



Message from the Advocate

I hope everyone has had the opportunity to enjoy the summer months and find some time to rest and recharge. It has certainly been a busy and productive summer here at the Office of the Seniors' Advocate, and we are excited to carry that momentum into the fall.

Over the summer, our thoughts have been with all those impacted by the wildfires in our province. It has been a difficult time for many, but we are encouraged to see the provincial government establish a Ministers' Committee to address the needs of those affected.

Over the past few months, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate has been busy with numerous meetings with organizations, building community connections, sharing our research through presentations, and welcoming a new student to our team.

As always, the OSA remains committed to listening to and advocating on behalf of seniors throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We look forward to continuing this important work together in the months ahead.

Susan

Susan Walsh
Seniors' Advocate NL



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Health Care in the Coast of Bays Area

As noted in the June 2025 newsletter, the Advocate was awaiting a response from NL Health Services regarding several health care concerns raised during community sessions in Milltown, Hermitage, and Belleoram. In July, the OSA met directly with Executive and officials in the Health Zone to resolve these ongoing issues.

Following these discussions, the OSA sent letters to the 50+ Clubs in the area that had raised concerns, providing them with the direct responses of NL Health Services on matters including drivers' medical forms, access to Family Care Teams, hostel availability, and the shortage of physicians. By sharing these responses, the OSA ensured that community members were directly informed of the progress and commitments made. This process has reinforced the OSA's role in amplifying seniors' concerns and holding systems accountable to follow through on identified issues.



Issue

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Decision- Making Framework

The OSA raised concerns that seniors were not adequately represented in the initial consultation process on government's decision-making framework. Given that many seniors will be significantly impacted by such legislation, their perspectives and experiences are essential. The OSA was therefore pleased that government accepted our recommendation and held a second round of consultations. As part of this phase, the OSA met with government officials to highlight seniors' priorities and reinforce the importance of accessibility in both process and outcome.

The OSA also prepared and released a formal submission as part of the second phase of consultations. Read about it [**here**](#).

Provincial Hearing Aid Program

The OSA previously recommended that the Provincial Hearing Aid Program be fully transferred to the Department of Health and Community Services, with eligibility determined by income only (similar to the provincial eye glass program), rather than by both income and assets. Government accepted this recommendation and, in its most recent response for the OSA's **Status Report on Recommendations 2024-25**, indicated that the recommendation was completed. However, the OSA has since learned that the full transfer has not occurred. As a result, seniors continue to be subject to both an income and asset test. Yet if found financially eligible, they are referred to secondary processing of the request. This unnecessary administrative step, additional paperwork for seniors and a potential deterrent from applying to the program is not acceptable.

The OSA raised the concern to the Department of Seniors' Executive and asked for the accurate status of this recommendation. The OSA awaits a response.



Meet Our Newest Student

Josh Allen

Josh Allen is a Registered Social Worker based in Fredericton, New Brunswick, where he practices at the Fredericton Downtown Community Health Centre. He holds a Bachelor of Social Work from St. Thomas University and is currently completing a 500-hour Master of Social Work field practicum through Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador with the Office of the Seniors' Advocate NL.

Prior to entering the field of social work, Josh worked in long-term care for 10 years and majored in Gerontology at St. Thomas University. He has a strong interest in working with the aging population and advocating for both macro- and micro-level policy changes to improve the lives of older adults.

Originally born in St. John's and raised in Grand Falls-Windsor, Josh now lives in New Brunswick with his wife, their two young children, and their big, beautiful 100-pound Golden Retriever puppy, Gus.

