



## Message from the Advocate

As this will be my final message before I retire in May, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to each and every one of you for your support. When I began this role, I had two goals: to firmly establish the Office of the Seniors' Advocate so that no future government would ever consider closing it, and to improve programs and services for seniors. Early on, it became clear that many people were not aware the office existed, nor understood our mandate. In response, my small but mighty team and I made it our priority to change that.



Over the past four years, we met with seniors, community organizations, and local governments in more than 70 communities throughout the province—listening, educating, and committing to elevate the issues shared with us. We also introduced a transparent accountability framework that allowed seniors to see what we were doing on their behalf and whether government was responding. This included numerous evidence-informed recommendations to improve services for seniors, as well as our annual Status Report, which publicly outlined government responses and held decision-makers to account.

I believe we have achieved what we set out to do. The value of having an Office of the Seniors' Advocate is recognized, the strength of the mandate is felt, and we have seen many positive changes to programs and services for seniors.

I leave this role filled with pride for the meaningful change and successes we have achieved and with gratitude for the seniors who trusted us, my incredible team, supportive colleagues, and the community organizations who walked alongside us. While my time as Seniors' Advocate is coming to a close, I am confident that the momentum built and initiatives underway have laid a strong framework for continued progress in the years ahead. This office will continue to amplify the voices of seniors and make a lasting, positive difference in the lives of older adults in our beautiful province.

I thank you for your support and wish you all the best!

*Susan*

**Susan Walsh**  
Seniors' Advocate NL

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# SOMETHING BIG

*is coming*

## FULL INVESTIGATION POWERS AND INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY COMING TO THE OSA

We are thrilled to share that the Speech from the Throne highlighted significant positive changes for seniors in our province! Most notably, the legislation governing the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will be replaced with a new Act which will provide full investigation powers and the ability to provide individual advocacy. This is a major step forward in supporting older adults and protecting their rights. It is anticipated that there will be some time identified to develop the resources to do this work, after the bill is passed in the House of Assembly and before it comes into power.

This development will enable us to investigate concerns and provide direct support and advocacy to seniors navigating programs and services.

In anticipation of these changes, the Advocate has sent numerous letters to the Department of Seniors, outlining her recommendations for the proposed legislation and budget requirements to complete this expanded mandate.

The Advocate has provided her vision for the legislation and is eager to see the Bill introduced. This is an exciting time for seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador, and we are confident that these changes will enhance protections, improve services, and strengthen advocacy efforts in the province.

**This truly is GREAT news for seniors and the broader community!**

**BIG NEWS  
FOR SENIORS  
IN NL**

02/12

# Advocacy Actions

Issue	OSA Action	Response
<b>Meetings with Ministers</b>	Since January, the Seniors' Advocate has met with Ministers and executive teams from several provincial departments, including Health and Community Services; Labrador Affairs; Government Services; Justice and Public Safety; Seniors; Finance; Municipal and Community Affairs; Social Supports and Wellbeing; and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. These meetings allowed for a discussion on key issues affecting older adults in the province. Topics included the advancement of a Poverty Reduction Plan for seniors, implementation of Continuum of Care legislation, and improving eligibility criteria for government programs and services.	The meetings were characterized by open and receptive dialogue, with Ministers expressing interest in the issues raised and the priorities identified. The OSA looks forward to collaboration with government departments to advance legislation, policies, and programs that support the wellbeing, dignity, and independence of older adults in NL.



Issue	OSA Action	Response
<b>Housing Challenges for Seniors in the Private Rental Market</b>	The OSA sent a letter to the Department of Government Services requesting a meeting to discuss concerns related to the Residential Tenancies Act and the challenges seniors face in the private rental market. Issues raised included rising rents, limited accessible housing, reliance on informal rental platforms, and the impact of housing instability on older adults living on fixed incomes. A follow-up meeting was held with the Assistant Deputy Minister and departmental officials to discuss these concerns in more detail, including the OSA's interest in rent and vacancy control.	The department confirmed it is considering all options and consulting with various stakeholders.

Issue	OSA Action	Response
<b>Review of Income-Tested Program Eligibility Criteria</b>	Following a meeting with government officials, the Seniors' Advocate sent a letter requesting a copy of the government-wide review of income-tested program eligibility criteria led by the Department of Finance. The review was initiated several years ago, and the OSA sought to better understand the findings and how they may impact seniors' access to programs and services.	The department advised that the Income Tested Program Review has not yet been completed. However, it noted that as it relates to one program, the benefit amount and income threshold for the NL Seniors' Benefit were indexed to the provincial Consumer Price Index effective July 1, 2025. The OSA will continue to advocate for the review of all income thresholds.

