

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

ACTIVE AGING SYMPOSIUM REPORT

PLANNING FOR HEALTHY AGING

Vancouver: Harbour Centre
Simon Fraser University
June 9, 2011

Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat
BC Ministry of Health

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INTRODUCTION

On June 9, the B.C. Ministry of Health (the Ministry) hosted the 2011 Active Aging Symposium in conjunction with Seniors' Week (June 5-11, 2011).

The symposium brought together more than 120 older adults, caregivers, and professionals who work with older adults to discuss the need for, and how to encourage, planning for healthy aging.



Participants had the opportunity to network, share ideas, and learn about existing programs, services, and resources for seniors. They also provided valuable input into how the Province can best support planning for healthy aging.

The Ministry, represented by the Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat, was on hand to guide and record the discussion, which is summarized in this report.

OUTCOMES

Each Active Aging Symposium has a number of objectives. One is to bring seniors together with seniors' organizations, health care providers, administrators, community groups, and other interested parties to network, exchange information, and learn about what is going on in B.C. to support active aging.

Participating organizations can learn from and build on each others' successes to stimulate action to support healthy, active aging at the community level. Participants agreed that the symposium encouraged information sharing and networking, that they made new contacts and had plenty of opportunity to have their suggestions heard.

Since 2007, the Government of British Columbia has hosted four Active Aging Symposia to provide a forum for older British Columbians, stakeholder organizations and health care providers to share ideas and best practices on supporting seniors' health and informing future directions in policy development.

The first symposium, held March 27, 2007, focused on active aging – defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (2002). This symposium resulted in the ongoing development of tools and resources to help older British Columbians age actively, through a focus on five key areas: healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco cessation, fall prevention, and social connections.

The second symposium, held June 5-6, 2008, focused on intergenerational connections and brought together Health Authorities, provincial and federal ministries and agencies, First Nations, municipalities, seniors, and other community organizations to learn about innovative intergenerational projects in B.C., as well as provincial and community grant opportunities. Showcases provided examples of active aging and intergenerational projects around the province.

The June 18, 2009, Symposium “Aging in Action: Mobilizing and Supporting Volunteerism” focused on how volunteering promotes social engagement and healthy, active aging. Discussions also focused on the challenges and opportunities for organizations that support volunteers and helped inform ongoing policy.

Another reason for hosting the Active Aging Symposium is to highlight the programs, resources and services available at the provincial level for seniors and community organizations. This year, a number of organizations were able to host showcases to provide information on how they support seniors in their efforts to remain healthy and active. The showcases held are listed in Appendix IV.

The final objective of each Active Aging Symposium is to provide a forum for seniors and those who work with seniors to communicate directly with the Ministry, and to help shape policy direction on a particular theme. This year, with the theme “Planning for Healthy Aging,” the Ministry looked to participants to provide input on:

- key areas of focus to support planning for healthy aging – such as housing, finances, transportation, physical activity, volunteering, social networks, health literacy and continuous learning – to ensure a satisfying and secure older age;
- issues that make it challenging to plan for healthy aging;
- the kinds of tools and supports that can help seniors in their planning, including those that already exist, those that may need to be developed, the formats most suited to seniors’ needs, and how seniors and their families would prefer to access them.

Through discussion on this theme, the Ministry’s goal was to raise awareness of the need to plan for healthy aging, and to learn from the ideas and suggestions of participants how best to support older people in their efforts to plan.

WHY PLAN FOR HEALTHY AGING?

As people age they experience a number of transitions in their lives. Some are anticipated and can be positive experiences such as becoming a grandparent, or retiring to devote time to a much-loved hobby. But events and changes that older people are not prepared for can be experienced as crises, which may be compounded by stress and the need for urgent action. Such events can have negative effects on an older person’s health and ability to remain active and independent.

Before the Symposium, the Ministry of Health conducted a scan of healthy aging research and planning tools available from government, non-profit and private sources. The scan identified many reasons to plan for healthy aging, and indicated that being prepared and having plans in place helps older people to:

- make the most of later life;
- have greater control over their decisions;
- have a satisfying and positive retirement;
- maintain health and independence; and
- reduce or avoid costs for health care and other services.

The scan also concluded that planning for healthy aging is best started earlier in life rather than later, to provide the most options, satisfaction and independence in older age. A summary of the scan is included in Appendix II.

OVERVIEW OF THE 2011 SYMPOSIUM

The 2011 Active Aging Symposium was held at Simon Fraser University's Harbour Centre in Vancouver. About 120 people, including seniors, policy makers, and health care professionals, shared their knowledge and identified gaps related to the symposium's theme, "Planning for Healthy Aging."

Speakers and panellists provided relevant contextual information to help inform and stimulate discussion. Participants then gathered in small groups to discuss responses to key questions. Each group's facilitator took notes and encouraged participants to write their own ideas directly on the paper provided.

Participants had opportunities to network, take part in "Energy Burst" activity breaks, and view a short film highlighting programs and activities from across the country to promote positive images of aging.

Of those participants who completed symposium evaluation forms, the vast majority found the event to be a valuable experience (97 per cent), and found the presentations and discussions useful (96 per cent).

Following is a summary of the presentations and participant discussion from the 2011 Active Aging Symposium.

