

President's Message COSCO News March 2018

For over a year, we had been dreading the moment we would have to bid our President, Lorraine Logan farewell. She died on January 23. On February 17, 2018, a blustery and moist winter's day, more than 200 people gathered in the Operating Engineers' Hall in Burnaby. There were folks from all walks of life – family, politicians of all stripes (!), union types (to rhyme with stripes), Seniors on Guard for Medicare, disabled community members, former COSCO presidents and executive members and associates, LGBTQ community members and many personal friends.

Marie Decaire as the Master of Ceremony kept the proceedings on track: There were words on behalf of Lorraine's brother, Bill recounting some

selective family history. The Re:Sisters [choir] set the mood with "We were there" and "Union Maid" in wonderful harmony. Lorraine's long time friend and current President of the Government Employees Union, **Stephanie Smith** recounted the inspiration, mentorship and support Lorraine provided. Many shed a tear. **Jane Dyson** of the Disability Alliance let us know how well she and Lorraine got along specially with their work on the Translink Accessible Advisory Committee. They developed a unique bond, mutual respect and friendship that saw them collaborate with many transportation issues.

Brenda Felker of the New Vista Housing Society sent kind words about the time Lorraine was the President and their work together on



*by Gudrun Langolf,
COSCO President*

the board of that Housing Society. I had the honour of speaking about Lorraine and her significant contributions as the President of COSCO since 2014. She was a great example to all of us who had the pleasure of working with her. Her leadership, sense of fairness, humour will be missed. Kindness is what she practiced and we would do well to emulate her and heed her advice to celebrate every victory large or small.

We hope that the occasion brought some comfort to Lorraine's partner Sharon Bard. It did feel wonderful to be in that big tent of Lorraine's influence.

Council Of Senior Citizens' Organizations Of BC (COSCO)

Visit us at www.coscobic.org &
<https://www.facebook.com/COSCOBC/>

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Disclaimer: Unless otherwise noted, opinions, viewpoints, accuracy of facts submitted by the member is the sole responsibility of the writer, and not necessarily the opinion of the Editor, Executive, or Membership of COSCO.



IN THIS EDITION

What Happened/What We Did	3
May Be Useful Info	7
National News Flashes	8
Biography	10
From Our Affiliate	14
March is Fraud Prevention Month: Avoid Becoming a Victim	15
What does the Provincial Budget Mean for Seniors?...16	

About COSCO

COSCO is an umbrella organization that brings together 85 different seniors groups, representing approximately 100,000 women and men to work on common issues.

COSCO is affiliated with the 1,000,000 member National Pensioners Federation (NPF) which promotes these issues at the national level.

Much of COSCO's work is promoting good health. Our COSCO Health & Wellness Institute trained volunteers provide free workshops on 43 topics. More than 30,000 seniors have now attended these workshops! We update the information in the 90-minute workshops as information changes.

Send your letters to the editor or other contributions to:
cosconews.editor@coscobic.org and
president@coscobic.org

WHAT HAPPENED / WHAT WE DID

Dec 8 - Delegates' mtg brief business mtg - speaker: MP **Don Davies** talked about Pharmacare with some startling facts and figures from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. We could save \$4 to \$7 billion dollars with a comprehensive national, universal pharmacare plan! For the first time ever, there was music: the VSB teachers' choir entertained us with seasonal songs.

Jan 19 - am -January Delegates' mtg - speaker: Omar Chu of the BC Poverty Reduction coalition [see the article].

Jan 22 – Mohinder Grewal, Sheila Pither, Kathleen Jamieson and the President met with the Hon Adrian Dix, BC Minister of Health in his riding office [Vancouver-Kingsway]. Topics – (re) introduce COSCO and our work – then Home Care, Pharmacare and offer to help with the Ministry in order to achieve our agenda. We were pleased to have one hour of



VSB Teachers' Choir

the Minister's ear. He knows a lot about health funding. Kathleen put a brief together that explained our Pharmacare and our Home Care goals as well other important health initiatives we encourage this government to adopt. Minister Dix did not make any commitments, nor did we think he would, but this meeting is an important step in our campaign because it lets the government know that we are determined to serve the needs of seniors.



