

Message from the Advocate

I am excited to deliver to you the inaugural edition of the Office of the Seniors' Advocate Newsletter. This Newsletter is just one way that I am working to increase my Office's communication and accountability to the seniors of this beautiful province. Other initiatives include: the creation of an email group where seniors and their families can sign up to receive regular updates from my Office, increased public engagement, and a survey to hear from seniors, their family and caregivers.



When I became the Seniors' Advocate on June 15, 2022, I made two public commitments to seniors: to provide an update on the status of all recommendations made by this Office, and to hear from seniors, their families and community agencies such that I could fulfill my legislative responsibility to identify and review and make recommendations regarding systemic issues impacting seniors. I fulfilled the first commitment on Nov. 1, 2022, when my Office released the Status Report on Recommendations 2022-23. Read the details in this Newsletter. To fulfill the second commitment, I conducted approximately 30 Engagement Sessions and Presentations in every region of the province, in-person and virtually; held 68 meetings with government officials and stakeholders; 10 municipalities; and 3 of the 4 Regional Health Authorities. What a learning! I wish to thank the hundreds of seniors that shared their experiences and wisdom.

I can tell you it has been a productive 6 months and we are just getting started!

Going forward some of the things my Office will focus on include: analyzing the information we heard in the engagement sessions, releasing the findings and working with partners to advance solutions and, as I am mandated, advocating for improved services to seniors where necessary; the review of the personal care and long term care system; working with the Seniors' Advocates nationally on matters of mutual concern, including long term care; representing the interests of seniors in such matters as basic income and food security; and, addressing an average of 85 requests per month for advocacy assistance for seniors.

Warmest wishes for the holiday season, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Susan Walsh
Seniors' Advocate NL

Advocacy Actions

Seniors' Advocate Calls for Review of the Personal Care Home and Long Term Care Systems

News Release – For Immediate Release

Office of the Seniors' Advocate

October 20, 2022

Seniors' Advocate Seeks Review of the Personal Care Home and Long Term Care Systems

On Thursday October 20, 2022 Newfoundland and Labrador's Seniors' Advocate, Susan Walsh, wrote the Minister of Health and Community Services to request immediate implementation of the 2019 recommendation in the Office of the Seniors' Advocate report titled **Long May Your Big Jib Draw: Setting Sail**, which states that "a significant review of the province's Personal Care Homes and Long Term Care Homes" be completed.

Issues related to the care of seniors in both of these Systems were noted in 2018/19 which resulted in the recommendation for a review of both of these Systems. As the Advocate currently conducts Engagement Sessions in the province issues related to the care of seniors in the Personal Care Home and Long Term Care System continue to be raised. Further, similar concerns related to the care and treatment of seniors in the hospital system are also prevalent.

The details shared by family members of the care and treatment of their loved ones in the health continuum including hospitals, Personal Care Homes and Long Term Care facilities are heart wrenching and fundamentally wrong. We can and must do better.

Susan Walsh, NL Seniors Advocate

Further, in her October 20, 2022 letter to the Minister of Health and Community Service, the Seniors' Advocate has noted that the need to review the Personal Care Home and Long Term Care Systems is even more critical today, and has therefore recommended that:

The Department contract an external expert in residential care for seniors to review both the Personal Care Home and Long Term Care homes/facilities and systems. This review should include an evaluation of each home/facility, from a quality of care, structure and oversight perspective. Further this review should then consider the draft standards the Department of Health and Community Services has developed for both of these Systems to determine: a) if they are adequate to meet the needs of seniors in both Systems, b) the required staffing ratios, and c) can these ratios be achieved within the current staff complement. Speaking to residents and their families should be part of this review.

I wish to be clear that there are many intersecting issues, in addition to staffing, that are creating the current significant concerns I am hearing exist in the hospital, Personal Care Home and Long Term Care Systems. There are staff that are delivering quality care in very demanding environments in some circumstances without adequate training requirements and with what appears to be significant staffing shortages that place additional pressure on the existing staff. Seniors deserve an external review completed by experts in the area of residential care and the requirements of care for seniors with complex needs. I will ensure that any review is comprehensive, with recommendations for real change that get implemented.

Susan Walsh, NL Seniors Advocate

Advocacy Actions

Seniors' Advocate Releases Status Report on Recommendations



The Office of the Seniors' Advocate has released the Status Report on Recommendations 2022-23. This is the first report on the status of recommendations released by this Office and will be an annual feature while there are outstanding recommendations. To date, 25 recommendations have been issued by the Office of the Seniors' Advocate to various Provincial Government departments and agencies arising from its first report released in 2019 titled Long May Your Big Jib Draw [<https://www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca/pdfs/LongMayYourBigJibDrawSettingSail2019.pdf>]. Of these recommendations, 44% have been fully implemented, 44% partially implemented, and 12% have had little or no meaningful progress, as of the reporting period. The 25 recommendations focused on three areas:

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| 1. Aging in Place | 11 recommendations: 5 implemented, 5 partially implemented, 1 not implemented |
| 2. Health Care | 12 recommendations: 4 implemented, 6 partially implemented, 2 not implemented |
| 3. Labour Force Participation | 2 recommendations: both implemented |

Meaningful change can take time; and I accept that recent global challenges may have hindered the implementation of some recommendations. This is unfortunate as some of the problems we see today may have been avoided or on the road to positive change. But the world we live in now is our “new normal” and we must get on with the work. However, progress is happening in many areas, and I wish to thank those who have worked to improve the lives of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador.

