

UN International Day Of Older Persons - October 1, 2019

The United Nations' theme of IDOP 2019 "The Journey to Age Equality".

As COSCO requested, the Government of British Columbia proclaimed October 1, 2019 as "International Day of Older Persons" in the Province of British Columbia. [A copy of the proclamation is on the our website www.coscobc.org]

United Nations celebrated the importance of the 71st anniversary of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, by reaffirmed the commitment to promoting the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by older persons. In 2019, the theme of the International Day of Older Persons focuses on pathways of coping with existing and preventing future old age inequality.

Older human rights champions today were born around the time of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. More than 40 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, issues of human rights for older persons were taken up in 1991 in the formulation of the United Nations Principles for Older Persons. These principles provide guidance in the areas of independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity. In 2002, governments for the first time agreed to link questions of aging to other frameworks for social and economic development and human rights.

The interdependence between older persons' social integration and the full enjoyment of their human rights are very much connected and directly affects



our dignity and quality of life: growing older must not diminish a person's inherent dignity and fundamental rights.

Our Executive member, Agnes Jackman wrote to almost all BC municipalities. We urged them to proclaim and celebrate seniors on October 1st by flying the UN International Day of Older Persons' flag in their respective communities. A number of them did so.

If there was an event in your community and you have pictures, please upload them on the "Seniors' Voice" website seniorsvoice.org

by Gudrun Langolf

Council Of Senior Citizens' Organizations Of BC (COSCO)

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

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IN THIS EDITION

UN International Day of Older Persons	1
World Human Rights Day [UN]	3
From the President's Desk	4,5
The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act	6
BC Summit for Older Adults on Safe Medication Use.....	7
COSCO In The Community	8-9, 15-16
The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in BC....	10
Lobbying for Reasonable Parking at BC Hospitals	11
Climate Change / Surviving Information Overload	12
Ride-Hailing: Not a Solution	13,14
Be Prepared for Darker Winter Days.....	15

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 40,000 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@coscobc.org and pres@coscobc.org

World Human Rights Day [United Nations]

On December 10th, 2019 we celebrate the 71st anniversary of World Human Rights Day [United Nations]

In 1948 the United Nations passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Universal Declaration includes civil and political rights, like the right to life, liberty, free speech and privacy. It also includes economic, social and cultural rights, like the right to social security, health and education.

Human rights are still im-



portant today. Basically, human rights guarantees people the means necessary to satisfy their basic needs, such as food, housing, and education, so they can take full advantage of all opportunities.

Finally, by guaranteeing life, liberty, equality, and security, human rights protect people against abuse by those who are more powerful.

HOW TO BOOK A FREE WORKSHOP FOR YOUR GROUP

So far, more than 50,000 seniors throughout BC have participated in the COSCO Seniors' Health and Wellness Institutes 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

We are always interested in recruiting and training volunteer facilitators. If interested, please contact president@coscoworkshops.org



From The President's Desk

The summer was really busy for all of us. Is it true that time passes faster as we get older?

We just survived another election, complete with half truths, whoppers mixed in with honest sharing of fact, opinions as well as the all important election promises.

So you thought our job was done by placing the “X” on the ballot? Of course you know better. Now we have to begin double checking the parties' promises against

what we know needs to be done. We seniors are literally running out of time. For example,

PHARMACARE has been promised for over 40 years!

Time for empty promises is over, the parties have to deliver!

NOW

That means the federal parties/government have to negotiate with the promises to harmonize the effort because each province has a

Age Is Not Just A Number

In our culture, it seems that ageism is at the root of the paternalism and neglect of seniors. Just as with sexism and racism, not many people consciously discriminate on the basis of gender or race but it is all around us. We have to deliberately think about the topics. We also don't think of ourselves as hapless victims...but

The “-isms” and prejudices divide us and keep us all from getting the living conditions we need and want. Ageism is a baked-in preju-

4 – COSCO News, October 2019

dice about not being young. It even legitimizes abuse in its various forms. It affects old and young. It should unite all of us since it is the one human condition that is universal, regardless of gender or race, sexual orientation or other distinction. We can learn from the feminist and civil rights movements of the sixties, as well as the “Grey Panthers”!

Ageism has been defined in many ways, here is just one:

Ageism is the discrimination against seniors, and patterned on and racism. It is

different approach/system. But comprehensive, universal pharmacare should not be dependent on which province we live in.