Hon Adrian Dix
BC Minister of Health

Jan 23 – the President with Barb Mikulec met with the Hon Jody Wilson-Raybould, Member of Parliament, Justice Minister, Attor-



Hon Jody Wilson-Raybould
Member of Parliament

ney General of Canada; both Barb & Gudrun are her constituents in Vancouver-Granville. We introduced the COSCO Health & Wellness Institute and COSCO, discussed our priorities including Bill C-27 [pending pensions rule changes], universal, national pharmacare and home care.

News of a grant of \$25,000 from New Horizons for our **Stay on the Road – A Practical Guide for Senior Drivers Workshop** was fabulous news. During January and February Annette O’Connor and Sheila Pither, who had applied for the grant, developed the workshop. We were the grateful recipient of a \$5,000 from the British Columbia Retired Teachers’ Association. That enables

us to present the workshop in more communities. We have had welcome assistance from the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles and his staff. We plan to invite Driver Examiners and Occupational Therapists who advise about how to make your ‘Car Fit’ to participate in the workshop in every community. We will be letting you know how your organizations can book a day-long presentation

of two workshops combined. President Gudrun Langolf and Sheila Pither went to Sechelt. Our COSCO members there meet in an impressive seniors’ activity centre. We did a trial run of our “Emergency Department Visit” workshop with them and we learned a lot from the audience. We really enjoyed our time there even though we had equipment/compatibility problems.

**February 8th was our Annual General Meeting
Election results: 2 year term [2018-2020]**

- President** - Gudrun Langolf [Vancouver Municipal & Regional Retirees Assn]
Second Vice President - John Wynne [Plumbers & Pipefitters]
Treasurer - Betty Bolton [BC Old Age Pensioners Organization]
Members-at-Large - Navin Goburdhun [BC Government Retired Employees]
- Agnes Jackman [BC Forum]
- Jean Sickman [BC Government Retired Employees Assn.]

How to book a free workshop for your seniors' group

So far, over 30,000 seniors throughout BC have participated in the COSCO Seniors’ Health and Wellness Institute’s free health promotion workshops. We now offer workshops on 43 different issues and topics of particular interest to seniors.

Each 60 to 90 minute workshop is available free of charge to any seniors’ group of 10 or more. A trained senior volunteer presents practical and usable information. These workshops are not intended to provide any specific legal, medical or financial advice, just a better understanding and practical suggestions.

To book a workshop for your group, please email:
ws_coord@coscoworkshops.org



Guest speaker Delegates’ meeting January 12, 2018 – Omar Chu from the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition

It is more important than ever that the provincial government hear our collective voice loud and clear highlighting the pillars of a strong, comprehensive poverty reduction plan.

Key Messages

The BC poverty reduction plan must be grounded in a human rights foundation.

The existence of poverty in BC is a violation of human rights. There is not only a moral duty to eradicate poverty but also a legal obligation under international human rights law. A human rights approach to poverty reduction is based on a fundamental respect for human dignity as opposed to a charitable approach, and is grounded in the experiences and engagement of low-income people and communities.

An upstream approach focusing on the social determinants of health has the greatest impact.

Just as we pool our resources to provide public health care and education to all, we must work together to ensure the provincial government provides and adequately funds public poverty reduction.

Poverty reduction is an economic investment for our province.

We know that we all pay for the failure to address poverty. The cost of doing nothing to address poverty is \$9 billion per year, while the implementation of a comprehensive poverty reduction plan in BC would only be \$4 billion per year. Let’s stop mopping up the floor and fix the hole in the roof.