- Susan Walsh, NL Seniors' Advocate

This report can be found on the Office of the Seniors' Advocate webpage:
<https://www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca/pdfs/StatusReportOnRecommendations2022-23.pdf>

Community Engagement

Some of the Community Organizations the Seniors' Advocate Met with and/or Presented to:

- Connections for Seniors
- SeniorsNL
- Quality of Care NL
- Seniors Coalition
- Endless Homelessness St. John's
- The Gathering Place
- Stella Circle
- Food First NL
- Human Rights Commission
- NL Public Sector Pensioners Association
- NL Seniors and Pensioners Coalition
- Grand Bank 50+ Club
- NL 50+ Federation
- Canadian Association for Retired Persons NL
- Navnet
- Catholic Women's League
- Clarenville Random Age-Friendly Communities
- Town of Clarenville
- Clarenville 50+ Club
- Town of Gander
- Gander Seniors 50+ Club
- Town of Grand-Falls Windsor
- Exploits Valley 50+ Club
- St. John's Retired Citizens Association
- Mount Pearl Seniors Independent Group
- City of Mount Pearl
- Town of Deer Lake
- Caribou 50+ Club Deer Lake
- Seniors Citizen Echo Club Corner Brook
- Stephenville 50+ Club
- Town of Stephenville
- Twin Cities 50+ Club Labrador
- Seniors Advisory Committee St. John's
- Science & Seniors Geo Centre
- Seniors on the Go Botanical Gardens
- Alzheimer's Society
- Rethinking Food Charity Summit
- Town of Wabush
- Town of Corner Brook
- Town of Happy Valley Goose Bay
- Red Leaf Centre Springdale
- Town of Labrador City
- Mayor Danny Breen



Susan addressed the NL 50+ Federation in Marystown. Approximately 300 delegates attended the 45th Annual Convention.



Susan recognized the great work of the Random Age-Friendly Communities, Mayor Pickett and council, and the ten businesses in Clarenville that have achieved the distinction of Age Friendly Businesses.

Community Engagement

The Seniors' Advocate Meeting with Media



Day two on the job, Susan reached out to the media and discussed the priority areas of seniors which the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will focus. **Housing, Cost of Living, Transformation of Acute, Long-Term and Community Health Care, Status Report on recommendations and Aging in Place/ Age Friendly Communities.**

The Seniors' Advocate was live "On Target"



Susan discussed the systemic issues impacting seniors in the province, live with Linda Swain.



Seniors' Advocate Susan Walsh and Tanya Billard (Advocacy Consultant OSA) meet with NL Seniors and Pensioners Coalition.



Susan met with Mayor Manuel and council of the town of Grand Falls-Windsor and the Excite Corporation to discuss Age Friendly Communities and supports to seniors.



The Office of the Seniors' Advocate recognized the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on September 8, 2022. With a reign of over 70 years, and as a senior, her counsel and leadership were sought after by many world leaders.

Public Engagement

Seniors' Advocate Provincial Public Engagement

Newfoundland and Labrador's Seniors' Advocate, Susan Walsh, conducted public engagement sessions, reaching out to seniors, families/caregivers and service providers throughout the province. The Seniors' Advocate listened to concerns brought forward to gain a better understanding of the systemic issues affecting seniors. Feedback will be used to help guide the Office of the Seniors' Advocate's actions and strategic direction in 2023. The 16 public engagement sessions were conducted virtually and in-person. A survey was used to collect input.

My mandate is to recommend ways to improve issues, services and programs impacting NL seniors. Three years have passed since this Office undertook any significant engagement process. In that time, we have all witnessed considerable change: economically, socially and health related. It is time to hear from seniors; to learn and discuss how we can ensure positive impacts on the lives of seniors.

- Susan Walsh, NL Seniors' Advocate

Public Engagement Sessions

CENTRAL AND CLARENVILLE

Clareville Sept 28 Gander Oct 4
Grand Falls Oct 5

AVALON

St. John's Oct 6, Nov 23 & 24, Dec 5
Mount Pearl Nov 24

LABRADOR

Labrador West Dec 6 Goose Bay Dec 7

WESTERN

Springdale Nov 28 Deer Lake Nov 29
Corner Brook Nov 29 Stephenville Nov 30

VIRTUAL SESSIONS

Nov 1 & 22



Great turn out in Labrador West for our Public Engagement session. Appreciate the partnership of the Twin Cities 50+ Club.



Lively discussion with seniors in Deer Lake. Thanks for the partnership of the Caribou 50+ Club.

Stay Safe from Covid-19, Colds and Flus!

As we enter another holiday season, remember that flus, colds, Covid-19 and many other germs and viruses are all around us.

Keep safe by following Public Health Guidance which strongly recommends wearing a mask over the nose, mouth and chin without any gaping, especially in public indoor spaces and where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Further measures to keep yourself healthy and safe include:

- **washing your hand often**
- **avoiding touching your face**
- **coughing and sneezing in your sleeve or a tissue**
- **frequently cleaning high-touch areas**
- **staying home when you are sick and avoiding contact with others when they are sick**
- **ensuring your vaccinations and boosters are up to date**



For further Public Health advice visit the Department of Health and Community Services NL Life with Covid-19 Webpage at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>

Reminder

WINTER HOME SAFETY TIPS FOR SENIORS



Schedule maintenance for furnaces and fireplaces to ensure they are safe to use.



Check batteries in portable radios, flashlights, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.



Keep all heat sources and vents clear of clutter.



Make sure smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are installed and working on every floor of the home.



Never leave portable heaters unattended.



Put entry or garage lights on a timer or light sensor so they come on as soon as it gets dark each day.



Keep fire extinguishers on hand and near heat sources.



Keep the home well-lit by installing the maximum watt bulbs indicated.



Our Team

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Tanya Billard- Advocacy Consultant

Pamela Dawe-Advocacy Consultant

Sherri Lee Owens- Office Administrator

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