

Message from the Advocate

Hello Everyone!

It's hard to believe summer is over and fall is upon us. And what a busy summer it has been for the Office of the Seniors' Advocate!

In addition to releasing our 2023-2026 Activity Plan, and public engagement sessions in a number of communities, in July we spent two days in Labrador for meetings and public engagement sessions in Nain, Hopedale and Happy Valley-Goose Bay with Indigenous seniors, Elders and their leadership.

In September I was honoured to give the key-note address at this year's NL 50+ Federation's AGM in Gander. What a great turn-out of seniors from 50+ Clubs from all over the province!

On September 8 we released our annual Status Report on the progress made on the formal recommendations made by this Office since 2019. I am pleased to note that 16 of the 25 recommendations have been fully implemented and seven are underway. We continue to advocate for the implementation of the remaining two recommendations.

Based on the overwhelming interest from seniors and their organizations for me to meet with them, it will be a busy fall. See page 10 for the specific details and come along if you are in the area!

Before closing I would like to make note of an important day: October 1. Every year on this day we celebrate National Seniors Day and International Day of Older Persons. National Seniors Day honours Canadian seniors and recognizes their valuable contributions. On International Day of Older Persons we acknowledge the important contributions of seniors and raise awareness of the challenges faced by many older persons around the world.

All the best for continued good health and happiness.

Susan



STATUS REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS 2022-2023



On September 8, 2023 the Seniors' Advocate released the annual Status Report on Recommendations 2022-2023.

Since 2019, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate has issued 25 formal recommendations to various provincial government departments and agencies. To date, 16 recommendations have been fully implemented, compared to 11 in last year's report; seven recommendations are partially implemented; and two recommendations have no measurable advancement.

Overall, there has been considerable progress in government's response to the recommendations of the Office of the Seniors' Advocate in this reporting period. The percentage of implemented recommendations increased from 44% last year to 64% in 2022-23.

While seven recommendations are partially implemented, there has been progress in a number of these: the review of the Personal Care Homes and Long Term Care Homes has commenced, after the Advocate's public call last Fall, and the Dementia Care Action Plan has been released and implementation is ongoing.

Other recommendations, which are reiterated in the Health Accord, have had progress and continue to advance such as the need for increased professionals with gerontology expertise in the health system.

The Seniors' Advocate will monitor progress on all outstanding recommendations and annually report on progress until all have been implemented. The seniors of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve no less!

ADVOCACY

ACTIONS

Issue:

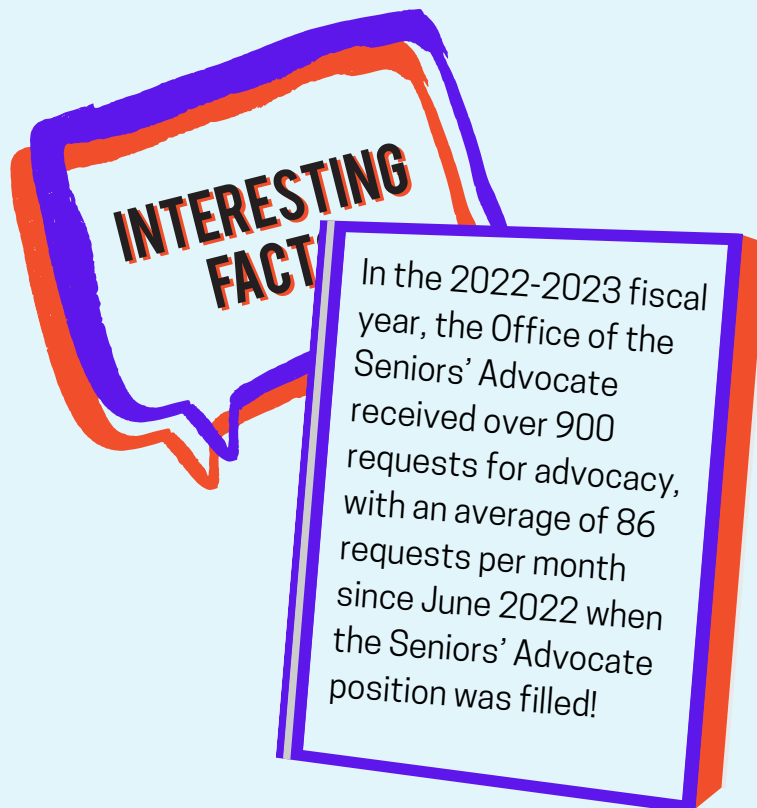
Seniors who do not have access to a family doctor expressed concerns that they are unable to have the drivers medical form completed within required timelines. In addition, seniors are concerned about the cost of medicals, especially those on fixed income, with the rising cost of living.