To ensure long-term sustainability of the poverty reduction plan, targets and timelines must be legislated.

We urge the provincial government to provide leadership, and to adopt and legislate poverty reduction targets and timelines with annual reports on their progress. We recommend the following targets and timelines:

- Reduce BC’s poverty rate by 30% within four years, and by 75% within 10 years.
- Recognize that poverty is concentrated in particular marginalized groups and ensure likewise declines in the poverty rate by 30% in four years, and by 75% in ten years within these groups.
- Within two years, ensure that every British Columbian has an income that reaches at least 75% of the

- poverty line.
- Within two years, ensure no one has to sleep outside, and end all homelessness within eight years (ensuring all homeless people have good quality, appropriate housing).

The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition is a coalition that includes community and non-profit groups, faith groups, health organizations, First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, businesses, labour organizations, and social policy groups. We have come together around a campaign aimed at seeing the introduction of a bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan from the gov-



*Photo Credit: Denis Ottewell
Omar Chu and Kathleen Jamieson*

ernment of British Columbia that would include legislated targets and timelines to significantly reduce poverty, inequality and homelessness. We seek to improve the health and well-being of all British

Columbians. We have over 70 Coalition Members and over 400 supporting organizations that have joined the call for a poverty reduction plan.

For more background information, visit:
bcpovertyreduction.ca

**Guest Speaker Delegates' meeting February 8th:
Jim Sinclair,
Chair of Fraser Health**

Jim started by talking about a conversation with a Vancouver surgeon who had turned down an incredibly lucrative job offer in Seattle, Washington. This doctor remembered the night he operated on Mike Harcourt [the former premier] after Harcourt fell from his deck. The surgeon had also operated on a man from a very poor area of Vancouver and was looking in on both patients who shared the same hospital room. He wanted to be a part of this kind of healthcare, where a privileged person as well as a poor one receives the same quality care.

Our health care system in BC is not perfect and we need people to be involved and work together to find answers. The system has to work and we have to protect it. A two tiered system destroys faith, we have to believe we will get

the best care but when we add \$ to the mix we lose faith that that will happen.

Jim talked about some of the challenges and priorities at Fraser Health in particular for Seniors care:

- Fraser Health receives less funding per capita than the other Health authorities
- There is a desire by the Health authority to enable people to stay in their homes as long as possible
- We are running out of General Practitioners – we are not turning out as many and more are specializing
- There is no way to control the distribution of Doctors
- Setting up teams to provide service in homes and follow up in Chilliwack
- Need to provide services so people are not going to Emergency Rooms when other options would be better
- Need community involvement in combating the opioid crisis
- Need more: Community Health Clinics
- Residential care beds
- Assisted living – especially culturally sensitive options
- Community involvement

Jim answered questions on a number of topics including:

- Mental Health – more emphasis is being placed

on this

- Parking at hospitals – working to make it more equitable [extremely complicated]
- Promoting a national, universal pharmacare program – we all need to advocate for this

Fraser Health Board of Directors hold board meetings for the public that include formal and informal discussions with the community. These meetings are usually held three times a year, usually in the fall, winter and spring, in various locations throughout the region. You may submit a request to make a presentation to the Board.

Details, including schedules and agendas, are on the Fraser Health website, fraserhealth.ca.



*Photo Credit: Linda Forsythe
Jim Sinclair, Chair, Fraser Health Authority*

May Be Useful Info



Tax time will be here soon and we wanted to ensure that you don't miss any potential savings on taxes. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Age amount – If you were 65 years of age or older on December 31, 2017 and your net income is less than \$36,430 you can claim \$7,225. If your income is over \$36,430 but less than \$84,597 there is still a deduction available. Check with Canada Revenue (CRA).

Pension income amount – You may be able to claim up to \$2,000 if you reported eligible pension, superannuation, or annuity payments on your return.

Pension income splitting – if you are receiving a pension, you may be eligible to split up to 50% of your eligible pension income with your spouse or common-law partner.