WELCOME AND SYMPOSIUM OPENING

Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors to the B.C. Minister of Health, the Honourable Michael de Jong

The Symposium was opened by Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid, who emphasized that seniors are a diverse group with varying needs, and that this diversity should be taken into account when developing tools to support planning for healthy aging. Dr. MacDiarmid highlighted the need to remove the stigma from aging and recognize the contributions of older people to their communities.

Dr. MacDiarmid spoke of the launch of the Province's Healthy Families BC program, the priorities set by the Seniors' Healthy Living Framework, and government's consideration of the unique needs of different age groups when developing policy and programming for older British Columbians. She drew on over two decades of experience, as a family physician working mostly in rural areas, to discuss the challenges of providing patients with quality care in small communities, of helping manage chronic disease and of

providing palliative care. When planning for healthy aging, she stressed that decisions need to be made earlier rather than later.

Silas Brownsey, Executive Director, Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat

Mr. Brownsey gave an overview of the agenda for the day, and talked about a recent series of focus groups held with older adults around the province on information outreach and planning for healthy aging. Focus group discussion revealed that many older British Columbians only start thinking about planning once a change in circumstances, such as a life threatening illness, forces action. Many focus group participants said they don't want to begin planning because it represents an acknowledgment that they are getting older – which suggests there is still a stigma about older age, and a need to continue working to highlight more positive images and experiences of aging.

Dr. John Millar, MD, FRCP(C), MHSc., Former Executive Director, Population and Public Health, Provincial Health Services Authority

Dr. Millar discussed environmental and economic sustainability issues, health and economic inequities, and other challenges facing Canada's health care system, such as increasing numbers of people living with chronic disease, shortage and isolation of General Practitioners (GPs), end-of-life care, mental health, and obesity issues.

He outlined how a primary health care system that includes comprehensive care and integrated teams of health care professionals, electronic health records, and a focus on a population perspective and self management, could help mitigate some of these issues.

Dr. Millar noted that retirement offers many opportunities to be active, to continue learning, and to take on broader issues such as poverty or climate change. He emphasized that retirement, aging, and good health are not mutually exclusive, and that older adults can better support their own health by:

- sleeping eight hours a night to help prevent dementia;
- exercising more, walking 10,000 steps a day, and controlling their weight;
- preventing physical injuries by giving up driving sooner rather than later, being aware of tripping hazards in the home, and installing grips and handholds;
- managing their finances;
- minimizing alcohol, drug and tobacco use;
- taking preventative measures and learning clinical self- management if they have a chronic disease;
- participating in the creation of age-friendly communities; and
- planning how to stay mentally stimulated after retirement.

Discussion

Following the opening speakers, discussion topics included: housing for older adults; design to accommodate older adults' needs; waitlists and the public health system; integrated health networks and a stronger role for community-based service providers;

appropriate funding for, and recognition of, the importance of community-based services; monetary support for volunteers; help for people with dementia; more pilot projects, evaluation and research; and continued funding for successful pilot projects.

A number of initiatives are currently underway in B.C. to address existing and emerging issues in Primary Health Care:

Integrated Primary and Community Care:

- The Ministry and Health Authorities are working towards integrating services for priority populations including, but not limited to, seniors, people with chronic health conditions and/or complex conditions, and the frail elderly.

Patients as Partners:

- Patients are supported to participate in their own health care, in decision making, quality improvement, and health care redesign to the extent that they desire. A number of initiatives have been developed, including mapping of patient health care journeys, mechanisms to increase health literacy, patient and public engagement, and ongoing work with non-government organizations to provide patient self-management programs.

General Practice Services Committee:

- A collaboration between B.C.'s General Practitioners, Health Authorities, the Ministry and the BC Medical Association to improve the quality of patient care.

Full-Service Family Practice Incentive Program:

- This program has been in place since 2006 to provide family physicians with additional payments for the extra time needed to support patients with chronic diseases and complex health care issues.

Prescription for Health:

- In June 2011, B.C. physicians were provided with additional tools to help patients who belong to one of the at-risk populations (smoker, unhealthy eating, physically inactive, obese), or who may be at risk of health complications like chronic disease, make long-term care plans.

A GP for Me:

- The aim of this initiative is that by 2015, everyone in British Columbia who wants to have a family doctor will have one.

MORNING DISCUSSION: THEMES AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING FOR HEALTHY AGING

Panellists: Dr. Irving Rootman, Connie Davis, Dulcie Brown and Val LeBlanc

The morning discussion began with a panel presentation on key areas to consider when planning for healthy aging. This was followed by small group discussions on what adults at various stages of aging need to think about when planning.

Dr. Irving Rootman, Visiting Professor, Department of Gerontology, SFU: Health Literacy and Healthy Aging

Almost 90 per cent of seniors do not have the health literacy skills required to understand health information. Studies show that low health literacy levels lead to more chronic conditions, inappropriate medication use, less use of preventive services, difficulties using the health care system, and premature mortality.

Health literacy is the ability to access, understand, evaluate and communicate information as a way to promote, maintain and improve health in a variety of settings over the life-course.

Being health literate allows individuals to make informed health decisions, express their views and wishes regarding their health care, manage chronic conditions, advocate for health services and policies, and live longer.

