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# Prince Edward Island Seniors Advisory Council

**Sixth Annual Report  
July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004**



**Health and  
Social Services**

# Prince Edward Island Seniors Advisory Council

## *Sixth Annual Report*

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c/o Department of Health and Social Services  
16 Garfield Street, PO Box 2000  
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Health and Social Services

# *Prince Edward Island Seniors Advisory Council*

PO Box 2000, 16 Garfield Street, Charlottetown, PEI C1A 7N8

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July 31, 2004

The Honourable Chester Gillan  
Minister Responsible for Seniors  
PO Box 2000  
Charlottetown, PE  
C1A 7N8

Dear Mr. Gillan:

On behalf of the members of the Prince Edward Island Seniors Advisory Council, I am pleased to present you with our sixth Annual Report.

This report provides a summary of activities of the council during its sixth year, from July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004.

As I conclude my term as chair and my membership within the council, it is my pleasure to share with you the work that the council has enjoyed and progress made.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Henry-MacDonald, Chair  
Seniors Advisory Council

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## *Message from the Chair*

This year, the sixth for the Seniors Advisory Council, has been a transition year albeit an exciting time for the council. The appointment of a Minister Responsible for Seniors and the plans for a Seniors Secretariat have been positive developments. Both of these initiatives have been requested by the council over the years, and that they have come to fruition provides encouragement and validation of the council's work, and reassures us that the council is recognized and valued.

Other changes that have affected the council's work include the addition of Heather Gillis as primary staff resource under the direction of Jean Fallis. The council appreciates the diligent work and wise counsel of these people, and has enjoyed a close working relationship with them. The council particularly wishes to thank the Minister Responsible for Seniors, Hon. Chester Gillan, for the interest and support he has provided.

The council has also resumed community consultations with seniors groups and initiated a Community Service Award, which was presented to deserving recipients from each health region.

We have enjoyed collaboration with other seniors' organizations. We are confident that this collaboration will continue, and that together we can make a difference for all Island seniors.

This year the council welcomed new members Letty Abbott, Dr. Tom Hall, William Costain and Dr. Ninian LeBlanc. We have also said farewell to faithful founding members Dr. Bernice Bell, David Harper and Fran Sark, whose terms have expired along with my own. I wish to thank the departing members for their diligent service

In conclusion, after having been involved since its inception, I am pleased with the progress that has been made by the council, and I will be interested to see how the future unfolds. This has been a wonderful learning experience for me and I have enjoyed meeting many contacts, many of whom have become friends.

Heather Henry-MacDonald, Chair  
Seniors Advisory Council

## *Work of the Council*

The fiscal year 2003/04 was a year of transition within the Island seniors community, marked by organizational shift, and community mobilization and consultation. This resulted in the creation of a new Island seniors organization, Seniors United Network (SUN); and an enhanced mandate and strengthened membership for the Seniors Advisory Council.

This was a rebuilding year for the Seniors Advisory Council. In June of 2003, four council members concluded their term, leaving eight members to conduct business until the spring of 2004, when four new members were welcomed. During this period, the council recommended to the Minister Responsible for Seniors that future vacancies on the council be filled through a public nomination process. This recommendation was accepted, and in April 2003 a call for nominations was issued. The call for nominations resulted in the selection of four new members to fill the vacancies created by the retirement of the four remaining founding members of the council in June of 2004.

The council also recommended the creation of a Prince Edward Island Seniors Secretariat to the minister, which was a 2003 election promise and was announced in the 2003 Speech from the Throne. The council examined organizational models from other provinces and concluded that PEI should start small, build upon existing resources, and consist of staff who are dedicated to promoting the interests of Island seniors through conducting research, developing policy, and profiling achievement within the seniors community. The council rejected a model which would see the secretariat be a high level committee of ministers or deputy ministers. The council waits with anticipation for government's further announcement on the Seniors Secretariat.

One of the highlights for the year was the creation, development and presentation of Community Service Awards to commemorate Seniors Month in June. The intent of the awards is to recognize the volunteer efforts of Island seniors to improve their communities. This was the first year awards were presented, delivering on a mandate set out in the council's Terms of Reference, and will become an annual event.

