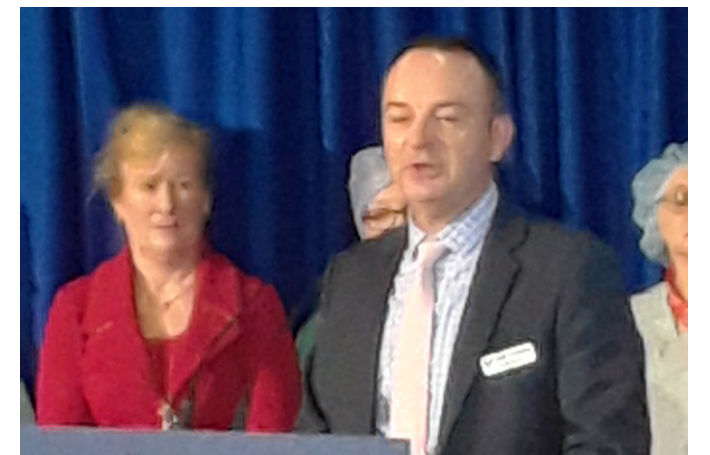
Left to right Barb Mikulec, MLA Michael Lee, Gudrun Langolf - introducing the COSCO & the COSCO Seniors Health and Wellness Institute.



Anne Kang drops by the COSCO and COSCO Seniors Health and Wellness Institute information table - Left to right Barb Mikulec, MLA Anne Kang, Gudrun Langolf



Gerry Tiede, President of the BC Retired Teachers Assn, Addressing COSCO Delegates about pension -Bill C27 defined benefits pension plans



Peace Arch Hospital (White Rock) announcement

# WOMEN SENIORS & WORKPLACE PENSIONS: THE UNTOLD STORY

Ever since October 2016 when the Canadian Finance Minister, Bill Morneau, introduced Bill-27 targeting defined pension plans, seniors organizations have focused a great deal of their resources on ensuring that this Bill does not go on to become law. So far the Bill-C-27 has not gone on to 2nd reading but it remains in place.

When Sears filed for bankruptcy in October 2018 leaving its Canadian retirees in the lurch, better protection for retirees in the event of a company's insolvency be-

came another major concern for seniors and unions.

What seems to be missing at this critical moment in time is that about 60 percent of Canadians have no employment-related pension whatsoever far less a defined benefits pension plan. In a 2016 report "An Analysis of the Economic Circumstances of Canadian Seniors" prepared by Richard Shillington for the Broadbent Institute, "The difference in incomes between seniors with and without a pension income is stark." The report also notes that employer pension plan

coverage of the paid labour force has been falling for some time and that most people have little in the way of savings for retirement.

These retirees will be reliant on OAS and CPP which, even with recent necessary but modest improvements, will not be enough to allow future seniors with no work-related pension to live with dignity and economic security even if the current average CPP allowance of \$660 per month is doubled.

Women are twice as likely as men to be poor, according to

the last (2016) Census. The oldest women are less likely to have had paid employment and may be reliant on OAS and in deep poverty.

Daphne Branham using a gender-lens analysis of 2016 census statistics by Andy Yan of Simon Fraser University notes "Women face economic disadvantage throughout their life times, but it is near the end of their lives that it is most acute."

by Kathleen Jamieson



**Shannon Daub**  
BC Director of Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Reacquainted Delegates with CCPA and highlighted our shared work on senior's and other issues.

## HOW TO BOOK A FREE WORKSHOP FOR YOUR SENIORS' GROUP

So far, almost 50,000 seniors throughout BC have participated in the COSCO Seniors' Health and Wellness Institutes free health promotion workshops. We now offer workshops on 43 different issues and topics of particular interest to seniors.

Each 60 to 90 minute workshop is available free of charge to any seniors' group of 10 or more. A trained senior volunteer presents practical and usable information. These workshops are not intended to provide any specific legal, medical or financial advice, just a better understanding and practical suggestions.

To book a workshop for your group, please email: [ws\\_coord@coscoworkshops.org](mailto:ws_coord@coscoworkshops.org)



## NATIONAL PHARMACARE POSITIVE FRAMEWORK

The federal Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare's issued their initial report. How the Canadian government implement a Pharmacare plan? The report does not address the crucial question of whether the strategy will be a universal, public system or whether it will continue to be a patchwork of public and private insurance.

COSCO and many of our allies advocate that Pharmacare be implemented as a

seamless part of the current single-payer, national, universal health care system. We believe that Pharmacare must be implemented following the same principles as medicare, as legislated through the Canada Health Act.

A national pharmacare must meet the following requirements:

- Public and single-payer
- Comprehensive
- Universal
- Accessible

- Affordable

The current patchwork system is a mix of private and public plans that is expensive, inefficient and leaves one in ten Canadians unable to afford their medication.

