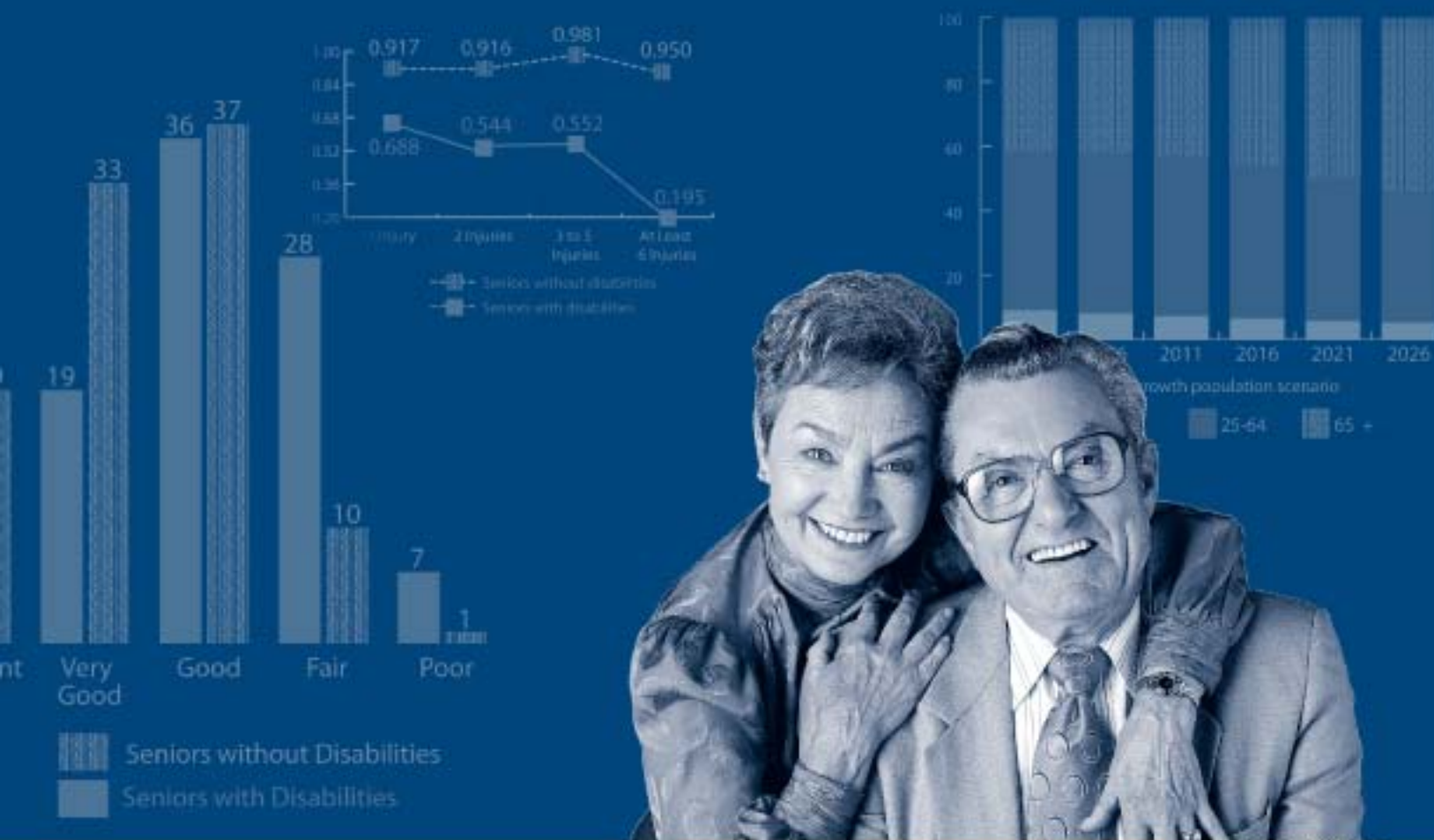


Advancing the inclusion of people with disabilities

With a special section on seniors



SDDP-042-12-05E

“The Government of Canada is committed to supporting the life choices of seniors with disabilities. To this end, I for one want Canadians of all ages to live fully in a fully inclusive society.”