Disability amount – If you or your dependant has a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions and meet certain conditions, you or your dependant may be eligible for the disability tax credit. To determine eligibility, you must complete Form

T2201, Disability Tax Credit Certificate and have it certified by a medical practitioner. Canadians claiming the credit will be able to file on-line regardless of whether or not their Form T2201 has been submitted to the CRA for that tax year.

Medical expenses – You can claim the total eligible medical expenses paid for you, your spouse or common-law partner, and you or your spouse's (or common-law partner's) children born in 1998 or later for any 12-month period ending in 2015 and not previously claimed. This can include amounts claimed for attendant care or care in an establishment.

Guaranteed Income Supplement – If you receive the guaranteed income supplement or allowance benefits under the old age security program, you can renew your benefit by filing your return by April 30. If you choose not to file a return, you will have to complete a renewal form.

Goods and services tax/ Harmonized sales tax (GST/HST) credit – You may be eligible for the GST/HST credit, a quarterly payment that helps individuals and families with

modest incomes offset all or part of the GST or HST that they pay. To receive this credit, you must file an income tax and benefit return every year, even if you did not receive income in the year. If you have a spouse or common-law partner, only one of you can receive the credit. The credit will be paid to the person whose return is assessed first.

Family caregiver amount (FCA) – If you are caring for a dependant with impairment in physical or mental functions, you may be able to claim up to an additional \$2,093 when calculating certain non-refundable tax credits. Non-refundable tax credits reduce your federal tax. If the total of the non-refundable tax credits is more than your federal tax, you will not get a refund for the difference.

Public transit amount – You can claim the cost of certain public transit passes, such as a monthly or annual pass, for travel within Canada on public transit in 2015.

If you need help filing your return, have a modest income, and a simple

tax situation, contact the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP), which coordinates volunteer tax clinics across

the country. Most Seniors Centres or Community Centres offer this service. The training will start soon for volunteers who provide this service so if you are

interested in either accessing this service or taking the training to volunteer, do contact the Senior’s Centre in your area.

National News Flashes

For this issue of the Newsletter I decided to look at doctor recruitment in several provinces. We do not hear a lot about this particular endeavor, but I was surprised to learn that there are 13 recruiters on Vancouver Island alone. There is an organization named The Canadian Association of Staff Physician Recruiters (CASPR). Members of CASPR are exclusively community or hospital recruiters. Here are a few examples of what is happening nationally:

NOVA SCOTIA

There is a very large migration out of the province, partly because the pay for physicians is the lowest in Canada. For instance, in a recent year, 51 doctors left the province to move to B.C. and only 17 went the other way. To play catch-up the province

is making it easier for physicians from 29 foreign jurisdictions to practice. Early indications are not very promising. Only one doctor has been admitted so far.

ONTARIO

In Goderich, a town with 8,000 inhabitants there are 18 family doctors! A decade ago, they had five. First, the town built new facilities, an ice-rink, an indoor pool, a better library. Then the town started to woo doctors by inviting them for weekends where they were given VIP treatment. It worked obviously.

MANITOBA

This province is not just working through CASPR. They have hired a firm of head-hunters to find doctors, particularly for northern and remote postings. In general, most provinces seem to stress the quality of life in their communities, not so much the state of medical care.

SASKATCHEWAN

This province has a Physician Recruitment Agency and during the last five years, the supply of doctors has increased by 12%. An incentive is offered to doctors who go to rural and remote communities.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

We know that in British Columbia many people cannot find a family doctor. Recruitment is crucial here too, hence what would seem to be a very large number of recruiters in the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

Are other areas of the province placing the same emphasis on supplying needed services? Complex though isn’t it? Unless the overall supply is increased one community’s gain is another community’s loss.

by Sheila Pither

No More Changes for Door-to-Door Mail Delivery

On January 24, 2018 the Federal Liberals announced an end to Canada Post’s scheme to end home mail delivery to have all mail delivered to community mail boxes.

