

Don't Plan for Seniors Plan with Seniors



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The Seniors' Road Map

Saskatchewan Seniors Ass'n Inc.

BRIEF

April 25, 2017

**GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN
HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Walking the Road Together

Introduction

Seniors are taking the lead role in combating ageism. Clubs, and provincial organizations are trying to raise public awareness about its existence and to dispel common stereotypes and misperceptions about aging. They also combat ageism through inclusive planning and design, advocacy with all levels of government, and active aging programs.

Seniors deserve the same opportunities and benefits as everyone else, regardless of age. It is important to recognize that older persons make significant contributions to our society and that we must not limit their potential. Governments need to listen to and hear the Voice of Seniors to reinstall dignity in the lives of seniors.

Challenges

The demographics of the province are changing very rapidly. While there is a concentration of population in large urban centres, there still are a number of seniors living in rural Saskatchewan. Each area has some unique challenges, but collectively, as seniors, there are a lot of challenges which are common to both.

The voice of seniors is seldom heard or listened to. All residents need to have access to goods and services; however, many barriers exist and these are especially pronounced for the senior population. **The services need to be relevant, accessible, affordable and provided to enable seniors to live in dignity, whether in their homes, seniors' housing, or nursing homes.**

The Reality . . the 2017 Budget impacts

Many seniors are facing many challenges in several key areas. With the current budget, many new concerns have arisen. These include:

- 1) Transportation – access to a system which will enable seniors to attend to medical appointments, visit family and friends, and travel.
- 2) Medical services – access, wait times, prescription costs, over prescriptions in nursing homes
- 3) Homecare and mental care
- 4) Affordable housing – seniors on fixed incomes cannot senior housing or the cost of maintaining their own homes, utilities, groceries, increased cost of medications, etc.
 - a. lack of grants for housing repairs - maintenance
- 5) Ageism by all levels of government, communities and individuals
These include: lack of recognition for senior mentorship; transportation – especially in rural Saskatchewan; financial restrictions – living below the poverty level; street signage, timing on street lights (more than 20 seconds), etc.; sidewalk maintenance
- 6) Living with Dignity – seniors on fixed incomes were not able to meet the rising costs of utilities, taxes, groceries, medication, etc. The addition of 6% sales tax on a number of items essential to seniors will place them in a position of financial stress and difficult choices.

The Road Map

The following pages have the seniors' road signs in their social travels of life over the past five years. Each sign indicates the area of life's highway that required work. Unfortunately, the resolutions listed point out that the repairs that were identified have not been acted upon to make the journey more dignified.

PHARMACARE



16.1 Dispensing Fees Resolution: *Therefore be it Resolved that the Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to amend the legislation that regulates pharmacies and the dispensing of fees to effect required changes which would protect the consumers, provide a consistent approach to the dispensing of medications, and enable dispensing a prescription of more than one month for one fee.*

16.2 Deprescribing Drugs Resolution: *Therefore be it resolved that SSAI urge the Ministry of Health, Province of Saskatchewan, to engage in this process to enable positive deprescribing drug practises be put in place, with the goal of reducing inappropriate prescriptions for seniors by 50 per cent by 2020.*

16.3 Prescription Fee Increase in 2016 Budget: *Therefore be it resolved that SSAI lobby the Government of Saskatchewan and the opposition to immediately introduce legislation to amend the budget to eliminate the proposed increase in the per prescription fee of \$5.00*

16.4 Shingles Vaccine: *Therefore be it resolved that SSAI urge the Government of Saskatchewan to make Shingles vaccine available and free to all seniors in our province.*

15.1 Diabetic Supplies: *Be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Medicare system supply all diabetic supplies and medication, ensuring that all diabetics have better control over their diseases.*

12.1 Prescription Fees: *Be it Resolved that all Saskatchewan seniors who qualify for the Saskatchewan Seniors' Drug Plan not be charged a prescription fee.*

PATIENT FIRST



16.5 Special Care Homes: *Be it resolved that more publically funded and administered Special Care Homes be expanded or built in rural centres, nearer Seniors' home base and their families.*

16.6 Health Care – Patient First: *Therefore be it resolved that the patients have the right to demand that their local physician be in charge of their recovery.*

15.2 Ambulance Fees: *Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Government of Saskatchewan through the Ministry of Health provide free ambulance services when transferring clients from one healthcare facility to another one.*

15.3 Chiropractic Services: *Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Government of Saskatchewan reinstate the chiropractic services for the residents of Saskatchewan, as it was before it was removed.*

15.4 Care Home Beds: *Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Government of Saskatchewan through the Ministry of Health. expand health care centres that are in need of more beds so that those clients needing long term care can remain in their local communities.*

15.5 Cost of Glasses, Dentures And Hearing Aids: *Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Government of Saskatchewan through the Ministry of Health,. provide and publicize an optical, dental and hearing aid plan that is affordable.*

14. 1 Limited Access to Public Home Care Services: *Be It Resolved that SSAI lobby the Provincial Government and the Ministries of Social Services and Health to ensure that the citizens across the Province are receiving full access to Public Home Care services.*