In the future, nominations would be called for from the public, but in this inaugural year, council members decided that each of them would make nominations from their health regions. The information received back from members was immense and colorful. The council heard the rich stories of volunteering and contributing to Island communities of some of PEI's most generous, modest and unassuming Islanders. After much deliberation, the Council selected as its first recipients: from West Prince, John H. Fitzgerald; from East Prince, Al and Belle LeBlanc; from Queens, Aline Reid and Doreen Reid; and from Kings, Clarisse Gallant. In June, the council hosted a festive reception for recipients where the minister presented plaques. The council was very pleased with the media attention garnered by the event.

The Community Consultations were another highlight of the year. Early in the year, the council recommended to the minister that the original mandate to conduct such consultations be reinstated. The recommendation was accepted and two consultations were held: one in Summerside and one in North Rustico.

At each event, community members joined council members for lunch prior to the actual consultation. Sharing this informal meal proved to be an excellent way to get the meeting underway, as it allowed both council members and guests to become more comfortable with each other.

Detailed reports of the consultations were created, describing the concerns discussed. These will be combined and crafted into a comprehensive report to the minister following similar events in the remaining health regions this fall.

Where issues arose that required further investigation, the council took steps to seek out further information and to take action. For example, volunteerism among seniors was an issue that generated much discussion. As a result, the council invited PEI's representative for the Volunteer Canada Initiative to their next meeting. After an informative presentation, the council recommended that a senior be added to the initiative's advisory committee, a recommendation which was accepted and actioned within a month, when the individual who initiated the discussion at the Summerside consultation was invited and accepted to become part of the committee.

Throughout the year, the council participated in several community-based and health system-based events, such as the Seniors Mental Health workshop, and the meeting of Chairs of Canadian Seniors' Advisory Councils, held in conjunction with the Canadian Association on Gerontology conference in Toronto in October. The Council was also involved in a series of meetings hosted by the Atlantic Seniors Health Promotion Network – Prince Edward Island (ASHPN-PEI), to discuss the creation of a “united voice for Island seniors”. At a provincial meeting in January, the chair of the Council was invited to deliver a presentation about the Seniors Advisory Council. This was an opportunity to bring profile to the council's role and its work. The PEI Senior Citizen's Federation also delivered an informative presentation. These presentations were important as they established the current “lay of the land” in the Island seniors community. With a better understanding of the mandate of these organizations, those working to create a united voice were better informed about what gap their network might fill. After months of discussion and negotiation, ASHPN-PEI successfully concluded operations and the Seniors United Network (SUN) was born.

Throughout the year, the council also carried out its regular business, which this year included an investigation on the topic of seniors housing needs from independent seniors living in their own homes to those living in long term care facilities. While the council has heard from several guest speakers on the topic, further work needs to be done on this issue, and will continue to be a focus for 2004-05.

This was a busy year for the Seniors Advisory Council, as it was called upon to respond to and interact within a seniors community that was in a state of flux.



## *Presentations to the Council*

During the year, the Council heard the following presentations:

Kathleen Coady	Veterans Affairs Canada	Integrated Services for Seniors and Veterans
Janet Wood <i>Planning Officer</i>	Social Policy Development Division Department of Health & Social Services	Seniors Housing and the Seniors Emergency Home Repair Program
Dave Olafson	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	CMHC programs for seniors
Sheri MacDonald	Volunteer Canada Initiative	
Pat Malone	Atlantic Seniors Health Promotion Network - PEI	Creating a "United Voice for Seniors"
Laraine Poole <i>Public Policy Analyst</i>	Health Policy Development Division Department of Health & Social Services	Health Living Strategy

## ***Senior Advisory Council Members, 2003-2004***

**Heather Henry-MacDonald, Chair**  
Stratford

**David Harper**  
Tignish

**Bill Costain** (as of March 2004)  
Bloomfield

**Fran Sark**  
Lennox Island

**Dr. Tom Hall** (as of March 2004)  
Summerside

**Marion Simpson**  
Summerside

**Inez Doiron**  
North Rustico

**Dr. Ninian LeBlanc** (as of March 2004)  
Charlottetown

**Dr. Bernice Bell**  
Charlottetown

**Clare Doyle**  
Earnscliffe

**Letty Abbott** (as of March 2004)  
Montague

**Camilla MacPhee**  
Souris