

Advancing Age : Promoting Older Manitobans

AN OVERVIEW

In spring 2003, the Manitoba Government implemented a new seniors strategy “*Advancing Age: Promoting Older Manitobans.*” The need for a coordinated and comprehensive framework of legislation, public policy and programs was identified by the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat to ensure that Manitoba is well-positioned to respond to the current, emerging and future needs of Manitoba’s aging population.

The Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat is committed to leading government in creating an environment that promotes health, independence, and well-being for all Manitoba seniors, recognizing that the needs and interests of seniors are diverse. *Advancing Age* is a collaborative effort addressing issues of aging to stimulate initiatives across government and within the seniors community.

A series of short-term action strategies and longer term planning and policy initiatives have been undertaken. In addition, a government-wide inventory of programs and services for seniors is currently underway. The strategy addresses issues within three theme areas: Health Care, Community Living and Security. Specific issues are identified in Appendix I.

Policy Forums will be established for longer term planning and to identify priority areas for collaborative action. Input and active participation will be sought from:

- ❑ Provincial departments and other levels of government;
- ❑ seniors’ organizations and selected seniors known for specific expertise;
- ❑ the academic/research community; and
- ❑ the Manitoba Council on Aging.

Expected key outcomes of *Advancing Age: Promoting Older Manitobans* include:

- ❑ A coordinated and comprehensive framework of legislation, public policy and programs.
- ❑ A collaborative environment to address issues, explore options and stimulate initiatives among governments and within the seniors community.
- ❑ A focus within government that demonstrates to seniors and their families, that issues of aging are being addressed by the provincial government.

In this process, the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat has adopted the five key principles outlined in the National Framework on Aging - *dignity, independence, participation, fairness and security* - to address policy and program development for seniors. *Advancing Age* will also take into account the interests of rural and northern seniors, older women, aboriginal people, seniors with disabilities and the Francophone community.

Background

Currently, 158,400 Manitobans are 65 years of age and older. Manitoba has one of the highest per capita populations of seniors (14%) in all of Canada. In 2001, 22% of Manitobans were aged 55 and older and this is expected to increase to 33% by 2021.

An extensive consultation process undertaken by the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat, with the University of Manitoba’s Centre on Aging and federal-provincial/territorial governments, led to the identification of issues of provincial and national importance. These issues were categorized into the three theme areas.

HEALTH CARE

- Community-based services/health programs
- Aging in place
- Disease prevention
- End-of-life care
- Better coordination of services
- Addictions (alcohol/gambling)
- Chronic disease (Alzheimers, diabetes, osteoporosis, incontinence)
- Health Care Directives
- Support services to seniors program
- Geriatric training for nurses and physicians
- Other

COMMUNITY LIVING

Housing

- Affordable & adequate housing
- adequacy of financial assistance for housing & repair programs
- housing options
- housing in rural and remote areas
- availability of home care
- other

Wellness/Healthy Aging

- enhance quality of life
- healthy lifestyles
- active living
- prevention & promotion
- other

Caregiving

- demands on seniors, families, friends & neighbours
- unpaid work
- resources for caregivers
- other

Technology/Life Long Learning

- continuing education
- training/retraining
- literacy
- access to technology
- other

Transportation

- affordable & accessible transportation
- rural & urban needs
- pedestrians (safe sidewalks, timing of lights)
- other

SECURITY

Economic Status

- pensions – 55 Plus and other benefit programs, funds
- sustainability of programs
- economic security for older women
- other

Elder Abuse

- physical; emotional; financial; neglect
- prevalence escalating
- legislation
- other

Age Discrimination

- services, housing, employment, training
- ageism/marginalization of seniors
- other

Safety & Security

- consumer issues (frauds & scams)
- safety in homes
- injury prevention
- other

Guiding Principles: Dignity, Independence, Participation, Fairness and Security

Population Considerations: Rural & Northern; Aboriginal, Francophone; Older Women; Disability.