**Canadians pay 30 percent more for our prescription medications than average of 14 comparable countries that offer universal drug coverage.**

by Gudrun Langolf

# THE BEST OF CARE: GETTING IT RIGHT FOR SENIORS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Press Release by the Ombudsperson's Office on February 14, 2019

The Ombudsperson released The Best of Care -Public Report No. 47 Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 2) in 2012... The 400 plus page report is the Ombudsperson's final report on the Office's three year investigation into the care of seniors in British Columbia. It is a comprehensive and in depth report that makes 143 findings and 176 recommendations. The recommendations are designed to improve home and community care, home support, assisted living and residential care services for seniors.

During the investigation, the Ombudsperson found that the Ministry of Health did not make sure that seniors and their families have access to adequate assistance and support to navigate the complex home and community care system; has not analyzed whether the home support program is meeting

its goal of assisting seniors to live in their own homes as long as it is practical; and that it is ineffective and inadequate for the Ministry of Health to rely on responding to complaints and serious incident reports as its main form of oversight for assisted living. The Ombudsperson also found that the Ministry of Health's decision to maintain two separate legislative frameworks for residential care has resulted in unfair differences in the care and services seniors receive and the fees they pay.

The report makes specific recommendations to the Ministry of Health and the five regional health authorities including in the following areas:

- Providing clear information to seniors and their families; tracking key home and community care data and reporting it publicly in an annual home and community care report
- Supporting seniors and families in navigating the home and community care system

- Protecting seniors through consistent reporting and tracking of abuse and neglect
- Protecting those who complain in good faith about home and community care services from any adverse consequences for doing so
- Assisting seniors to continue to live at home by assessing the adequacy of current home support programs and analyzing the benefits and costs of expansion
- Ensuring objective and enforceable standards of care for home support services
- Ensuring fair and equal treatment by immediately making certain that no seniors in assisted living are charged for services and benefits that are included in the assessed client rate
- Establishing an active inspection, monitoring and enforcement program in assisted living residences
- Ensuring equal treatment, benefits and protection of


seniors in residential care by health authorities

- Ensuring fair treatment by not charging fees to seniors involuntarily detained in residential care under the Mental Health Act
- Ensuring objective and enforceable standards of care for seniors in residential care
- Enhancing dementia and end-of-life care services in residential care

While the Health authorities have responded to some of the recommendations in the report, the majority of the Ombudsperson's recommendations are currently being considered by the Ministry of Health. The Ombudsperson will monitor progress that is made on accepting and implementing the recommendations and report the results through the Office's website and subsequent annual reports.

The public interest since releasing the report has been

unprecedented. After releasing the report on February 14, media from every part of the province covered the many findings and recommendations in the report. In addition, the Ombudsperson has received more than 25 requests from organizations and interested groups to speak about the report, and numerous letters from across the province indicating support for the report. Interest in reading the report has been significant with a second reprint already placed.



**75TH ANNUAL NPF CONVENTION**  
 MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO SEPTEMBER 10 - 12, 2019  
 DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON - TORONTO AIRPORT WEST

5444 DIXIE ROAD, MISSISSAUGA, ON L4W 2L2  
 1-905-624-1144 Reservations: 1-800-560-7753

Hotel Reservation Deadline: August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Rate: \$149.00 + tax (includes shuttle from airport/or parking)

To register online: NFP - Book My Room <https://bit.ly/18PzUHS>

\*must request the discount group rate if needed for 3 days before and after convention

Delegate Registration:  
 Convention Delegate Registration Deadline: August 16, 2019

Registration Fee \$145.00 per delegate and visitor

Register online or print mail in forms. Click link below:  
[Convention Delegate Registration](https://bit.ly/18PzUHS)


**RESOLUTION DUE DATE: AUGUST 1, 2018**  
 MAIL TO: [carol.rogers@npfmail.ca](mailto:carol.rogers@npfmail.ca)

Convention Registration: September 10, 2019 (afternoon) Meet & Greet: September 10, 2019 (evening) Convention: September 11 & 12, 2019 Banquet: September 11, 2019 (evening)



**Stay on the Road:**  
 A Practical Guide for Senior Drivers  
 (especially nearing 80 years)

Featuring COSCO Facilitators  
 ICBC Driver Examiner  
 Occupational Therapist - Car Fit Program



The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of British Columbia is conducting a one-day workshop for people who are interested in learning more about driver assessment, particularly when they are nearing the age of 80. However, drivers of any age are welcome to attend and the presentation will be useful for anybody.

10:00	Coffee and muffins available
10:30	Welcome and introduction
10:40	Safe Driving Part 1 – Driver Assessment Process Medical Issues and future planning
12:00	Lunch – provided
1:00	Safe Driving Part 2 – ICBC Driver Examiner ERA Presentation
2:30	Break
2:45	Safe Driving Part 3 – Occupational Therapist with Car Fit
3:45	Evaluations / Questions / Windup

**April 24, 2019 – Cherish at Central Park – 10:00 to 4:00**  
 917 – Avriil Road, Victoria

There is no charge for the workshop - Council of Senior Citizens' Organization (COSCO) will provide lunch and snacks free of charge.