Older people and patients need to be proactive in developing health literacy skills. This can be achieved by asking questions when receiving health information, developing computer skills and doing research. Two main factors – lifelong learning and life-wide learning (formal and informal learning in a variety of contexts) – are key indicators of health literacy for seniors.

Professional health care providers also need to make an effort to communicate clearly with patients, create supportive environments, identify people with health literacy issues, and encourage learning.

Connie Davis, MN, ARNP Gerontological Nurse Practitioner: Successful Aging

Researchers from the MacArthur Foundation Research Network identify three intersecting factors in people who age well:

1. They maintain cognitive function and engage in at least 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity.
2. They avoid disease and disability by smoking less, reducing alcohol intake, avoiding falls, eating well, and managing their medication.

3. They are involved and engaged in life.¹

Being physically active is vital to prevent falls, because balance is like a muscle and needs to be maintained through physical activity and flexibility. Medication management is also crucial: seniors may be over-diagnosed and should have their medication needs regularly reviewed for successful aging. Lifelong learning, passing on knowledge, being engaged in life, and maintaining social connections are strong indicators for living a longer, healthier life.

Dulcie Brown and Val LeBlanc, Patient Voices Network: Reclaiming Health

Both Dulcie Brown and Val LeBlanc from the Patient Voices Network spoke about living with a chronic disease and how important it is to find and maintain balance in life. Ms. Brown discussed balancing financial health with mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health. She achieves this balance by maintaining friendships and connecting with others, spending time in nature, celebrating her life, and undertaking activities such as volunteering and zumba dancing to remain alert and healthy.

Health, she said, has become her job – she is its owner and CEO. Living with a chronic illness has forced Ms. Brown to take stock of how she is doing, to pay attention to the bigger picture – and to take care of herself. She keeps a medical journal and a running record of her medications, and gives copies to her physician and other health care providers to keep them informed. She aims to maintain balance in all areas of life.



Dulcie Brown focuses on keeping her life in balance

Mr. LeBlanc spoke of the importance of looking on the bright side of life. He argued that being happy is healthy. He has found five key elements to support active aging: being positive, living stress-free, having healthy eating habits, enjoying regular exercise and managing one's finances. He tries to follow his own advice by staying optimistic, sharing his passions, eating a well-balanced diet, exercising, not sweating the small stuff and being careful with his finances. People want to be around positive people and having friends is critical to having a healthy life. He is also not afraid to ask for help: he said people like to help!

¹ Kahn, Robert, L. Ph.D., and John Wallis Rowe, M.D., *Successful Aging*, New York: Pantheon, 1998.

Participants' Discussion: What have you done to plan for healthy aging? What do older adults in more vulnerable circumstances need to think about when planning?

Following the panel discussion, the audience was invited to discuss steps they had taken to plan for healthy aging, and to consider what vulnerable adults need to think about when planning.

Key Findings

Participants discovered that there are many things to consider when planning for healthy aging. Most had made plans in just one or two areas (such as finances or housing), but many said they had not thought about the importance of preparing for older age in other areas.

Participants highlighted the following considerations and topics:

- Adopt a planning mindset
- Start the planning process early and think about downsizing your residence and consider accessibility and available community facilities
- Ensure vulnerable seniors have trusted advocates
- Aim for a life in balance
- Learn to navigate the health care system
- Think about housing, finances, mobility and transportation, advocacy and resources to support these
- Anticipate the progress of disease
- Stay engaged: mental and social stimulation, education, community involvement and volunteering are crucial to healthy aging

Housing

Many participants expressed the desire to live in a neighbourhood with accessible housing that encourages walking and has services within walking distance. They discussed downsizing and making changes to their homes earlier rather than later so they could remain living at that location as they age. The issues of affordable housing and more age-friendly housing to support aging in place were also raised.

Suggestions for housing solutions for vulnerable seniors included building homes with accessible, universal design (with features such as low switches and wide doors), locating homes close to services, and having housing complexes/neighbourhoods that offer access to health services, social and physical activities, and good nutrition.

Community, Transportation and the Built Environment

Discussions focused on supportive communities, accessible built environments with sidewalks and benches, and mixed neighbourhoods that encourage intergenerational communication and interaction. Participants discussed the need for seniors to be included in discussions about age-friendly communities, and ensure they are engaged in community planning and local government initiatives to build the communities, social networks and transportation options they would like to enjoy when they are older.

Considerations for more vulnerable adults included: ensuring that they are in close proximity to hospitals, clinics or health care centres; that they feel safe in their living environments; they plan for mobility limitations; think about obstacles to their mobility in the environment and areas for exercise; and know about community resources and how to access them.

Update: Age-friendly BC

The Age-friendly BC initiative envisions a province where people of all ages and abilities feel included and valued in their communities. In an age-friendly British Columbia, older people are supported to live active, socially engaged, independent lives.

The Government of British Columbia is working with local governments and other partners to achieve this vision. See

www.SeniorsBC.ca/Age-friendly for more information.

Social Connections and Education

Participants discussed the importance of:

- taking advantage of educational opportunities;
- building and maintaining friendships and other social/intergenerational connections;
- volunteering and being involved in community activities; and
- making an effort to visit neighbours, especially isolated seniors.

