

COSCO Highlights



<https://www.facebook.com/COSCOBC/>

July 2020



This little article is not going to talk about the pandemic. What else is there to say except 'Hang tough'. Usually COSCO doesn't have meetings during July and August but this year we decided to keep in touch by the publication of Highlights, which is edited by Annette O'Connor, and speakers at virtual meetings. Plus, this seems to be the season for advocacy.

Here are a few of the issues we are dealing with:

* TELUS has a program called Internet for Good that reduces internet fees for low income families and people with disabilities. That's good.
However what's not so good is that single people with low income and no disability designation cannot qualify. That's not so good.

ACTION: Write to the Director of Internet for Good and to the CEO of TELUS to ask for a change in policy.

* COSCO was invited to send a brief or to appear in person at the Select Standing Committee for Finance and Government Services to make recommendations for the next provincial budget.

ACTION: Appear in virtual hearing and also send a brief, making eight recommendations. Kathleen Jamieson, COSCO's Health Committee chair, was instrumental in getting us prepared.

* When companies go bankrupt often the employees are at the bottom of the list in terms of recovering funds. COSCO is partnering with the National Pensioners' Federation to persuade the government to pass laws that would protect pension funds, making them the first to be paid.

ACTION: Letter to Bill Morneau, the federal Finance Minister, asking for his support and that of his government. Copy to the Prime Minister.

* We are greatly concerned about the care of people who require assistance to stay at home and the shameful way in which people who require long-term care were treated in some care homes. When COVID-19 is just a bad memory we cannot go back to the way it was before. COSCO is calling for the refusal to grant permission for any more private facilities and the buy-out of those which are privately owned.

ACTION: Letters to Premier Horgan and Prime Minister Trudeau. Letters to Health Ministers. Constant and repeated reminders of the disgusting treatment of vulnerable seniors that occurred because greed trumped human rights and common decency. Stress our recommendations at every opportunity. Frequent contact with BC's Seniors Advocate, Isobel Mackenzie.

COSCO can make a difference. I fervently believe that.

Sheila Pither ~ COSCO President

ELDERDOG Canada



When someone first tried to tell me about ElderDog my first response was, “My dog isn’t old!” They replied “Yes, but you are.” Ouch!

ELDERDOG is a national registered charity dedicated to ageing people, ageing dogs and the important connection they enjoy.

The positive impact of companion animals on older people’s physical and cognitive health is well documented.

What do they do?

ELDERDOG volunteers can provide:

- Dog walking
- Transportation to grooming or vet appointments
- Light grooming and hygiene

As well, ELDERDOG volunteers can provide:

- Temporary care during hospitalization
- New homes for dogs who have lost their human
- An emergency plan for dog care in case the senior’s health fails
- Assistance to healthy, independent senior to find an older canine companion

Contact Information

www.elderdog.ca

info@elderdog.ca

1-855-336-4226



Thanks to the [Voices of Burnaby Seniors Society](#) for sending us this information.

HOW OLDER ADULTS CAN PROTECT THEIR MENTAL WELLNESS DURING COVID-19

No one is immune to the psychological toll of COVID-19-related restrictions. For older adults, however, the heightened fear of contracting the virus, a sudden decrease in connectivity, or the loss of outside support can make their situation more difficult.



*To help self-isolating seniors who are at home during the pandemic, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) asked **Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy**, professor of psychiatry at Dalhousie University and founder of the **Fountain of Health** optimal aging initiative, to share some practical advice on how to deal with the challenges of COVID-19.*

1. Focus on what you can control

Turn your attention to the things you have control over, such as self-care. To help stay on track, try structuring your day by writing a checklist with things like physical activity, nutritious meals, and meaningful hobbies. Checking off each item as you complete it will help you feel productive and boost your mood. Focusing on areas within your control can also reduce stress and improve long-term resilience. To learn more about self-care and other helpful resources, visit Fountain of Health.

2. Get creative about connecting

Social connection looks different these days, but it's as important as ever for bolstering mental wellness. While phone calls are a great way to stay in touch with friends and family, they aren't the only way to connect from a distance. Consider exchanging letters, going for a (safely spaced) walk together, or doing a drive-by visit to catch up with loved ones. You can also explore video-chat options or virtual book clubs to stay in touch.

3. Be open to technology

Unfamiliar technology can be intimidating, but it's never too late to learn something new. In addition to communication, technology can be used for entertainment, learning, and accessing helpful resources. Examples include:

- The **Wellness App**, an evidence-based tool for setting and tracking health goals
- The **MHCC Resource Hub**, mental health information and resources related to COVID-19
- **Wellness Together Canada**, the federal government's mental health resource portal
- **Skillshare**, free video tutorials on a variety of subjects
- **Headspace**, a mindfulness app offering free content during the pandemic

4. Limit your exposure to the news

While it's natural to want to stay informed during a crisis, too much news can increase stress and make it more difficult to focus on what you have control over. Try to limit your news intake to 30 minutes per day and avoid consuming it close to bedtime. When you do seek out the news, choose sources with care and be wary of low-value imagery and sensationalistic language.