*The Honourable Ken Dryden
Minister of Social Development*

■ AGING AND DISABILITY

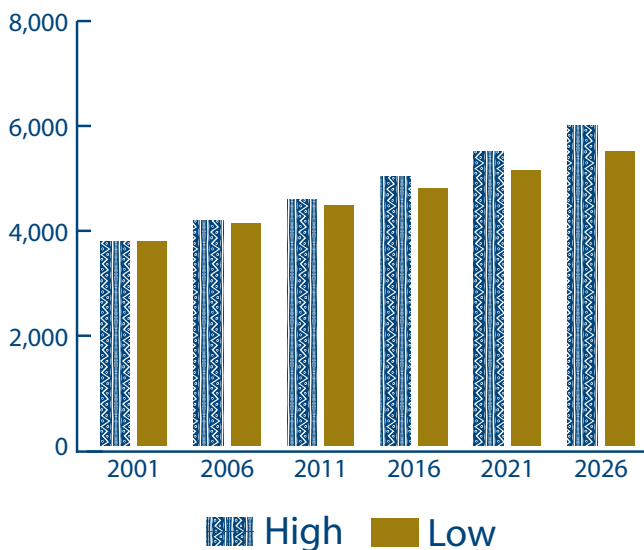
Canadians are living longer and as we age the chance of acquiring a disability increases. Disability can affect anyone at any point in life, but by age 65 one in three people has a disability. This report explores the implications of aging and disability.

In 2001, Canada was home to some 1.6 million seniors with disabilities 65 years of age and over.

In 2001, about 90% of seniors with disabilities or 1.4 million lived independently in the community while there were also about 176,000 seniors with disabilities living in facilities providing residential care.

The population of Canadians with disabilities could increase from about 3.9 million in 2001 to between 5.6 (low growth) and 6.1 million (high growth) in 2026. In 2026 approximately 54% of people with disabilities will be seniors versus 42% in 2001.

Total people with disabilities in Canada (000s)



■ OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS FOR SENIORS WITH DISABILITIES

Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2005 reports on broad areas of inclusion identified in previous disability reports. It provides examples of actions taken by the Government of Canada to promote inclusion of seniors with disabilities

When seniors are asked to describe “successful aging” it includes things like loving relationships, graceful acceptance of change, moderate living, having goals and a sense of humour.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Seniors with disabilities participate actively with their families and in the community. They play an active role in the care of spouses, family members and friends. Many participate in a variety of activities, including religious activities, lifelong learning, leisure pursuits, politics or cultural events just to name a few.

KEY FINDINGS

- Some 6.5 million or 27% of all Canadians volunteer including about 18% of seniors overall and 21% of seniors with disabilities.
- The favoured volunteer activities of seniors with disabilities are helping in schools, religious and community organizations.

- In 2003, 11% of seniors aged 65 to 69 with disabilities were employed all year compared to 16% of their peers without disabilities.

GOVERNMENT ACTION EXAMPLE

The Public Health Agency of Canada funds the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability to promote the value of physical activity and quality of life for people with disabilities including seniors.

DISABILITY SUPPORTS

Disability supports are the goods and services that people with disabilities need to fully participate in daily life. They are important to help individuals maintain personal independence. The majority of seniors with disabilities receive help for everyday activities from family members. Most of this assistance takes the form of meal preparation, errands, transportation, housework, specialized nursing or medical treatments, personal care and help around the home.

Seniors may not accept the label of disability. They often see the use of aids and devices as a sign of increased frailty while the disability community sees them as tools for increased independence.

KEY FINDINGS

- About two-thirds of Canadian seniors with disabilities have all the aids they need and receive all the help they need with daily activities. Less than 10% don't have any of the aids or assistance they need.
- Families are the most common source of assistance with everyday activities, with 21% of those 65-74 years of age and 38% of those 75 and over receiving help from service providers.
- Most seniors with disabilities (72% women and 76% men) have needed home modifications such as grab bars, wider doorways or lifts.