Next to the scarcity of time is an alarming scarcity of \$\$\$ for seniors. Increasing number of seniors experience poverty, rely on food-banks and are at risk of losing secure housing. That is simply unacceptable, an intolerable situation that has to be fixed now, **BEFORE we die!**

a combination of three connected elements:

- prejudicial attitudes towards older people, old age, and the aging process;
- discriminatory practices against older people; and
- institutional practices and policies that perpetuate stereotypes about elderly people.

[Adapted from Robert Neil Butler, 1969]

Ageism makes us afraid of the future. We blame ourselves for a lot of circum-

stances that we did not create and which we cannot control. Growing old has become shameful. Witness how many people are not comfortable about telling you their age... And as a direct result, age-friendly products which can improve our physical environment and make it more accessible are kept out of the market because of 'stigma'. Ramps, grab bars, wider door ways etc. ought to be part of “universal design” - no stigma, just normal!

Internalized stereotypes interfere with people's lives. What about all of the seniors jokes? It all conspires to belittle, infantilize, demean, reinforcing the stereotypes of incapacity and incompetence. We are barraged with messages that our lives are not worthwhile nor worth paying for. You

cannot open most newspaper or magazine that do not emphasize the importance of being wrinkle-free, living and looking right (read young). Looking old is bad! It is clear: stereotypes oppress us!

Awful too is this: We are now encouraged to become super geezers. Who hasn't heard about the 100 year old marathon runner or the 90 year old making the birthday jumps out of planes? Shouldn't we be able to grow old at our own pace in spite of being the “silver market” - the source of profit for business.

AGEISM IS THE ATTITUDE THAT DISCRIMINATION, NEGLECT & ABUSE OF OLDER PERSONS IS AN ACCEPTABLE NORM

TAKE A STAND AGAINST AGEISM TODAY

It is good to have legal protections but they are totally useless if enforcement is non-existent and the prejudice is systemic:

In Canada, Section 15 (1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that "every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on ... age" (as well as other protected classes).

In Canada, Article 718.2, clause (a)(i), of the Criminal Code defines as aggravating circumstances, among other situations, "evidence that the offence was motivated by ... age".

by Gudrun Langolf

SENIOR CITIZENS REPAIR SERVICE IN METRO VANCOUVER

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Services include plumbing, carpentry, electrical work, gas fitting. Painting, yard work and general 'handyman' services. All services are guaranteed for 30 days and offered by retired or semi-retired, experienced tradespeople.

Sponsored by the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union Local 170.

Office hours are 9 AM to 12 Noon, Monday to Friday.

Phone: 604 529-1100

YES! Good news especially for our First Nations' Elders & their families.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

[October 25, 2019]

British Columbia is the first province to bring the internationally recognized standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) into provincial law. It was a long time coming!

First Nations across B.C., Canada and the world watched the introduction of this historic legislation. The maturity and wisdom of our current leadership in this province, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are signs for hope during these uncertain times.

The B.C. Government continues work with our First Nations to build an even stronger, more inclusive and more just B.C., a better future for everyone.

Congratulations to Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the BC government and the First Nations partners for this giant step towards reconciliation. The legislation will help create a path that

upholds the human rights of Indigenous peoples, while creating more transparency and predictability in the work we have to do together. It is about ending discrimination and conflict in our province, and will help to ensure more economic justice and fairness.

Over time as laws are modified or built, they will be aligned with the UN Declaration. Additional elements of the bill include:

- a requirement to develop an action plan to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration, in collaboration with Indigenous peoples;
- annual public reporting to monitor progress;
- discretion for new decision-making agreements between the Province and Indigenous governments where decisions directly affect Indigenous peoples and mechanisms exist in applicable legislation – with clear processes, administrative fairness and transparency; and

- recognition for additional forms of Indigenous governments in agreement-making, such as multiple Nations working together as a collective, or hereditary governments – as determined and recognized by the citizens of the Nation.

To support self-determination and self-government, the act will enable the Province to recognize other forms of Indigenous governments in addition to federal Indian Act bands, treaty Nations and incorporated bodies and societies. This also provides more clarity for businesses and communities about who to engage when working with Indigenous partners.

For a fact-sheet on the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, visit

https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/FS_Declaration-Legislation_24Oct19_FINAL.pdf

The legislation <https://declaration.gov.bc.ca>

2019 BC Summit for Older Adults on Safe Medication Use: Seniors Empowering Communities!

On Friday, May 17th, 2019 COSCO and the Canadian Deprescribing Network partnered for the summit. 100 seniors from all over BC met in Richmond. The summit addressed the potential health problems for seniors that created by consumption of too many medications. There is also the potential risk of inappropriate medications being prescribed to seniors.

Almost half of Canadian seniors are prescribed medications deemed inappropriate or risky for this population, and more than one in four seniors take more than 10 different medications (CIHI 2018).