For additional guidance, see the MHCC's media consumption tips.

5. Self-monitor your mental wellness

With so much change and uncertainty, feeling some negative emotions is perfectly normal. But it's important to monitor your emotional state and be mindful of any negative patterns or impaired functioning that lasts more than a few consecutive days. A decrease in your appetite, weight, level of interest, energy, and concentration, or having feelings of hopelessness and suicide, are all signs of depression that require treatment. If you're concerned about your mental health, don't hesitate to speak to your family doctor or a mental health care professional.

6. Ask for practical help

There is no shame in asking for help of any kind. Besides the practical benefits, seeking support can reduce stress and improve your mood. The 211 system is a great way to learn about provincial resources and services that are available. Calling specific health and social service agencies can also be useful. If you have friends and family who can help with things like delivering groceries, don't hesitate to ask.

7. Channel past resilience

Some older adults can manage the stress related to COVID-19 better than younger adults. Their life experience enhances the ability to put difficult times into perspective. Consider how you overcame past challenges and trust in the resilience you've developed as a result. Given that the pandemic is just another storm, the fortitude you've built over a lifetime may help you weather it.

For more information, visit <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19>



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada



COSCO had a zoom meeting Friday July 17th featuring **Daphne Bramham** a columnist for the Vancouver Sun since 2000, speaking on seniors' health and mixed tenancy and **Josh Cook** who recently completed his masters thesis at SFU on the mixed tenancy situation in BC.

If you would like a copy of the notes contact the COSCO secretary at alem50@telus.net

Protecting yourself from COVID-19 Frauds and Scams

(Information provided by Seniors First BC, formerly BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support)

<http://seniorsfirstbc.ca/news/protecting-yourself-from-covid-19-frauds-and-scams/>

1. What are the most common COVID-19 frauds and scams?

According to Seniors First BC, the most common COVID-19 scams targeting the public are:

- phone calls
- text messages
- phishing (fraudulent) emails
- door-to-door canvassing
- fake charities
- fake websites
- social media
- online shopping

2. What should you do if a fraud or scam is suspected?

Seniors First BC recommends not responding back to any attempted communications, do not answer the door if you are not expecting a visitor or package, ensure you are purchasing from reputable websites, and do your research before shopping online. Do not click on website pop-ups and close the page immediately if one appears on your screen.

3. How can fraudulent activity be identified?

Official organizations will not send threats, errors or warning messages and will never give you a reason to panic unnecessarily.

Scammers have ways of making themselves appear extremely legitimate. They may impersonate well-known organizations, taking advantage of official symbols or logos.



4. How can you protect myself from scammers?

Never give out personal information such as credit card numbers, banking information, passwords or social insurance numbers, unless you have contacted someone for services and verified their identity first. Scammers will often tell you not to call family members or the police but to deal only with them. It is important not to listen to this advice. Reach out to a family member, trusted friend or call your local police department if you are concerned.

5. How do you report fraudulent activity?

Suspected frauds and scams can be reported to:

- The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at antifraudcentre.ca or 1-888-495-8501
- Your local police department by filing a non-emergency report (do not call 911)
- Your local bank/financial institution and credit card company
- The National Credit Bureau to place a fraud alert on your credit reports (Equifax Canada 1-800-465-7166 or TransUnion Canada 1-800-663-9980)
- The National Do-Not-Call List at lnnte-dncl.gc.ca or 1-866-580-3625

6. Where can you learn more?

Seniors First BC operates the **Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL)**, a BC-wide program with trained intake workers ready to talk to you in confidence about abusive situations of any kind involving older adults.

Seniors First BC also provides free legal services to older adults age 55+ who cannot afford a lawyer.

To connect with Seniors First BC for the SAIL line or to book legal services, call 604-437-1940 or toll-free at 1-866-437-1940, available 7 days a week (excluding holidays) from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

Disability Tax Credit
FACEBOOK LIVE WORKSHOP

Peter Julian, MP

WED. JULY 29, 5PM (PDT)

Follow my facebook page:
facebook.com/MPPeterJulian

The banner features a circular portrait of Peter Julian, MP, and a photo of a woman and a child in a wheelchair. The background is orange and blue.

The Disability Tax Credit is a little known benefit because many people with disabilities either don't know about it, and the current government has tried to limit access. However, many Canadians would qualify if they knew the process and the steps involved. I want you to have this information!

You are invited to join Peter Julian, MP, at the Disability Tax Credit Workshop through Facebook Live on Wednesday, July 29 from 5-6 PM PDT. Sign language interpretation is available.

Copy and paste the following URL into your browser, to join the workshop:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/2662400010666213/>

And ending on a humorous, but serious, note, because we all need a bit of humour in these times of stress...