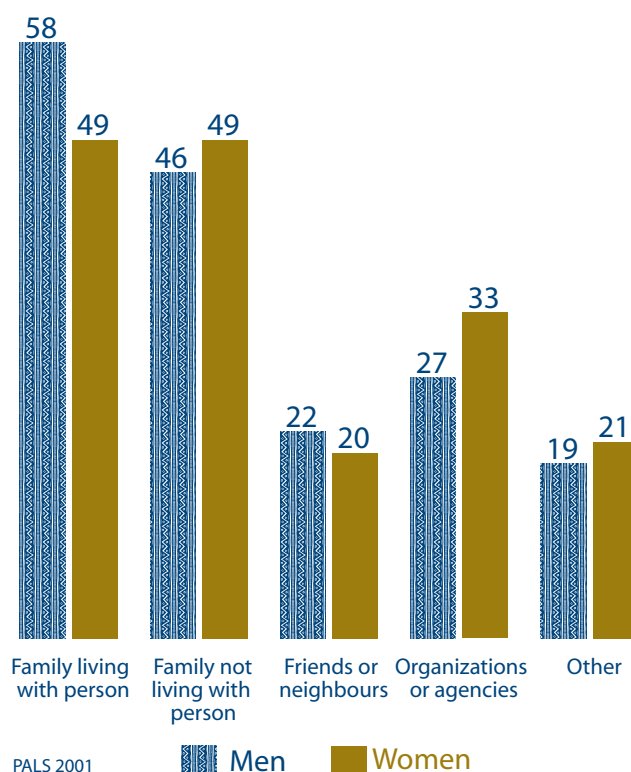
Cost is the prime reason for seniors to have unmet needs for home modifications.

- Other important supports needed by seniors with disabilities include accessible local and long-distance public transportation, assistance in travelling by car, and access to information in multiple formats.

GOVERNMENT ACTION EXAMPLES

- The Canadian Transportation Agency requires that mobility devices such as canes, walking sticks, wheelchairs, scooters be carried free of charge as priority baggage or in the cabin of passenger aircraft if space permits.
- The *Veterans Independence Program* helps Veterans remain in their homes.
- In 2005, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation introduced *The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program—Secondary/Garden Suite* program to enable seniors and adults with disabilities to stay in their homes or move closer to their families.

Source of help with everyday activities for seniors with disabilities receiving help (%)



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Health is more than the absence of disease. It includes mental, physical and social well-being of seniors with disabilities so they can participate fully in Canadian society. However, disability does not necessarily lead to poor health. By their own assessment, two-thirds of seniors with disabilities feel they are in good to excellent health.

With appropriate supports, seniors with disabilities can have a quality of life equal to that of seniors without disabilities.

KEY FINDINGS

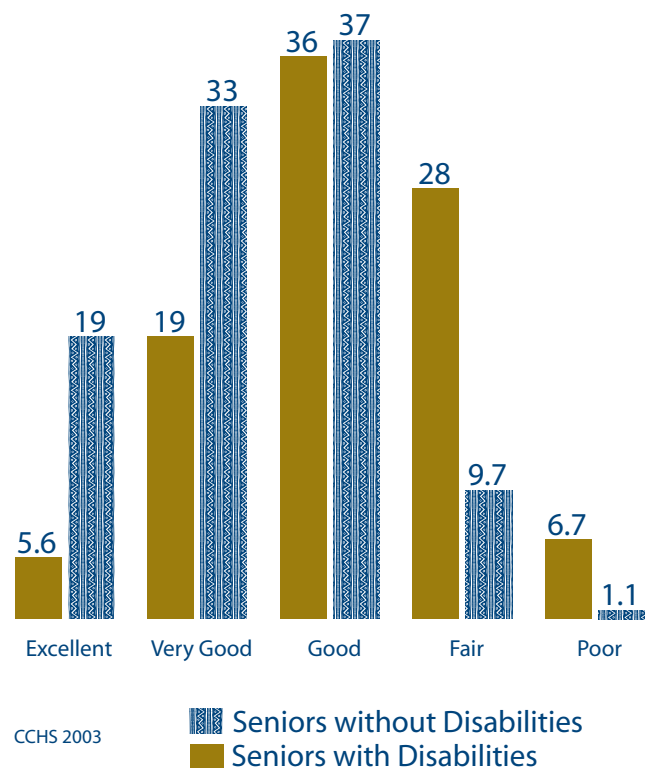
- Only 6% of seniors with disabilities think their health is excellent, compared to 19% without disabilities.
- The beneficial effect of factors such as physical activity, social support, education, income and health care on the health of seniors with disabilities is similar to or stronger than similar effects among other groups.
- Falls are the most frequent cause of injury among seniors. For seniors with disabilities, 66% of women and 53% of men attribute their injuries to falls.