While there are existing workshops on medication safety given by the “COSCO Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute” (among others) this summit spread awareness to

a much broader section of BC seniors and the organizations that work with them.

Speakers included the BC Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie, the Therapeutic Initiative's Alan Cassels and UBC Professors Steve Morgan, Rita McCracken and Tom Perry as well as Geriatrician Cara Tannhauser.

by [Kathleen Jamieson](#)

COSCO Associate Membership

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

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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

COSCO In The Community



L-R Barb Mikulec, Jean Sickman, and Barry Jones, Staffing one of many information tables events

Active Transportation Conference Held in New Westminster (below)



L-R: John Wynne, Larry Dea and Gudrun Langolf, Basking in the Sun

Celebrating 25th Anniversary of the Therapeutics Initiative



Kathleen Jamieson, Minister Dix et al



Hon. Adrian Dix and Gudrun Langolf exchanging views



Anthony Kupferschmidt [West End Seniors Network] Demonstrating the 'rickshaw'. They now own one!



Premier Horgan and Larry Dea

COSCO In The Community

Marpole Day At The Community Centre (below)



L-R Jean Sickman, Gudrun Langolf Barb Mikulec engaging with the public



L-R Barry Jones and MLA Michael Lee, Trying to stay cool



L-R Jean Sickman, Gudrun Langolf, and Sheila Crompton, Summer is grand!



The Hon. Adrian Dix, Minister of Health Announcing the plan for a long term care, residential facility to house 160 seniors



Larry Dea, Minister Adrian Dix

The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia



Jay Chalke was appointed **Ombudsperson** in May, 2015 by unanimous motion of the Legislative Assembly. His six-year term as Ombudsperson started July 1, 2015.

He spoke at the June COSCO Delegates' meeting mostly about the follow-up findings of a report done by the Ombudsperson's Office by his predecessor, Kim Carter in Feb. 2012. It looks like our work advocating on behalf of seniors hasn't lessened...

“The actions taken to date, while welcome, have mostly focused on smaller incremental improvements,” said Chalke. “Frankly, in seven years I, and I think the public, would expect more in terms of improving critically important services for our aging population, some of whom are extremely frail and vulnerable.”

“...Seven years after the release of The Best of Care (Part 2), we have decided to end our regular formal monitoring of the recommendations in this report. Because of the scope of The Best of Care (Part 2), we extended our regular monitoring by a further two years. After seven years we have reluctantly con-

10 – COSCO News, October 2019

cluded monitoring The Best of Care (Part 2). At the same time, **many of the issues we identified remain as pressing as they were in 2012.** This final systemic investigation update report highlights our analysis of implemented recommendations and the primary areas where important work remains to be done. We are encouraged by the fact that some improvements have been made to seniors' care in the province since our initial report was issued. However, most of the work completed to date has focused on small, incremental changes. As this report highlights, **there is clearly significant work ahead** to ensure that fundamental changes are made to address the systemic and structural gaps that still exist.”...

Key **implemented** recommendations included:

- The Seniors Advocate identifies, collects and publicly reports on key home and community care data highlighting trends in seniors' services. The Advocate reports on systemic issues impacting seniors and assists seniors and their families by providing information and referrals.
- The Assisted Living Registry (ALR), which oversees the

registration of and investigates complaints about assisted living facilities in British Columbia, has improved its internal procedures for investigations including time limits for responding to complaints.

- The Ministry of Health and health authorities have developed some standardized performance management requirements to measure the quality of home support services.
- Information has been enhanced for seniors who are facing financial hardship in regard to how they can have home and community care service fees reduced.

To come still is enactment of several pieces of legislation that relate to the Community Care and Assisted Living Act, Residential Tenancy Act, Community Care and Assisted Living Act and the Hospital Act are still on the list.

“This update marks the end of our regular monitoring process, which we extended well beyond our typical five-year limit given the breadth of the original report,” said Chalke. “Having shone the light on this vital area, I am confident that advocates, community organiza-

tions, seniors and their families, and the public will continue to push for ongoing improvements to seniors' care. My office will continue to receive and investigate individual complaints from seniors and their family members and I expect we will return to these matters as we issue summaries or reports of future investigations.”

Lobbying For Reasonable Parking At BC Hospitals Arrangements

Hospital parking fees are a burden for most seniors and for low income families

Recently, SOAR, Chapter 3-14 Vice President, Kay Noonan and I met with Surrey Guildford MLA Garry Begg concerning the high cost of hospital parking. Resolution #17, adopted at the last Canadian SOAR conference, called for

“SOAR chapters engage with other interested groups to call on governments at all levels to implement a more humane parking charge system that provides fairness and equity to all users with a view to abolishing parking fees....”