This is good news. But 840,000 households that lost their door to door mail delivery since 2014 will not have it restored. This includes households in Abbotsford, Campbell River, Chilliwack, and the Central Okanagan.

In the 2015 Federal election, the Liberals made a promise to “save” home mail delivery. This promise was repeated a number of times, including in Parliament.

This announcement did not arise from a vacuum. This decision is directly attributable to the campaign that postal unions, seniors organizations, community groups and many individuals carried out. COSCO was part of this.

by Marion Pollock



COSCO Associate Membership

☐ In addition to my \$25 Associate Membership fee, I wish to make a donation of \$_____ to COSCO.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

COSCO does not share mailing lists with third parties, unless we are required by law to do so.

Associate Membership is \$25 a year. Please make cheques payable to COSCO and mail your application to:
Linda Forsythe, Membership Secretary, E-Mail: membership@coscobc.org
702 – 4353 Halifax Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5C 5Z4 Telephone: (604) 444-4300
For information about Affiliate (organizational) Membership, please contact the Membership Secretary.

You can now contribute on our website www.coscobc.org

Biography: Lorraine Logan

It was a privilege to have been able to interview Lorraine twice while she was in Crossroads Hospice. Her commitment to the issues seniors face animated these discussions. Lorraine was a great role model for all of us.

Lorraine Logan is one of the few who was born in Vancouver, 73 years ago. Her dad was a builder and her mom stayed at home and raised Lorraine and her brother.

Lorraine went to school in Vancouver and started University here, but found it was not for her. When she was in high school, she began playing field hockey (she was also a very good tennis player!). Field hockey opened many doors for Lorraine. She became part of the Canadian National team and played in the world cup field hockey tournament (those were the days before the Olympics recognized Field Hockey). Once her playing days were over, she began to umpire on the International circuit. These

experiences gave her a chance to travel and get the bigger picture of what was going on with people around the world. Team sports also set values she would carry into other aspects of her life: learn to negotiate; learn to cooperate (there's no I in TEAM) and compromise; learn to be a team player; and most importantly learn to believe in your mates.

As with most amateur athletes, Lorraine needed to work to support herself. She spent years working in the provincial government, particularly in finance and administration, in the Ministries of Education and Transportation and Highways. It is while working for government that Lorraine got involved in the BC Government Employees Union. She says that when she saw something that was not right, she asked herself "what can we do about it?" Those questions, and answers, lead her to her shop steward, to unionism and to advocacy. She was on the local executive and was mentored by Wendy

Lawrence and Mary Ann Gilbert, two very important people in her life.

Because of the downsizing (layoffs) under the Campbell Liberals, Lorraine chose early retirement, so as not to bump another long-term employee who hadn't quite reached her retirement levels. It was this selfless attitude that has served her well. She joined the BCGREA (government employees' retirement group) where she worked with Rudy Lawrence and Art Kube. Both were involved in seniors on Guard for Medicare, a group set up after the then Premier Campbell led an attack on our medicare system. Lorraine's involvement in BCGREA led her to become a COSCO delegate, and after a few years, she became 2nd Vice-President. In 2014, Art Kube stepped down as President of COSCO and passed the torch to Lorraine. She stepped down in November due to ill health.

Lorraine has some great and meaningful life lessons for the rest of us:

- If you see something, say something
- Don't work in silos; it's fruitless. Instead, form coalitions with like-minded groups who have similar values to us
- Don't duplicate work that's already being done by others
- Stay true to your course, don't get swayed by trends
- Take time to reflect
- Identify resources (both people and money)
- Make sure your actions are sustainable and realistic (time wise)
- Invest in people
- Think hard about volunteerism. What does it mean in terms of jobs for others?
- Volunteer in areas other than those where you have skills, so that you are always learning new things. Step outside your comfort zone
- Listen

In 2000, Lorraine met her partner Sharon. Lorraine

says that without Sharon's trust, support and love she would not have been able to achieve half of what she has done. Sharon has been her sounding board while at the same time offering Lorraine her freedom, independence and love.

