



Seniors' Advocate NL Releases What Golden Years? Report

Today, Susan Walsh, Seniors' Advocate for Newfoundland and Labrador, released a report titled *What Golden Years?* The report is a first step in attempting to address the cost of living challenges identified by seniors through an extensive consultation process that heard from approximately 1,400 seniors.

Thirty-two per cent (32%) of seniors throughout Newfoundland and Labrador reported that they did not have enough income to meet their financial needs and were unable to afford food, rent, medications and required medical services. This is contributing to poorer health outcomes and reduced quality of life.

The *What Golden Years?* report contains twelve (12) recommendations to the Departments of Finance, Health and Community Services, Children Seniors' and Social Development, and Labrador Affairs, which begin to address some of the cost of living concerns expressed by seniors. Key recommendations include:

- 1) Indexing the NL Seniors' Benefit;
- 2) Reviewing both the maximum family net income threshold to receive the full NL Seniors' Benefit and the phase out rate;
- 3) Exempting seniors in receipt of GIS from having to pay for their required home supports;
- 4) Exempting households with a family net income of less than \$29,402 from having to pay for their required home supports;
- 5) Implementing the Food First NL recommendation for a shared food delivery service to ensure food can be delivery to seniors if necessary;
- 6) Increasing the amount of money per kilometer people traveling for medical appointments are eligible to receive through the Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP); and
- 7) Providing all people age 65 years and older free access to the high-dose influenza vaccine.

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate NL will monitor the implementation of the recommendations and report on progress annually in the Status Report on Recommendations.

Quote

"Our research has shown that seniors in receipt of the full federal and provincial financial benefits cannot afford the necessities of life. The recommendations contained in this report are a starting point to begin to provide some financial relief to seniors living in low income, while ensuring they can access the supports and services they require to age well in their homes and communities. I look forward to the details of the provincial government Poverty Reduction Program for seniors, to further support seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador who are struggling with the high cost of living."

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