Gary had previously expressed concern about the issue. We had a long and productive meeting.

Next steps Our next step is a meeting with the Hospital

Text is excerpted from the website: <https://bcombudsperson.ca/sites/default/files/OMB-Bestof-Care-Update-2018v17.pdf>

If you think a provincial government ministry, local government, or other provincial public authority has treated you unfairly— the Ombudsperson's office may be able to help. An independent statutory office of

Board Chair to make the following points:

- That hospital parking fees were inconsistent and caused great hardship for most seniors and low income families.
- Meters allow for lots to double dip by not letting people add to time. They do not give change back. Some require credit cards only.
- Cities are taking away free or two hour parking spaces away from land near hospitals.
- Currently people are not able to use parking fees as a tax deduction unless they have to use facilities away from where they live.
- Some hospitals have reduced passes for long term patients and family members, but it is still a burden

the provincial legislature, the Office of the Ombudsperson impartially investigates individual complaints about unfair administrative actions in more than 2,800 local and provincial public authorities . In addition to resolving individual problems, the investigation of a complaint can lead to systemic improvements that benefit many people.

- There should be no parking fees for emergency patients and drop offs.
- There should be a grace period for people overextending their time, if they are not able to get back to their vehicles.
- The parking agent should not be able to keep 100 per cent of the fines collected. It is an incentive for them to ticket people.

This is reprinted from the BC Forum **The Advocate**, Summer 2019 issue Fred Girling is a member of the BC FORUM Board of Directors and B.C. Coordinator, of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) and a COSCO delegate.

by Fred Girling

11 – COSCO News, October 2019

Climate Change

How many people dismiss what Greta Thunberg says about climate change simply on the basis of her age? Could it be ageism at work...? Perhaps a defence mechanism or simple response that allows many not to think about what can be done?

What are you and your neighbours doing? What is your community doing?

If you don't know, please check it out. If you don't know where to begin, start with searching in your library... Librarians are very helpful and knowledgeable!



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Surviving Information Overload

We have gazillion of 'facts' at our fingertips, they're not always true and often, they can be downright mean and malicious.

When you combine false information with our tendency for confirmation bias – that is when we look for proof to support our beliefs and disregard contradictory information – we're in trouble. So what's a human to do?

The important thing is not to

stop questioning. Be constantly curious. "Curiosity has its own reason for existence," said Einstein.

"Curiosity is an act of vulnerability and courage," says Brene Brown. "Choosing curiosity and connection rather than walking away or shutting down, while painful, is choosing courage."

Amp up your curiosity and its bedfellow critical thinking.

Don't let your brain be spoon fed false beliefs. Stay alert. Stay critical.

Use the very tools that dispense a gazillion of 'facts' to us every day for your own benefit. For example use Snopes, which bills itself as "the definitive Internet reference source for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumours, and misinformation."

by Gudrun Langolf

Ride-Hailing – Not A Solution Without Bad Unintended Consequences!

Last year, the BC government introduced legislation expected to bring ride-hailing to the province, but many questions remain about what that will look like in practice. One of the bodies responsible for working out the policy details is **BC's Passenger Transportation Board (PTB)**, an independent tribunal that has been handling passenger transport license applications from ride-hailing companies including major players such as **Uber** and **Lyft**.

This is the **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives** submission about two applications.

Link to the CCPA website item: https://www.policynote.ca/bc-should-think-twice/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=general&utm_content=secondary

Re: Application 6988-19TNS, UBER Canada Inc. and 6990-19TNS, Lyft Canada Inc.

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm an economist and researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. I've previously been asked to speak to legislative committees in BC regarding the ride-hailing industry and have published an analysis on this issue. In my view, the introduction of ride-hailing multinationals like Uber and Lyft would not promote sound economic conditions in the sector, nor would it reasonably balance the satisfaction of necessarily competing public needs. Consequently, I urge you to reject these applications.

I'd like to give you an overview of my reasoning and evidence in reaching this conclusion, focusing on three main points.

The experience from other jurisdictions is clear: drivers will not enjoy sound conditions in terms of their levels of pay or benefits.

First, in the absence of any limits on fleet sizes or min-

imum wage regulations, accepting these applications would fail to uphold decent economic conditions for drivers of passenger transportation vehicles. This reality can be seen clearly in other jurisdictions: it is among the reasons that New York has introduced fleet size limits and a minimum wage in this sector, and it is why California has passed legislation requiring the recognition of ride-hailing drivers as employees. Wages in the industry are dismal, which is consistent with what we would expect a priori from allowing unlimited vehicles into this market.

