

## News Release – For Immediate Release

### Office of the Seniors' Advocate Newfoundland and Labrador

March 30, 2023

#### Seniors' Advocate Releases [What We Heard: Engagement with Seniors, Family Members and/or Caregivers, and Service Providers](#)

Today Susan Walsh, Seniors' Advocate for Newfoundland and Labrador, released a report titled [What We Heard: Engagement with Seniors, Family Members and/or Caregivers, and Service Providers](#). The report is the summary of an extensive engagement process led by the Office of the Seniors' Advocate NL, with support from MQO Research, to identify the concerns and needs of seniors and give the seniors of this province a voice.

The process involved two components: 15 in-person and two online consultations; and a public survey available online and on paper. The response from seniors was overwhelming and unprecedented, with 1,300 seniors and almost 200 family members and service providers having their say. Given the large sample size, which provides a 95% confidence interval, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate has established a very clear picture of the needs and concerns of seniors throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Key findings include:

- 1) Seniors are equally concerned about access to health care and the cost of living.
- 2) When asked to rank their priorities, the number one priority was supports to age well in their own home, followed closely by addressing the cost of living and then access to health care.
- 3) 32% of seniors do not have enough income to meet their needs.
- 4) 16% of those noting they did not have enough income to meet their needs were receiving greater income than the lowest income seniors in NL (those in receipt of GIS).
- 5) Seniors who do not have enough income to meet their needs (32%) report being unable to afford food (40%) and going without food (60%).
- 6) Seniors who do not have enough income to meet their needs do not purchase needed medical supplies and devices (57%), personal items (51%), special dietary requirements (34%) nor attend social events (60%).
- 7) Seniors noted inability to access primary health care providers and wait times as their most frequent unmet health care needs, which was significantly higher in Labrador.
- 8) Family members noted home support as the highest need for those living with dementia, followed by training and education for caregivers and family members.
- 9) 40% of seniors identified home repairs and maintenance around the home as needed to stay in their homes, while 46% of family members/caregivers reported home support as required.
- 10) 23% of seniors said they were looking for an apartment or condo, and 21% said a senior or retirement community complex. All noted that these were not available in their community or not affordable and had long waitlists.

The findings in this report should help inform policy development, program delivery and spending at all levels of government. Further, the findings may better inform service providers and businesses in their services to seniors.

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate will use this rich data to guide its strategic direction toward improved services for seniors in the province.

**Quote**

"I wish to thank the many, many seniors that met with me, called our office, completed a survey and shared their real life experiences, their worries, their needs and their knowledge and wisdom; and our community partners that supported the engagement process. Today, I share the voices of the seniors of Newfoundland and Labrador such that governments at all levels, community organizations, service providers and businesses can hear what nearly half of this province is saying and so we can work together to make positive change."

Susan Walsh

Seniors' Advocate Newfoundland and Labrador

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