Suggestions to better reach isolated seniors included:

- more immigrant networks;
- advocacy for Aboriginal Elders in urban settings who cannot access their community and support network;
- creating safety networks across generations and with community agencies;
- building peer relationships for emotional support;
- calling to remind one another to take medications;
- starting a block watch for seniors; and
- fostering intergenerational connections.

Mental Health and a Positive Attitude

Mental health and a positive attitude were seen as vital components of healthy aging. Participants mentioned trying to stay positive, having fun, following their passion, enjoying hobbies, taking an interest in spiritual issues and world affairs, singing, dancing, meeting new people, having a sense of purpose and learning to navigate life's events.

For vulnerable adults, keeping life in balance and having a positive outlook were noted as being especially important. Planning around cognitive loss, finding advocates and asking for help were also raised.



Health

Participants look after their health in a variety of ways. They exercise and walk, pay attention to nutrition and quality of life, visit wellness programs for seniors, avoid high risk behaviour and make an effort to reduce stress in their lives. The discussion also touched on medication management, including talking to the pharmacist, and the point that good health starts at a young age and is linked to socio-economic factors.

Issues raised for vulnerable adults included chronic disease self-management, medication management, anticipating the progress of a disease, and considering having an advocate, or a team of advocates. Participants noted that there are social, emotional, and financial implications of living with a chronic disease, and that self-management may be limited for a vulnerable older adult.

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

Many audience members had attended prevention workshops on diet and nutrition, made lifestyle changes, were more aware of what they ate, and made an effort to eat healthy food, avoid fried food and reduce their sugar intake. They discussed the importance of having an exercise partner and of building physical activity into their lives as part of a health regime from an early age.

However, income vulnerability can threaten diet, medication requirements and health. People without family members or close friends to help them with groceries, house repairs or other activities are likely to be more vulnerable. Vulnerable older adults would benefit from having community support.

Finances

Many participants reported that they had engaged in financial planning, but had not considered other areas of their lives when planning. Some financial steps they had taken included saving for retirement, seeing a financial planner, and considering their needs and wants in life vis-à-vis what they could afford – including whether or not they could afford to continue living in their homes.

Others said they had taken action to better educate themselves about finances and future financial needs and some had long term care insurance.



Financial literacy, the cost of services and medications and supplements, and awareness of free community resources were issues raised for more vulnerable adults. It was pointed out that immigrants and older women can be at risk for financial vulnerability. It was mentioned that there is a shortage of social and financial resources for seniors in need and for family caregivers who help keep elderly family members out of facilities.

Planning for Future Health, Financial and Legal Decisions

Planning for future decision-making and end-of-life care were discussed as vital components of healthy aging. Participants recognized that it is important to discuss your wishes with your family, loved ones and legal/financial contacts so that, in the event that you are unable to make decisions at some point in the future, they will know what to do. Putting in place advance care directives (often referred to as “living wills”) (www.health.gov.bc.ca/hcc/advance-care-planning.html), appointing a representative for health, financial and legal decisions (www.ag.gov.bc.ca/incapacity-planning), and ensuring you have an up-to-date will were identified by participants as key actions. Some participants had already engaged in extended family conversations and had a plan for end-of-life care in place.

Participants recommended that vulnerable adults, in particular, should ensure that they have the necessary documents in place and that they are reviewed periodically, in the event that they become incapacitated and cannot convey their wishes. Other suggestions included planning collaboratively, talking with friends, family and physicians about future health care decisions and end-of-life care, and planning for the unexpected.

Barriers to Planning for Healthy Aging

Participants identified a number of barriers that would make planning for healthy aging difficult for an older person. These included: elder abuse; not knowing the language; poverty; difficulty in accessing services; inappropriate or inaccessible housing;

displacement from their original communities due to health issues; a lack of social connections; being vulnerable or isolated; not having family; and suffering from mental health problems. This led to discussion about retirement, and whether retiring with a comfortable pension will be possible for most people.

It was pointed out that many older people, including Aboriginal Elders, are not able to navigate the health care system easily, and there is a need for health care workers to visit reserves and friendship centres. For many recent immigrants, there are cultural barriers to conventional relationships with family doctors. Participants highlighted the need for vulnerable seniors to be supported to a greater degree than those who are financially secure and health literate.

AFTERNOON DISCUSSION: TOOLS TO SUPPORT PLANNING FOR HEALTHY AGING

Panellists: Eleanor Kallio, Dr. Kendall Ho and Andrew Hazlewood

The afternoon discussion began with a panel presentation on healthy aging planning tools for younger and older adults, as well as for ethnocultural seniors. The presentations were followed by small group discussions on the types of tools, and formats thereof, participants would find useful.



From left to right: Andrew Hazlewood, Dr. Kendall Ho, Eleanor Kallio and Silas Brownsey

Eleanor Kallio, Senior Policy Analyst: Planning for Healthy Aging

Ms. Kallio presented on findings from the environmental scan conducted by the Ministry on healthy aging research and planning tools. The scan suggests that planning can make a positive difference in maintaining seniors' independence and quality of life, and reviews a variety of resources from government, non-profit and private sources

available to help people plan.