There are legitimate and ongoing debates about the optimal suite of policies and regulations to address the economic conditions of drivers in the passenger transportation industry. However, in the absence of fleet size limits, employee status or minimum wage regulations for drivers, and lack of meaningful minimum fare regulations, the experience

from other jurisdictions is clear: drivers will not enjoy sound economic conditions in terms of their levels of pay or benefits. While only some of these regulatory issues are within the purview of the PTB, you have the power to approve or reject applications relating to economic conditions. Approving these applications would harm the economic conditions of drivers.

A second concern relating to sound economic conditions is ride-hailing multinationals' track record of engaging in what appears to be predatory pricing. This includes the practice of operating at a loss to offer deep discounts in different markets. Reasonable observers conclude that the purpose of this practice is to establish a position of market dominance vis-à-vis potential competitors (and the network effects inherent to this industry then tend to further entrench dominant players).

This strategy also appears to be buttressed by multimillion dollar industry lobbying campaigns to promote a favourable regulatory environment, such as the threat of a \$90 million industry-funded campaign to overturn California's new legislation.

While there are real problems with the status quo in the passenger transportation business in BC, allowing aggressive multinationals like Uber and Lyft into the British Columbia market would diminish rather than promote sound economic conditions in this sector.

While there are real problems with the status quo in the passenger transportation business in BC, allowing aggressive multinationals into the market would diminish rather than promote sound economic conditions in this sector.

Third, sound economic conditions in any sector should not include the imposition of costly externalities on others. Unfortunately, there is a clear body of evidence that the introduction of ride-hailing multinationals like Uber and Lyft does exactly this. Specifically, this industry adds substantially to the total vehicle miles travelled (VMT) in a given jurisdiction. Evidence suggests that ride-hailing has added 2.8 vehicle miles to roads “for each mile of personal driving removed” in the United States. In short, ride-hailing worsens the already-large economic and social costs of automobile transportation.

Externalities imposed by the industry (from the resulting increases in VMT) include the costs of increased traffic congestion, increases in deadly air pollution, higher greenhouse gas emissions, added noise pollution, additional traffic deaths and injuries, and diminished public transit ridership. Even if the PTB determines that there is some public need for additional passenger transportation services, any benefit of meeting these particular needs must be weighed against the corresponding harms to public needs and interests in the transportation sector and beyond.

Thank you for your consideration, Alex Hemingway

Further analysis and evidence relating to each of these points can be found in the November 2018 piece, *What's missing from the Uber debate?* Market power, congestion, pollution, and even deaths. That piece also charts a path forward for ride-hailing that doesn't privilege expansionist multinational corporations and also doesn't leave passenger transportation solely in the hands of unaccountable taxi firms. BC is uniquely positioned to break new ground on this file with a driver or community-owned model of ride-hailing; we just need to be bold enough to pursue a different way forward.

Be Prepared for Darker Winter Days

Being an older man or woman doesn't mean that you have to dress like a conservative, old person (unless you're into that kind of style). You don't have to stop wearing bright colours and fun patterns just because you're over a certain age.

If bright colours make you happy, wear what makes you happy. And **BONUS** you will be visible especially for drivers during these darker winter days!

If you don't have bright

clothing just adding a white scarf, hat, and gloves to your ensemble helps to make you more visible. You might check out second hand stores for reflective clothing and ICBC usually has reflective pendants. Bike shops are a good source for blinking and reflective stuff...

It all helps to make you safer on the street. For those of you who drive, or are regular passengers, remember when you get out of your vehicle, you are a pedestrian.



Photo by Amy E. Price/Getty Images for SXSW

COSCO In The Community



Kathleen Jamieson and MP Don Davies



'Stay on the Road' workshop facilitator and COSCO Treasurer, Betty Bolton

COMING OCTOBER 2020 – MAJOR 2-DAY CONFERENCE

“Living in the 21 st Century: A Seniors' Strategy”
check the COSCO website www.coscobc.org for details as they develop

COSCO In The Community

The Medication Summit (below)



Diane Wood and Gudrun Langolf



Leslie Gaudette



MP Don Davies receiving his 'thank you token' for his talk to COSCO Delegates about pharmacare

40th Anniversary Celebration / South Granville Seniors Centre (below)



L-R Clemencia Gomez [ED], Gudrun Langolf



Delegates' Meeting - June 2019 (below)



John Wynne & John Chalke, BC's Ombudsperson - Facebook photo credit: Fred Girling