Some things people said about Lorraine:

"Her wonderful sense of justice helped her to celebrate the gains and give the losses another try. I think she practiced the art of the possible." Sheila Pither (First VP COSCO)



"Lorraine's persistent work on transportation and mobility issues is just one example of the energy and determination she put into making life better for others. She was a force of nature, truth to power, not taking 'no' for an answer." Soren Bech (former COSCO News editor)

Already we miss Lorraine a lot - but the inspiration she provided will continue to empower others. No one could have asked for a more supportive leader at the helm of COSCO. Collaboration and teamwork is what she practiced. Principled values, passion and discretion guided her in her work. COSCO benefitted immensely from her leadership. Personally, I will miss her wise counsel, unerring BS detector, wicked sense of humour and friendship." Gudrun Langolf (Pres COSCO)

by Linda Forsythe

Biography: Lorraine Logan



From top left to bottom right: Art and Mary Kube; Art Kube & Ray Haynes; Art's family in front of a crowd; Guests; Jane Dyson; Elsie Dean and Marion Pollack; Daryk Plecas; Jerry, Larry & John; Bill Zander & Ted Mitrawitz; Annette, Jean, Sheila & Betty; Stephanie Smith, Les & Sheila, The Re:Sisters, Sharon Bard & friend, Dennis Ottewell & George Heyman.

From Our Affiliate in Quesnel

WHAT WE DO

We are a group of dedicated, trained volunteers who foster a shared commitment with other organizations in our community. We assist seniors and other community members with referrals to agencies when needed and offer free consultations for practical advice. We strive to ensure our clients needs can be met in a safe, secure and comfortable environment. We cultivate awareness of community-based challenges and contribute to helping others solve problems. We continually upgrade our skills to meet the demands of the current market. We have been serving Quesnel and area since 2004.

We are not funded in any way, government or otherwise. We continually fund-raise with willing partners to pursue opportunities to keep our office doors open. We encourage you to think of our office when donating to worthy causes.

WE PROVIDE

- The Accessibility Parking Permit Program (disabled permits)
- The Mobility Repair Fund – partnered with Kal Tire
- Courtesy Transportation to Medical Appointments (pre-registration required)
- Vital Information Program – community wide (a vial that sits in your fridge to alert emergency

services to the medical needs of the occupants & pets)

- Health Promotion Workshops – 37
- Forums/Seminars pertaining to the quality of life for seniors
- Hospital Visitation
- Friendly visits and “hello” phone calls
- Handyman Services & Snow Removal Referrals (small fee)
- Touch Screen Computer Training (DriveAble prep)
- Mediation Services
- Consultations for Seniors Issues; including forms preparation

We welcome other volunteers to join us in our office or for events: 2- 4 hours per month is the commitment.

We are open: Tuesday & Thursday, 11 – 1pm



#4 - 155 Malcolm Street
(West Park Mall)
Quesnel, BC V2J 3K2
(250-992-9330)
www.quesnelseniors.ca

Seniors' Repair Service

The Senior Citizens' Repair Service provides low-cost minor house repairs, renovations and maintenance services for seniors 55 years and over and for people with disabilities in Metro Vancouver. Services include **plumbing, carpentry, electrical work, gas fitting, painting, yard work and general handyman services**. All services are guaranteed for 30 days, and are performed by experienced trades people who are retired or semi-retired.

Sponsored by the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union Local 170.
Office hours are 9 AM to 12 Noon, Monday to Friday.
Phone: 604 529-1100

March is Fraud Prevention Month - Avoid Becoming a Victim.

Are they really who they say they are? Hang up on them! Don't engage!