The scan identifies different types of planners, various stages of planning, key reasons to plan for healthy aging), and six interrelated areas to focus on when planning to contribute to good health and a satisfying and secure older age: physical activity, social connectivity, housing, transportation, finances and volunteering.

Planning tools to support healthy aging range from checklists and web pages to guides and books; these can be used by older adults to assess their situation and make improvements to optimize healthy aging, and by mid-life adults to assist their aging parents and friends. Many of the tools are free and are easy to obtain by ordering online or by telephone.

Dr. Kendall Ho, Associate Professor (Emergency Medicine) UBC Faculty of Medicine; Director eHealth Strategy Office: Technology Enabled Healthy Aging

Dr. Ho talked about how technology can assist individuals with health management and planning. Examples ranged from having the ability to access lab results directly through myehealth.ca to smart phone applications (apps) that can perform biometrics monitoring, such as recording blood pressure, heart rate and temperature. He also discussed the importance of engaging with, and educating, the public on health technology. He spoke of the need to reach out to ethnocultural communities because many try to make healthy choices but require culturally relevant resources in their first language. ICON, the [interCultural Online Health Network](#), is a tool that provides culturally relevant information and helps people manage chronic disease.

Dr. Ho also discussed the concept of self-care. He explained that people are motivated to care for themselves when they wish to be informed and learn more about their symptoms and about prevention. Recognizing the limited access to time with physicians, they also want to have sufficient knowledge to be conversant with health professionals and help family members care for themselves.

Dr. Ho proposed the following six steps that can help older people better support their own health and learn more about new tools that are available:

- committing to self management and prevention;
- partnering with health professionals;
- acquiring web/smart phone skills;
- checking out web pages and apps;
- trying out new tools and verifying their reliability; and
- tracking and reflecting health outcomes.

Andrew Hazlewood, Retired Assistant Deputy Minister: Planning for Life's Transitions

Mr. Hazlewood, who was in his first week of retirement from the Ministry, was invited to provide his perspective on this major life transition and how he had prepared for it. He reflected on his long career in the public service, which included working closely with

the Provincial Health Officer on population and public health issues like health improvement, disease prevention, environmental health, emergency management, and public health policy. He talked about how much the public's perception has changed in just a few years from tolerating smoking in public places and drinking and driving to accepting the stringent measures put in place to protect the public's health and well-being.

Mr. Hazlewood also discussed the importance of being proactive and engaged. He reiterated how essential it is for society to promote and invoke change and stressed that government cannot do it all. Individuals owe it to themselves to look after their future selves and plan for the best possible outcomes. He talked about his plans to remain engaged through volunteering his knowledge and expertise in his area of interest – public health. Having prepared for his retirement financially, he now plans to continue looking after his health by staying physically active and socially engaged, and acquiring new knowledge.

Participants' Discussion: Tools to Support Planning for Healthy Aging



Following the panel discussion, audience members reconvened in small groups to discuss tools and resources they were aware of to help plan for healthy aging, the formats most suitable for older people, and the roles various groups or entities could play in developing further planning for healthy aging resources.

Key Findings

Participants found that the tools and resources most helpful and suitable for older people were those presented in plain, clear language, and sensitive to cultural, gender and age differences. These included tools and resources in media and modes of dissemination ranging from word of mouth to brochures and television. Participants also noted a general lack of awareness of what already exists to support older people in their planning, and the challenges in finding and navigating information sources.

Tools Identified to Support Planning, Healthy Aging, and More Awareness

Well known, useful tools mentioned to help support planning included television (e.g., community channels, Shaw cable), especially for isolated seniors; radio; and telephone, particularly the 8-1-1 HealthLink BC/Nurse Line, 4-1-1 directory assistance, and 2-1-1, providing information on community, social and government services in the Lower Mainland. Other useful resources identified included print media, internet, community and seniors' centres, Service Canada, ElderLink, and tools and training programs developed by the community sector. In addition, educational courses and workshops that involve seniors teaching seniors were highlighted as being particularly effective. The importance of word of mouth and face-to-face direct contact was mentioned as one of the most effective ways to pass on knowledge and information to older people.



In discussing the types of tools that would be useful to promote planning for healthy aging, participants suggested that an inventory of promising practices and of existing tools (i.e., a one-stop shop), be created. In addition, they highlighted a specific need for tools on elder and financial abuse, peer-to-peer counselling, and end-of-life planning, as well as tools for adult children who are caregivers and for Aboriginal communities. They also discussed the value of tools that could keep isolated seniors connected and motivate seniors of all ages to plan.

One Size Does Not Fit All

With regard to tool design, it was clear that one model would not work for everyone and that well-designed tools would consider the population's diversity in age, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Helpful resources would be informative, well researched, have large print, and many visual components. They would include personal stories and anecdotes, and be available in a variety of formats such as electronic and paper, tele-health and technological tools. They would be available in a number of languages to support older British Columbians from ethnocultural communities. In addition to self-help tools, a need was cited for training programs for seniors, university courses, and workshops for older people that would include handbooks and kits with DVDs.

Everyone Can Play a Role

Participants had a number of ideas regarding those groups or entities best suited to develop tools and resources, including:

- “everyone from the ground up;”
- “have users of services and seniors develop tools themselves;”
- “engage NGOs [non-government organizations];” and
- make this a collaborative group effort between all stakeholders and sectors (users, families, the community, government, researchers, clergy and NGOs).