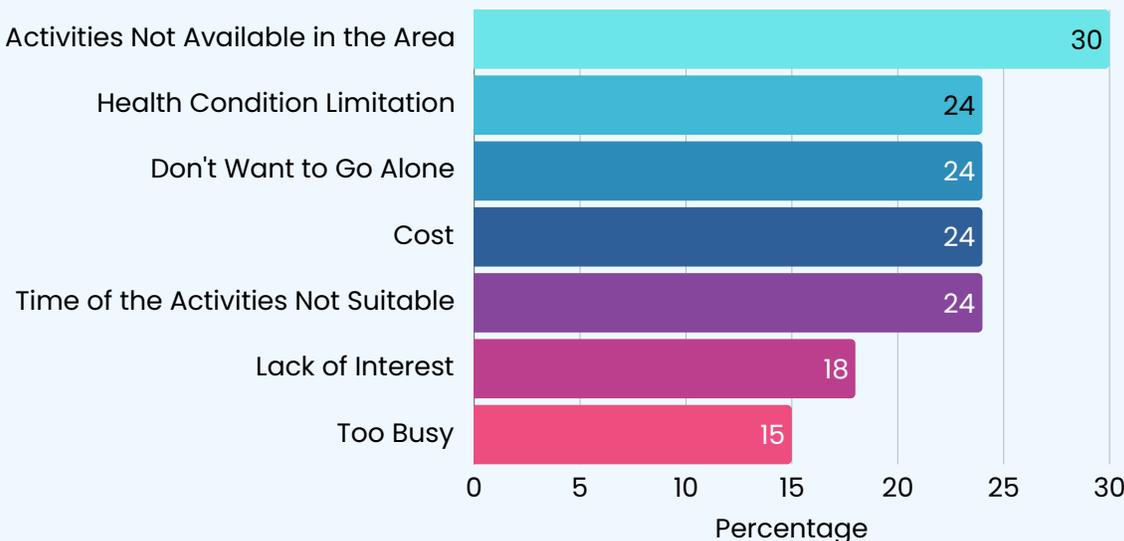
Seniors' Experiences with Social Connections

This past summer we sent out a survey to learn about seniors' experiences with social connections.

Thank you to everyone who participated!

We received responses from every health zone, including both rural and urban areas, and from individuals with varied ages, incomes, and relationship statuses. Although we are still analyzing the results, we can share the following findings with you:

- Over one-half (55 per cent) of respondents reported participating in at least one social activity once a week.
- Almost one-third (32 per cent) of respondents reported participating daily in at least one social activity.
- Almost one-half (47 per cent) of participants reported that they sometimes wanted to participate in more activities.
- Respondents' social networks ranged from having one or two close family members to having five or more close family members and five or more close friends.
- Almost one-quarter of respondents may be at risk of social isolation given their social network size.
- The main barrier to participation was a lack of activities in the area (30 per cent). Health condition limitations, not wanting to go alone, cost, and unsuitable timing of activities were selected as barriers by almost one quarter of participants (24 per cent) (see chart below).



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!

Public Engagement

The OSA continued its engagement with community and professional groups by meeting with a wide range of organizations, including the Pharmacists Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services, the Mental Health Foundation of Canada, 211, Speech-Language Pathologists, #ElderWisdom, the Chairperson of the NL Coalition of Seniors', Pensioners', and Retirees' Association and Groups, Aging Research Centre - Newfoundland and Labrador, End Homelessness, the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Optometrists, SeniorsNL, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NLNPEA).

In addition, the OSA was pleased to attend the Seniors of Distinction Awards 2025 to celebrate the contributions of older adults who make a meaningful difference in their communities.

These meetings provided valuable opportunities to discuss shared priorities, identify gaps in services, and strengthen partnerships that support the wellbeing and protection of seniors across the province.



Public Engagement



The OSA was pleased to take part in the 50+ Federation's annual convention, which brought together more than 300 participants from every region of the province. The event offered a valuable opportunity to connect directly with seniors, listen to their experiences, and share updates on the work of our office.



The Advocate presented key findings from the 2024 Seniors Report, emphasizing important regional differences in seniors' well being. In addition, the OSA hosted an information booth where we met with seniors one-on-one, answered questions, and provided resources on our reports and advocacy work.





Stay Connected



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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.





Office of the
SENIORS' ADVOCATE
Newfoundland and Labrador