Impersonation swindles, particularly those involving government agencies such as the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), continue to plague us. CRA does not phone you or email you with a refund or demand payment, threatening you with jail! For more information on how to identify these scams please visit the CRA's website: www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/corporate/security/protect-yourself-against-fraud.html

It is unfortunately true that scammers within their own family can prey upon the elderly. Not long ago, the RCMP's Economic Crime Unit (ECU) investigated a

case where an old person was allegedly scammed out of almost \$150,000 by a close relative. Thankfully, other family members recognized what was going on and contacted authorities. If you suspect someone is taking financial advantage of someone you know, please contact your local police. For more information, visit the Government of Canada's website at the link below.

You have heard it before, but it must be repeated.

When you hear the term mail theft you may not automatically think of fraud, but that is the primary reason mail is stolen. Once thieves steal a piece of your mail, they will usually attempt to assume your identity for financial benefit. They will often try

to obtain more of your mail order to build a profile and perpetuate the fraud even further. Check your mail daily, always report damage and suspicious activity around mailboxes, and alert your carrier if you plan to be away. Shred your papers before recycling.

If you are a victim of fraud, please **contact your local police and report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre online**. It is nothing to be embarrassed about – you might help catch the culprits and make sure that no one else falls prey.

www.antifraudcentre-centre-antifraude.ca/index-eng.htm

Get your group of seniors together and book a COSCO Health & Wellness Institute workshop about SCAMS.

National Pensioners Federation Conference

September 25 - September 27, 2018 - Regina, Saskatchewan “DoubleTree by Hilton”

Hotel Reservation Deadline: September 5, 2018, Rate: \$144.00 plus tax.

Register online, click the following link: [NPF - Book My Room](#)

(For discount group rate which is available for 3 days before and after convention)

1975 Broad St, Regina, SK. S4P 1Y2, (306) 525-6767 - (800) 667-8162, regina.DoubleTree.com

Delegate Registration Deadline: August 25, 2018 (Reg. Fee \$125.00 each per delegate & visitors)

Register online or print mail in forms. Click following link: [Convention Delegate Registration](#)

Resolution Due Date: August 1, 2018

What does the Provincial Budget Mean for Seniors?

We do not really know beyond the broad brush-strokes – but it looks promising!

Over the years, we lobbied our provincial government to get better conditions for the most vulnerable among us. They listened all right but nothing changed and some things even got worse especially with contracting for services that used to be done by government employees, in the public service. Therefore, we were expecting some of that to continue but it seems the current government's MLAs have not only listened but they are acting on some of the suggestions. What a welcome change! Of course, it is difficult to be patient about the pace of change. We seniors are literally running out of time.

Budget promises to help seniors:

- \$548 million to improve residential care, invest in primary care, home and community care, and assisted living. Seniors' care outlined in BC Bud-

get 2018 is a good first step toward meeting the needs of our seniors. Though the devil is in the details... we are hopeful that the funding improves the quality of care for seniors in facilities. \$548 million in new funding over three years is not a lot when it is spread among homecare, residential care, and assisted living for all of BC.

- The average payment under the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program will increase by approximately \$930 per year.
- \$445 million for the first three years of a 10-year commitment to support more than 19,000 affordable rental housing units for families, individuals, and seniors struggling to find lower-cost rental housing.
- The elimination of Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums, effective Jan. 1, 2020, will disproportionately help seniors

because they tend to be retired, without an employer to pay their premiums, and have low incomes.

- As of April 1, 2018, senior foot passengers will no longer have to pay to take B.C. Ferries, Mondays through Thursdays.

There are a number of other measures that indirectly benefit seniors and our families: The provincial government is tackling the housing crisis by taxing foreign and domestic speculators and building affordable housing. There is a promise of new jobs creation with major construction projects. There are initiatives mentioned in the budget that will ensure that more of our families have access to safe, affordable childcare.

[Source: Budget 2018](#)