Distribute Widely

Suggestions on how best to distribute the resources included the mainstream media (T.V., community and multicultural channels, radio, internet, newspapers), community-based distribution (pamphlets and posters in community centres, pharmacies, grocery stores, seniors' and recreation centres, flu clinics, public washrooms, neighbourhood lunches, workshops, lectures and presentations), and one-on-one dissemination. Peer-to-peer learning and word of mouth were strongly emphasized. Audience members stressed the value of personal, face-to-face connection for seniors. In addition, participants pointed out the need to raise awareness of the many resources that are already available at the community level and through government.

Health Literacy: a Key Consideration

One of the groups was dedicated to discussing how to raise health literacy levels, which is an important consideration when developing tools or resources to support older people. Suggestions for supporting seniors with health literacy challenges in planning for healthy aging included developing health literacy tool kits with printable resources, booklets, CDs and DVDs; flyers; workshops using plain language; and materials available in multiple languages.



It was generally agreed that public awareness materials needed to be developed to motivate people of all ages and health literacy levels to plan. Tools created would use accurate, current and evidence-based information and would be culturally sensitive. Seniors, Elders groups, families and service providers could contribute to developing the tools by providing helpful tips. With regard to the question, who should develop tools and resources to raise health literacy and support planning for healthy aging, responses included the grassroots/bottom up approach (“tools should be developed by the people, for the people”), advocates, NGOs, health sector professionals, government, and the private sector.

Dissemination of Health Literacy Tools and Resources

Suggestions on how health literacy and planning tools could be distributed included face-to-face dissemination at social events and gathering places, and dissemination through multicultural caregivers, community centres, train-the-trainer programs, lunch-and-learn workshops, and word of mouth at food banks. Through such opportunities

participants could be directed to resources, workshops, or other learning events. Others proposed using a multi-faceted approach incorporating posters, word of mouth, newspapers, and educational and awareness-raising workshops, as well as disseminating information using objects of everyday life to convey health literacy messages.

Other ways to raise awareness about health literacy and planning for healthy aging included engaging community partners and presenters to visit libraries and seniors' centres to discuss these issues. It was also suggested that individuals take steps to increase their own health literacy and that educational programs could be developed and delivered through public schools. Finally, it was noted that special efforts need to be made to reach and motivate seniors from all walks of life, including isolated seniors, baby boomers, older seniors, and seniors and Elders in ethnocultural and Aboriginal communities.

WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS

After an "Energy Burst" activity break from the [Move for Life DVD](#), participants were shown a short film on [Positive Images of Aging](#). The film, created by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Forum of Ministers Responsible for Seniors in December 2010, highlights a number of projects and campaigns underway in Canada to combat ageism and celebrate the contributions of seniors. It can be found on the [SeniorsBC.ca](#) website.

The comments and feedback provided by participants at the 2011 Active Aging Symposium were very valuable to staff of the Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat. As a result, work is underway to better support older people in maintaining active aging and planning for healthy aging, and more opportunities for outreach to older people are being identified.

Information and Outreach

The Symposium highlighted the need to increase outreach activities to ensure that seniors are aware of the health promotion tools available for older British Columbians. Participants noted the following information sources in particular:

- The [Health and Seniors Information Line](#)
- [Age-friendly communities initiatives](#)
- The [Move for Life DVD](#)
- [8-1-1 HealthLinkBC](#)
- [VictimLink](#)
- [www.SeniorsBC.ca](#)

The Ministry will continue to make concerted efforts to raise awareness of these resources. Since the Symposium, the Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat has hosted information booths to reach seniors at two major events: the Elders Gathering, held in Abbotsford in July and attended by approximately 5,000 Aboriginal Elders from across B.C., and the Diversity Health Fair in Campbell River in August, attended by about 850 people.

The Ministry is also planning to update and revise the popular [Seniors' Guide](#) resource, guided by feedback received from seniors through events like the symposium and focus groups. Information and updates of interest to older adults are frequently added to the SeniorsBC website (www.SeniorsBC.ca), which provides a wealth of information on services for seniors and many healthy living resources. This website is also being revised based on feedback from seniors, to use plain language and be more age-friendly. An option to enlarge the font is available. To keep seniors and organizations informed about new developments, the Seniors Healthy Living e-Newsletter is available by [subscription](#).

Supporting Healthy, Active Aging

The Symposium also highlighted the need to continue to support older people in maintaining their own health to achieve active aging.

The Ministry will continue to promote resources and events that support seniors in their efforts to remain healthy, such as the popular [Healthy Eating for Seniors Handbook](#), with culturally adapted and translated versions in French, Chinese and Punjabi; the English [Healthy Eating for Seniors Audiobook](#); the [18 B.C. Seniors' Parks](#), providing outdoor recreation equipment specifically designed for older people; the [BC Seniors Games](#); the [Move for Life DVD](#), with exercises showing older adults how to stay strong and healthy by integrating more physical activity into their daily routines; [It's Never too Late to Quit Smoking](#), a print and web-based brochure with messaging designed to help older adults quit using tobacco; fall prevention brochures; and many other resources to support healthy, active aging. More information is available on the SeniorsBC.ca website.