OSA Action:

The Seniors' Advocate wrote to Minister Sarah Stoodley, Digital Government and ServiceNL, and Minister Tom Osborne, Health and Community Services, outlining the concerns, offering suggestions and seeking solutions to ensure seniors can continue to drive legitimately while waiting medical clearance, as well as for the cost of medicals to be covered under MCP.

Government Response:

Budget 2023 announced an allocation of \$1.3 million to ensure physicians will bill MCP directly to cover the cost of completing driver medicals for seniors aged 75 years+, beginning on April 1, 2023. Any seniors who paid their doctor for the service between April 1 and August 25, 2023 can contact Medical Services Division of the Department of Health and Community Services at 1-833-864-0223 to be reimbursed.



ADVOCACY

ACTIONS

Issue:

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate and numerous community organizations have seen an increase in seniors with unwanted individuals living in their home but no avenue to make them leave.

OSA Action:

The Advocate joined community partners and met with the Office of Women and Gender Equality to discuss the issue as well as potential solutions.

Government Response:

The Office of Women and Gender Equality is reviewing the matter and a response is pending.

Issue:

Specific concerns with ageism in public communications has been raised to the Office of the Seniors' Advocate by NL seniors.

OSA Action:

The Seniors' Advocate has written businesses to express the concerns raised to her by a number of seniors and to educate on ageism including a reminder that even something meant to be humorous can proliferate a negative stereotype.

Media Interviews

On July 26, Susan was on Open Line speaking with Paddy Daly about seniors' issues including: how seniors are dealing with the extreme heat NL is currently experiencing; the Department of Health and Community Service's Review of the Long Term Care/Personal Care Homes and the need for that Review to be a blueprint outlining next steps for improvements; unsustainable Home Support co-pay amounts; and, how the Guaranteed Income Supplement might be adjusted to be more fair to seniors living in Atlantic Canada.

Listen here!



With the release of the Office's Status Report on Recommendations on September 8, the Advocate was invited to join Linda Swain on VOGM's News Talk on September 11 for a conversation about the recommendations, particularly those recommendations which have not yet been implemented.



Listen here!

Public Engagement

Advocacy Consultant Tanya Billard participated in the Seniors on the Go event at MUN's beautiful Botanical Gardens on June 22. Organized by the NL Chapter of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons.



On June 29 the Seniors' Advocate was one of the speakers on an online forum discussing seniors' food insecurity and what supportive services are available for seniors living at home in St John's could help them age well at home.

The Advocate met with Al Antle of Credit Counselling NL on July 5 for a discussion about the financial challenges NL seniors are facing. Mr. Antle provided his well-experienced and informed insights on this growing issue.

From July 11-13 the Seniors' Advocate was in Labrador for meetings and public engagement sessions in Nain, Hopedale and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The Advocate was honoured to be welcomed by the Nunatsiavut Government to meet with seniors and Elders who discussed their issues and portrayed their resilience.



Public Engagement

On July 17 the Office was pleased to have an online chat with Dr. Valerie Tarasuk, Professor Emeritus, Department of Nutritional Sciences with the University of Toronto. Much of Dr. Tarasuk's research is on problems of household food insecurity in Canada; why we have this problem, implications of poor nutrition and examining policy and program responses.

On July 19 the Advocate met with staff of the Iris Kirby House to discuss the alarming incidents of abuse of senior women and unique challenges these women face as seniors.

On August 15 the Advocate met with representatives of the National Association of Federal Retirees: Atlantic Director Roland Wells and Marilyn Best, Advocacy Program Officer. There were many common concerns including: cost of living, health care and benefits, and addressing ageism.