14. 2 Home Care: *Be It Resolved that the Public Home care services be improved for long term clients. This would mean an increase in longer hours and increased services resulting in clients not having bedtime medication at 4:00 P.M. etc.*

14. 3 Aids to Daily Living: *Be It Resolved that those costs need to be brought into an affordable range or better subsidized by the Saskatchewan Government, so that seniors in this Province may enjoy a happier and less isolated life.*

HOUSING



15.6 Seniors' Housing: *Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Saskatchewan Seniors Association request the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism to pursue the inadequacy of seniors' housing with the Government of Saskatchewan with increasing diligence.*

14.4 Affordable Housing: *Be it Resolved that the Saskatchewan Government ensure that the affordable housing is available and affordable for all seniors.*

14.5 Senior Housing Grants: *Be it Resolved that SSAI lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to establish a grant program for home repairs for seniors to enable them to live in their own homes.*



LIVING WITH DIGNITY

16.7 Seniors' Bill of Rights: *Now therefore be it resolved that SSAI lobby of the Government of Saskatchewan to enact a Seniors' Bill of Rights to enable seniors to have a legal framework for their protection.*

16.8 Legal Status of SSAI Clubs: *Be is resolved that SSAI investigate the legal status of the clubs to ensure that all the clubs and members have the same protection as individually incorporated clubs and communicate this information to the affected clubs as soon as possible.*

16.9 Assessment of Property – Seniors Centres: *Therefore be it resolved that SSAI lobby the government of Saskatchewan and SAMA to amend their policy on property assessment to provide for assessing services in rural Saskatchewan to reflect the lower service levels.*

16.10 Assessment of Seniors' Centres – Changing Commercial to Recreational: *Therefore be it resolved that SSAI lobby the government of Saskatchewan and SAMA to change the classification of Seniors Centres from commercial to recreational.*

15.7 Quality of Health Care: *Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Government of Saskatchewan increase its health services budget to enable the Ministry of Health to provide a higher quality of health services for seniors than what is currently in place.*

15.8 Transportation: *Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Government of Saskatchewan through the Ministry of Health put in place a method whereby seniors with no other means of transport can meet their medical needs.*

14.9 Transportation: *Now Therefore Be It Resolved That SSAI lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to provide an annual seniors' pass on STC for \$10.00 per month.*

14.10 Seniors' Centres: *Now Therefore Be It Resolved: That the Executive Board of the Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. urge the Government of Saskatchewan to include those senior centers in any future funding grant program that would help to sustain and support that philosophy.*

13.1 Seniors' Physical Activity Deduction: *Be it resolved that SSAI lobby the Provincial Government and the Government of Canada to allow tax deductions for fees associated with seniors' physical activity-based programs.*

13.2 Homecare Program With Community Supports: *Be it resolved that SSAI urge the Government of Saskatchewan to develop a long-term commitment to work with community agencies and stakeholders so that more seniors live safely and independently at home with the proper community and individual supports rather than in care facilities.*

12.2 School Tax : *Be it resolved that SSAI through SSM lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to also apply the same reduced rate for seniors from paying school tax on home-place residential property.*

12.3 Property Tax : *Be it resolved that all SSAI seniors' centres be exempted from all property taxes in the province of Saskatchewan.*

12.4 Utility Services: *Be it resolved that all SSAI seniors' centres in the province be provided service by SaskPower, Sask Energy and Sasktel at 50% of the charge levied for the services provided.*

Recommendation

The Saskatchewan Seniors' Association Inc. recommends that the government adopt a more proactive approach in programs – the establishment of a Seniors' Advocate provincially, and pass legislation to ensure that seniors don't have to be relegated to a lifestyle that is below that of the poverty level. Furthermore, it is also recommended that more communications and collaboration be afforded with the seniors of this province.

COMMITMENT

SSAI members serve as volunteers in all the communities throughout the province. In all cases, the experiences have shown that the most progress is made when individuals respect each other and work together for the common good of that constituency. Most senior activities are intergenerational.

Based on the experiences shared by all of the members, the clubs, districts, regions - We, The Saskatchewan Seniors' Association request a commitment to:

1. Work together to ensure a good quality of life for seniors by establishing a seniors' advocate provincially.
2. Communicate the progress made in achieving the resolutions of issues identified by seniors.
3. Meet at least once per year (in the spring – March or April) preferably three to four times annually, to discuss the concerns/issues as they relate to seniors with a mind to address them as best possible to maintain a quality of life with dignity for seniors in this province.

THANK YOU:

SSAI also wants to express its appreciation to you for making time to meet with us in your busy schedules and to engage in discussions with us in an effort to make the lives of Seniors more dignified in this province.

The seniors realize that financial constraints make the addressing of some issues more challenging. However, SSAI feels that Seniors' Issues do need a stronger focus in areas, as identified, and that a seniors' perspective needs to be used in addressing them. It is with anticipation that we look forward to working with you to assist in addressing these concerns with a focus of improving the quality of life for seniors in this province.

*Pat Trask, SSAI President
Mike Kaminski, SSAI 2nd VP*

SASK GOVT PROGRAMS

SENIORS ISSUES & CONCERNS