The Ministry launched [Healthy Families BC](#) in May 2011 to support families in making healthy lifestyle choices and to introduce innovative approaches to challenges facing the health care system. The four-pronged Healthy Families BC strategy supports families and communities in the following key areas.

- 1) Healthy Lifestyles – supporting British Columbians in managing their own health and reducing chronic disease by working with physicians to ensure consistent delivery of proven prevention initiatives.
- 2) Healthy Eating – initiatives aimed at supporting healthy choices in the home, the school and the community, and creating environments that support the provision of healthier foods and make healthy food choices easier.
- 3) Healthy Start – helping the most vulnerable families in British Columbia get the best start in life.

- 4) Healthy Communities – encouraging British Columbians to lead healthier lives where they live, work, learn and play.

Through Healthy Families BC, support is offered to help British Columbians be more physically active, be aware of the food they eat, quit smoking, and cope with a chronic disease or cancer diagnosis. Programs include:

- [Prescription for Health](#), which gives B.C. doctors additional tools to conduct medical assessments and work with patients to develop health promotion and illness prevention plans that suit their medical needs and personal situation. Patients identify a lifestyle change goal, which is documented by the physician on a Prescription for Health. It is available to patients who have a risk factor such as smoking, unhealthy eating (excess calories, fat or sodium in their diet), physical inactivity (less than 30 minutes of activity several times per week), and medical obesity (a body mass index of 30 or more). Participating patients may be referred to free-of-charge telephone-based lifestyle support services designed to support them in achieving their lifestyle change goal.
- A public awareness campaign around sodium and sweetened beverage reduction, and an [educational platform](#) to inform British Columbians about the dangers of consuming too much sodium.
- The [Informed Dining program](#), which involves participating restaurants which will provide nutrition information before or at the point of ordering in the restaurant. Information may be provided on a brochure, a menu insert or poster highlighting calorie and sodium content. Making nutrition information available in restaurants allows customers to make informed decisions, and helps to promote healthy weights and prevent high blood pressure and chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer.

In Closing

The 2011 Active Aging Symposium provided much valuable input and many good ideas and suggestions that can be incorporated into the Ministry's work to support seniors. Over the coming months, the Ministry will consider this input while exploring options for promoting planning for healthy aging.

The Ministry and the Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat wish to thank each of the more than 120 participants and speakers who attended the 2011 Active Aging Symposium for sharing their ideas and providing rich food for thought. We look forward to continuing to work with you to support older people in remaining healthy and active.

Appendix I

Planning for Healthy Aging Program

Thursday, June 9, 2011

Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre 515 West Hastings Street
Rooms 1400 -1430, Joseph and Rosalie Segal Centre

Theme: What do older adults, at various stages of aging, need to know to plan for healthy aging?

Objective: Obtain ideas on best practices to support healthy aging planning

8:30 a.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors

8:50 a.m. Overview: MC Silas Brownsey, Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat

9:00 a.m. Keynote Speaker: Dr. John Millar, MD, FRCP(C), MHSc. Former executive director, Population and Public Health, Provincial Health Services Authority

9:45 a.m. Introduction to showcases

9:50 a.m. Health break/view showcases

10:15 a.m. Panel discussion

- Dr. Irv Rootman: Health Literacy
- Connie Davis, gerontological nurse practitioner: Successful Aging
- Dulcie Brown and Val LeBlanc, Patient Voices Network: Reclaiming Health

11:15 a.m. Discussion/small groups

- Participants join in world café style small group discussions to identify top themes and key issues to consider when planning for healthy aging

12:15 p.m. Lunch

1:15 p.m. Panel discussion

- Eleanor Kallio, senior policy analyst: Planning for Healthy Aging Tools
- Dr. Kendall Ho: eHealth Strategies
- Andrew Hazlewood, retired assistant deputy minister: Planning for Life's Transitions

2:15 p.m. Health Break

2:30 p.m. Discussion/small groups

- Participants join in world café style small groups to discuss the types of tools needed to support older adults in planning for healthy aging

3:30 p.m. Film: Positive Images of Aging

3:40 p.m. Wrap up: Silas Brownsey, Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat

Appendix II

Planning for Healthy Aging

BACKGROUND

Can planning for healthy aging make a difference in maintaining seniors' independence and quality of life? Staff at the Ministry of Health conducted an initial scan of healthy aging research and planning tools to help answer this question.

A variety of resources from government, non-profit and private sources were reviewed. This summary is intended to provide context and rationale for planning for healthy aging, and to inform and stimulate discussion at the 2011 Active Aging Symposium.

FINDINGS

There are many reasons to plan for healthy aging, many things to consider when planning, and a variety of resources available to help people plan.

The Rationale for Planning for Healthy Aging

The scan identified six key reasons to plan for healthy aging:

1) To make the most of the third phase of life

Today, Canadian men can expect to live to age 81 and women to age 85, resulting in a potential 16 to 30 years of life after retirement. Retirement is an opportunity to realize dreams and goals, and structuring a chosen combination of leisure and work will support making the most of this phase of life.