Issue	OSA Action	Response
<b>Property Tax Issues</b>	Seniors throughout the province expressed concern that their municipality no longer offers a seniors rate on property tax, quoting that provincial government noted it was not permitted under the <b>Municipalities Act/Towns and Local Service Districts Act</b> . The OSA reviewed the matter and the Seniors' Advocate met with the Minister responsible and his executive and discussed the concern.	The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs noted that the <b>Municipalities Act/Towns and Local Service Districts Act</b> does not allow a reduced property tax rate based on age, but there are options for those living with low incomes.

Issue	OSA Action	Response
<b>2025–2026 Status of Recommendations Report</b>	The OSA has begun preparing the <b>2025–2026 Status of Recommendations Report</b> . As part of this process, letters were sent to government departments requesting updates on actions taken over the past fiscal year to address outstanding recommendations. These annual reports support transparency and accountability by tracking government progress in responding to recommendations aimed at improving programs and services for seniors.	Departments have been asked to provide written updates on the status of recommendations under their responsibility by April 9, 2026. The information provided will be reviewed and included in the upcoming report.

# BUDGET 2026-2027 SUBMISSION

**Our Budget 2026-27 submission is now before government, grounded in evidence and the lived experience of NL seniors. The submission calls for urgent, preventative investments that support seniors to age well, in the right place.**

Key priorities include:

- Including seniors in the provincial Poverty Reduction Plan
- Expanding access to free and preventive home supports
- Strengthening primary care access, including free nurse practitioner services
- Increasing affordable, age-friendly housing with predictable rents
- Investing in social inclusion to reduce isolation and support mental health

Smart, preventative investments today will reduce pressure on health care, housing, and social systems tomorrow.



SUBMISSION TO  
**THE GOVERNMENT OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

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**CLICK HERE TO  
READ THE  
SUBMISSION**

05/12

# Distinguished Service Award

**Celebrating Leadership and Lasting  
Contributions to Social Work**

The Seniors' Advocate, Susan Walsh, has been named the Newfoundland and Labrador recipient of the **Canadian Association of Social Workers Distinguished Service Award**. Presented annually during National Social Work Month by the Canadian Association of Social Workers, this national award is selected by each CASW member organization and recognizes individuals who have made sustained and meaningful contributions to the social work profession.

Susan accepted the award during a virtual ceremony surrounded by members of her team and her family, making the moment even more special. The recognition reflects her long-standing dedication to the social work profession and celebrates the remarkable impact she has made throughout her career.

We are incredibly proud of you, Susan, and grateful for your leadership and dedication!



## Town Hall Meetings with the Advocate



The Office of the Seniors' Advocate regularly meets with organizations/groups.

If you would like to arrange a session :



1-833-729-6603



seniorsadvocate@  
seniorsadvocatenl.ca

The schedule books up quickly, so be sure to reach out as soon as possible!

06/12

**March is**

## **Fraud Prevention Month**

If you believe you or someone you know may be a victim of fraud:

Contact the RNC at:

709-729-8000

Call Crime Stoppers at:

1-800-222-TIPS (8477)

Report to the Canadian

Anti-Fraud Centre at:

1-888-495-8501

According to the Government of Canada, fraud is the number one crime against older Canadians. Though people of all ages, backgrounds or income can be victims of fraud, older people get targeted more than others. During Fraud Prevention Month, the OSA is sharing important reminders to help older adults and their families recognize scams and protect themselves.

Scammers often pretend to be trusted organizations and may create urgency to appear legitimate. Be cautious of unexpected requests for personal information, unusual payment methods, or pressure to act quickly. To protect yourself, never share personal or financial information with unsolicited contacts. If something doesn't feel right, hang up and verify using a trusted number.

### **Meet Our Student**

## **Jill Ford**

Jill is currently completing a seven-month, part-time work placement with the OSA as part of her Master of Social Work degree at Memorial University. She also works part time as the Newfoundland and Labrador Resource Centre Director for the Huntington Society of Canada. Prior to returning to school, Jill worked as a Mental Health and Addictions Counsellor in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, where she gained valuable experience working within rural health care and community systems. She is passionate about creating systemic change, with a particular focus on improving access to services in rural areas of NL. During her time with the OSA, Jill is researching the NL Provincial Home Support Program, alongside conducting a broader review of home support programs across Canada. Outside of her professional and academic work, Jill is a busy mother of three. When she's not working, she can often be found at the hockey rink or soccer field cheering on her children, hiking, playing softball, or enjoying a quiet moment curled up on the couch.