Public Engagement

On August 22 we had a wonderful opportunity to meet with seniors with the Port de Grave New Horizon's Seniors Program, to share information about our Office, hear their concerns and answer questions.



The Advocate was delighted to be the Keynote Speaker at the NL 50+ Federation's annual conference in Gander during September 12-15. This year was the 46th time this event was held and as usual it was very well-attended by approximately 400 seniors from all over the province!



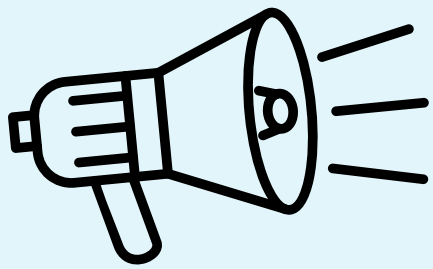
Public Engagement

On September 19, Advocacy Consultant, Pamela Dawe, met with the Mount Pearl Seniors Independence Group to provide an update on the work of the Office since our last visit in the winter of 2022.

Pamela Dawe, presented to the National Association of Federal Retirees on September 20 about the work of the Office and to discuss the shared concerns of the Office and the Association.

The Seniors' Advocate was busy on September 21 when she presented to the Bay Roberts 50+ club in the morning, and the Whiteway 50+ club, with members from the Cavendish and Heart's Delight 50+ clubs in the afternoon. Seventy seniors turned up for great discussions!





FALL 2023 **Town Hall Meetings with** **the Seniors' Advocate**

As announced in our June Newsletter, the Seniors' Advocate, Susan Walsh, will be travelling throughout the province this fall and winter to network and engage seniors to talk about the issues that most concern them. As well, the Advocate will provide an update on the work of the Office of the Seniors' Advocate and she will seek input from seniors on her current and future recommendations to government.

The fall schedule is as follows and all, except where indicated, are open for community participation. For exact locations check out our website, social media or contact our office as the date grows closer.

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
November 8	Pollards Point	10:00 a.m.
November 8	Stephenville	2:30 p.m.
November 9	Burgeo	11:00 a.m.
November 9	Irishtown-Summerside	TBD
November 10	Woody Point	10:00 a.m.
November 10	Norris Point	1:00 p.m.
November 10	Curling	4:30 p.m. (members only)
November 14	Alexander Bay	3:30 p.m.
November 15	Buchans/Buchans Junction	11:00 a.m.
November 15	Grand Falls-Windsor	3:00 p.m.
November 16	New World Island	10:00 a.m.
November 16	Botwood	2:00 p.m.
November 22	Hillview	10:30 a.m.
November 22	Clareville	1:30 p.m.

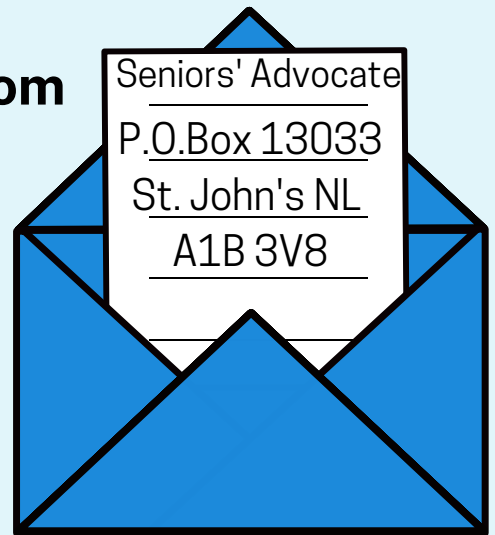
If your organization/group would like to meet with Susan in the winter/spring, please call 709-729-6603, 1-833-729-6603 (toll free) or email: seniorsadvocate@seniorsadvocatenl.ca. We already have some locations identified for the winter/spring, so please reach out as soon as possible if you are interested.



Our Team

Susan Walsh, Seniors' Advocate
Tanya Billard, Advocacy Consultant
Pamela Dawe, Advocacy Consultant
Sherri-Lee Owens, Office Administrator

To receive updates and information from the Office of the Seniors' Advocate, contact us to be added to our email list.



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