For over 30 years, Helen and Jack provided total care at home for their daughter Cindy who suffered a spinal cord injury. They rarely used public services. Recently, Jack passed away. Now Helen, aged 78, has developed arthritis, making it difficult to care properly for Cindy. Without appropriate supports, Cindy may have to be admitted to a rooming home, foster family or long-term care facility.

GOVERNMENT ACTION EXAMPLES

- The *Falls Prevention Initiative* provided \$10 million in funding over four years to sustainable community-based projects to prevent the number and reduce the severity of falls.
- The Population Health Fund’s “later-life” priorities for 2004 were to enhance awareness and knowledge of the barriers and issues affecting seniors with disabilities, including seniors with lifelong disabilities and to develop and strengthen collaboration and partnerships among disability and seniors organizations.
- Veterans Affairs, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Alzheimer Society of Canada developed the *Safely Home—Alzheimer Wandering Registry*.

Self-reported health of seniors (%)



INCOME

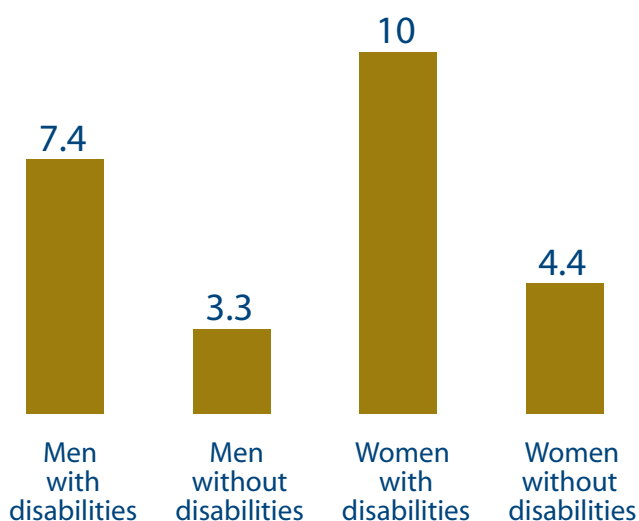
Seniors with disabilities, especially those who live alone, are more likely to have low income than other seniors but, overall, seniors with

disabilities are less likely to live with low income than working-age adults with disabilities.

KEY FINDINGS

- In 2003, the average household income for senior men with disabilities was \$43,524, while it was \$37,637 for senior women with disabilities. These figures are approximately \$3,000 less than household incomes for men and women without disabilities.
- Among seniors with disabilities in 2003, 10% of women lived in a low-income household compared to 7.4% of men. Rates for those without disabilities were 4.4% for women and 3.3% for men.
- Among senior women with disabilities living alone in 2002, 20% had low income as did 18% of senior men.
- Rates of low income among seniors have remained stable for the past five years.
- In 2003, 72% of seniors with disabilities relied on government transfers such as OAS, GIS and CPP as their major source of income compared to 63% of seniors without disabilities. Among seniors without disabilities 26% counted on private retirement pensions compared to 20% of seniors with disabilities as their primary source of income.

Seniors with low income 2003 (%)



SLID 2003

GOVERNMENT ACTION EXAMPLES

- Budget 2005 announced that low-income seniors will see an increase of the maximum monthly GIS by \$36 for single seniors and by \$58 for couples. It is estimated that 1.6 million seniors will benefit from the change.
- Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) provides a disability pension to 166,000 Veterans and civilians for a total of \$1.57 billion.