**07/12**

# Public Engagement

## Town Hall on the Seniors' Report 2025

CARP NL, NLPSPA, and the participating associations of the NL Seniors Coalition recently hosted a public town hall where in Susan Walsh shared key findings from the Seniors' Report 2025 on NL seniors wellbeing and answered questions from attendees.

We were pleased to welcome over 100 attendees, both in-person and online, who engaged in a very productive dialogue on the issues that matter most to seniors. Participants shared experiences, asked questions, and offered ideas that will help shape the ongoing advocacy work of the Office of the Seniors' Advocate.



# Public Engagement

On March 3rd, the Advocate had the pleasure to present the findings of the Seniors Report 2025 to over 200 social workers with the NL College of Social Workers. The presentation sparked meaningful discussion on advancing supports and services for older adults across the province.

The NunatuKavut Community Council invited the OSA to present at the NunatuKavut Inuit Health Forum: End-of-Life Care, held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. It was a great day of sharing, learning and collaboration.

The OSA also presented findings from the Seniors' Report 2025 to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Program with the Newfoundland & Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research, sharing key insights on seniors' wellbeing and sparking discussion on priorities for policy and program development.

In addition, the OSA joined the NL Anti-Poverty Coalition alongside community organizations to advance the agenda on reducing poverty among seniors, ensuring older adults have access to the supports they need to live with dignity.

The OSA participated in the exCHANGE Calgary Forum on Late Life Homelessness, contributing insights grounded in Newfoundland and Labrador's unique context while also learning from national experts on supporting older adults experiencing housing insecurity.



# Public Engagement

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate also met with several key groups, including the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Oral Health Centre – Mobile Smiles NL, the Canadian Radio–Television and Telecommunications Commission, the CEOs and Executive Directors of the Colleges of Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses, as well as Seniors NL, the 50+ Federation, and the NL Public Pensioners Association, to discuss issues affecting seniors.

## Media Interviews

In addition to the news related to the retirement of the Seniors' Advocate, Susan spoke to the media about the critical need for Continuum of Care Legislation, as recommended by the OSA.

## Listen Here

[Click Here for CBC On the Go: Retirement](#)

[Click Here for CBC Morning Show: Retirement](#)

[Click Here for VOXM Open Line: Continuum of Care Legislation](#)

## Read Here



### Advocate Suggests NL Enact Long-Term Care Legislation

The outgoing Senior's Advocate says Newfoundland and Labrador needs to develop continuum of care legislation L...

VOXM / Mar 21



### She fought to save the N.L. seniors' advocate office. Now she's retiring | CBC News

In 2022, Susan Walsh was concerned the provincial government was going to axe the Office of the Seniors' Advocate, so she applied for the job. Now retiring, she feels confident the role will exist long into the future.

CBC / Feb 28



### Seniors' Advocate Susan Walsh Retiring

The province's Seniors' Advocate is retiring. Susan Walsh will officially leave the position on May 19. Wash c...

VOXM / Feb 26



### NL Seniors Advocate to retire in May after 35 years

NL Seniors Advocate Susan Walsh says the past 35 years have been a blink as she gets set to retire in May. She sa...

Frequency / Mar 5



### March 21, 2026 – Should the province develop and implement continuum of care legislation, as suggested by the Seniors' Advocate?

This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply.

VOXM / Mar 20

# A CAREER WORTH

## CELEBRATING



With deep appreciation and gratitude, we share that after 35 years of public service, Susan Walsh has announced her retirement as Newfoundland and Labrador's Seniors' Advocate, effective May 19, 2026.

As her team at the Office of the Seniors' Advocate, we have had the honour of working alongside someone whose compassion, integrity, and tireless dedication have lifted up the voices and wellbeing of older adults throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Susan's leadership has shaped this office, strengthened its impact, and made a meaningful difference for seniors and families throughout our province. We are deeply grateful for her service and the legacy she leaves behind.



## Stay Connected



Seniors Advocate NL



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## Our Team

- **Susan Walsh**, Seniors' Advocate
- **Pamela Dawe**, Systemic Advocacy Consultant
- **Gabrielle Dupont**, Systemic Advocacy Consultant
- **Ignacia Diaz**, Policy Analyst
- **Arlene Mullins**, Administrative Officer

To receive updates and information from the Office of the Seniors' Advocate, contact us to be added to our email list. If you prefer printed copies of our reports, let us know, and we will mail them to you.