# CANADA'S FATHER OF MEDICARE - TOMMY DOUGLAS



*Tommy Douglas, Canada's "Father of Medicare."*

**T**HANKS TO CANADA'S universal health-care system, most Canadians have never had to worry about paying medical bills. Everyone gets the care they need, at a cost far below the hit-or-miss U.S. health-care system. It's little wonder that 94 percent of Canadians boast proudly about their national health care—even more than they hoot about hockey. Tommy Douglas, the architect of the Canadian single-payer system, rolled out

the plan while serving as a five-term premier of Saskatchewan. But Douglas' drive to ensure health care for all didn't originate from his politics. It was developed from his faith and his pre-political life as a Baptist minister. In 1930, when Douglas became pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, he joined an agricultural community brutally impacted by drought and economic depression. At first, Douglas focused on intensive relief efforts. Soon he

embraced advocacy as well. As Douglas put it, "You're never going to step out of the front door into the kingdom of God. What you're going to do is slowly and painfully change society until it has more of the values that emanate from the teachings of Jesus or from other great religious leaders."

For complete article go to: <https://sojo.net/magazine/march-2019/pastor-developed-Canada-single-payer-healthcare-universal>

[excerpt] by Fran Quigley

# WEST END SENIOR'S NETWORK (WESN)

**F**ormed in 1979, the West End Seniors' Network (WESN: [wesn.ca](http://wesn.ca)) in Vancouver is a multi-site seniors' centre providing programs and services across three locations:

- Barclay Manor, a heritage building built in 1890 that has been renovated to include an elevator, ramp and automatic door openers for accessibility
- Kay's Place, a drop-in centre in the local Denman Place Mall
- Clothes and Collectibles Thrift Store, a social enterprise with all proceeds supporting WESN programs and services

Today, WESN has over 850 members 55 years of age and older (\$10 per year), 15 staff and more than 225 volunteers. WESN serves the West End, Coal Harbour, Yaletown and Downtown neighbourhoods of Vancouver and offers more than 60 programs, services and events throughout the year, including:

- A range of social, recreational and educational programs including

workshops, dance classes, a choir, conversation groups in different languages, monthly birthday celebrations, painting studio, walking group, meditation, acting class, social outings to restaurants and much more

- Spa services including reflexology, chair massage, reiki, manicures and pedicures
- Computer lab
- Information and referral
- Income tax clinic
- Peer support (both one-to-one and group)
- Housing navigation
- Better at Home services, including light house-keeping, transportation and minor home repairs
- Life Unlimited services, including grocery shopping and delivery, friendly visiting, check-in phone calls and emails, and accompaniment to medical appointments
- Seniors' Centre Without Walls telephone conversation group
- Close To Home, which brings social, recreational and educational program-

ming into the lobbies and common rooms of local apartment buildings

- Free elder law clinic offered in partnership with Seniors First BC
- Programs for LGBTQ2S+ older adults offered in partnership with QMUNITY
- Special events including an annual summer Strawberry Festival and a Holiday Luncheon

Together with our close Vancouver partners the 411 Seniors Centre Society and the South Granville Seniors Centre, we have recently formed an Alliance of Seniors' Centres that we are working to expand to include other seniors' centres across the province. If you would like more information or want to get involved, please [email info@asc-bc.ca](mailto:email_info@asc-bc.ca) or call WESN Executive Director Anthony Kupferschmidt at 604-669-5051.



by Anthony Kupferschmidt



# HOME CARE SERVICES TO SENIORS (& OTHERS)

There appears to be a campaign to keep home care contracts in the private-for-profit sector in southern BC.

The companies currently providing this service got ONE YEAR NOTICE that their contracts will not be renewed. The Ministry of Health announced recently that the services will be brought into the public Health Authorities - a move COSCO applauds!

Appropriate Home Care allows individuals to remain in their own home while

receiving support services – personal hygiene, food prep, cleaning, laundry, etc. – depending on the prescription – while allowing individuals to be as independent as possible.

The article by Press progress (see link below) provides some factual context which counters the fear-mongering statements of the vested interest organization with Mr. Fountain as its spokesman/CEO.

Seniors and COSCO have a legitimate self-interest to improve the services for our

vulnerable population. The patchwork of services has not worked for us until now. It falls far short of being sufficient and of consistent quality.

Seniors do not feel good about the working conditions of the actual care workers as they cobble together precarious assignments and schedules.

<https://pressprogress.ca/private-retirement-home-lobby-group-worries-bcs-public-sector-workers-wont-give-seniors-cups-of-tea/>

## VACANCY ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Executive members of COSCO are all elected/appointed volunteers

**Position:** Secretary

**Available:** Immediately

**Description of duties:** Record and distribute Minutes of Executive and Delegates' meetings – generally two meetings per month

**Required:** Minimum basic familiarity with computer programs, email etc.

**Desirable:** access to transportation

There is no physical office – we are 'virtual'.