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS OR INUIT ELDERS WITH DISABILITIES

Canada's Aboriginal peoples comprise many different groups with unique languages, customs and history. In the 2001 Census, 976,000 people identified as members of First Nations, Métis or Inuit groups.

Following the preference of Aboriginal people, this section of the report employs the word "elder" instead of "senior. The number of Aboriginal elders age 65 and over is the fastest growing segment of the Aboriginal population.

KEY FINDINGS

- Elders in many Aboriginal communities experience poor health and living conditions. Inadequate social conditions such as poverty, poor housing, inaccessibility to services and discrimination also magnify the problems of Aboriginal elders with disabilities.
- One in five Aboriginal elders with disabilities need special features in their home and of these 36% do not have what they need.
- Accessibility and mobility present a different set of challenges in remote and northern communities compared to urban centers.
- Among Aboriginal elders with disabilities, 56% rate their health as fair or poor, compared to 35% of non-Aboriginal seniors with disabilities.
- Among First Nations, Métis and Inuit elders with disabilities, 31% live in households with income of less than \$20,000 per year, compared to 23% of other elders.

GOVERNMENT ACTION EXAMPLES

- Health Canada's *First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Program* and the *Non-Insured Health Benefits Program for First Nations and Inuit people* are important sources of support for Elders with disabilities.
- Indian and Northern Affairs' *Assisted Living* program supports First Nations people with disabilities who have functional limitations due to age, health problems or disability, to maintain their independence, to maximize their level of functioning, and to live in conditions of health and safety.
- Budget 2005 extended and enhanced the *Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI)* initiative and increased its funding.

OVERALL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Government of Canada supports the inclusion of Canadians with disabilities of all ages through a range of legislation, regulations, programs, policies and tax measures. In addition to measures described above, significant enhancements to the Government's disability agenda in the past twelve months include:

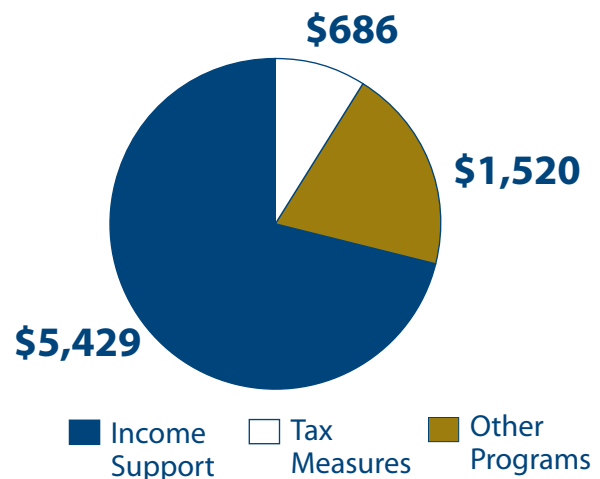
- Implementation of automatic reinstatement provisions in CPP Disability
- Adoption of virtually all of the recommendations of the Technical Advisory Committee on Tax Measures for Persons with Disabilities
- Funding of \$6 million to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind to digitize the CNIB library
- Funding of \$20 million to support the 2010 Paralympic Games
- Royal Assent to the new *Veterans Charter*
- Other more general measures benefiting Canadians with disabilities including increases to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (\$2.7B over five years).

EXPENDITURES

Total Government of Canada disability expenditures in 2004-2005 are estimated at \$7.6 billion. Income support accounts for 71% of expenditures for people with disabilities, followed by tax measures and benefits (20%) and other¹ expenditures at 9%.

Government of Canada disability expenditures have increased by 38% since 1996. Over that period, the consumer price index increased by 17.7%. Since 1996 the amount represented by tax measures has more than doubled, total income-related benefits have increased by about 21%, and other program benefits have increased by 60%.

Government of Canada disability expenditures 2004-2005 (in millions)



■ TO LEARN MORE

Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2005 builds on previous Government of Canada reports on Canada's progress on disability issues. If you would like to learn more, you can obtain the full report at www.sdc.gc.ca or by calling 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232).

ENDNOTES

- 1 Other expenditures are made up of programs for learning and employment, disability supports, health and well-being, and support to the not-for-profit organizations of the disability community.