2) To have greater control

Planning can help with the decision of when to retire or whether to continue working to support a desired lifestyle. It can help people adapt to, or better manage, unforeseen changes in health or circumstance, and remain as independent as possible in older age.

3) To heed the advice of retirees

Many retirees wish they had started planning sooner. They placed more importance on planning after they had retired, versus the amount of pre-retirement planning they had done.

4) To have a satisfying retirement

Planning can help older adults experience a more satisfying and positive retirement, by putting affairs in place to help maintain and increase self-sufficiency, productivity and social satisfaction.

5) To maintain health and independence

Both health and independence can be enhanced with good planning, or jeopardized without it. With a strong social network and regular physical activity, older adults can maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. Planning for future housing and transportation needs can help older adults adapt their homes or find alternatives to driving before these changes become necessary. Financial planning also supports health and helps avoid poverty, particularly for women.

6) To reduce/avoid costs

Maintaining good health is essential for quality of life and independence of older people. Those who maintain better health and independence in older age will need fewer health care services and will be less reliant on their families and communities.

Planning Stages and Factors

There are different types of planners and different stages of planning. Those struggling with financial and/or health concerns may be less self-reliant and have different planning needs from those with better health, higher incomes, and/or substantial savings. Planning stages include thinking about a vision for retirement, identifying the necessary steps to achieve that vision, and any barriers that may be faced, and planning for the unexpected.

Health, social networks, finance, housing, transportation, and volunteering are all connected. Each area affects the others and all are important. Planning in all of these areas puts older adults in a better position to achieve healthy aging.

Personal control, a positive attitude, and the ability to adapt to change are additional elements that contribute to healthy aging. Personal control is connected to practicing good health habits, and a positive attitude strengthens self-confidence and boosts one's ability to fight depression and cope with life changes. Planning can provide older people with a sense of being in charge of their health and enable them to make the most of their future.

Key Areas to Plan for Healthy Aging

The scan identified the following key areas to plan for healthy aging, but this is not an exhaustive list.

Health

Older adults are at risk of becoming inactive and developing a major illness, disability, or chronic disease. However, half of all age-related declines are preventable. Physical activity is one of the best antidotes to age-related disease and disability.

Low intensity, low-cost activities like moderate, regular walking are among the simplest and most popular ways for older adults to be physically active. Social support and a physician's recommendation are both helpful for getting and keeping older adults physically active. Practicing a healthy lifestyle is also beneficial for the brain. Cognitive and physical activities, as well as healthy eating, have been linked to brain health, maintaining memory, and lowering the risk of dementia.

Social Networks

Social networks are linked to health, happiness, and feelings of self-worth. Friends and family are especially important for those who live alone or who have lost loved ones. They provide emotional support and assistance with daily living activities, and help older adults stay active and engaged. Being involved in group activities such as walking groups can enhance physical health as well as social networks, and online communities can also provide social benefits.

Housing

Both the home and the surrounding environment play important roles in healthy aging. Neighbourhoods that are perceived as safe and that offer walking routes to local services and parks encourage residents to walk more and rely less on their cars.

Most older adults prefer to live in their own homes for as long as possible. Studies show that the longer an older adult remains at home, the less likely they are to move, even if the home becomes unsuitable. Safe, appropriate housing has features that support independence, even if changes in function or ability occur. Planning for healthy aging should include assessing one's home and living environment early on, in order to be aware of any changes or adaptations that may be required.

Transportation

Mobility outside the home helps people maintain social connections, participate in the community and fulfill personal needs. It also supports independence and choice. Many seniors are dependent on driving and don't know about alternatives; consequently, they feel they need to keep driving. Older adults generally live about seven – 10 years beyond their driving ability, so being informed and planning for future transportation needs can help them remain active and connected with their communities longer.

Finance

At every income level, financial planning can contribute to greater well-being, and it is a key part of healthy aging. Planning can help older adults maintain an adequate income for an active and independent lifestyle, as well as provide options in case life circumstances or health status suddenly changes. It is important to recognize that some Canadian seniors live below the poverty line, with women at higher risk for financial insecurity in older age. Women are generally less financially prepared for retirement; they tend to be less financially literate, have fewer savings, and live longer than men.

Many older adults rely on only one or two sources of retirement income, such as Old Age Security and the Canada Pension Plan. This may not provide enough security if changes in health or circumstances occur. A three-pronged approach that includes a public pension plus two other sources, such as savings, employer pensions or real estate investments, helps ensure older people are in a better financial position.

Volunteering

About one third of Canadians age 65 and older volunteer, and they volunteer more hours than other age groups. Volunteering has many benefits; it helps keep people connected with communities, is associated with longevity, and increases both happiness and satisfaction. The reasons older adults volunteer are both personal and altruistic. They volunteer to benefit their community and for a sense of belonging, to have social interaction and mental stimulation, and to feel useful. Making volunteering connections earlier in life is suggested, or opportunities to volunteer in later life may be lost due to declining health.

Tools and Other Resources for Planning for Healthy Aging

Several tools to support planning for healthy aging were identified in each of the key areas outlined above. These include checklists, books, booklets, guides, and online resources. Most of these are free and can be found or ordered online or by telephone (for further information, please refer to the *Healthy Aging Planning Tools: A Set of Examples* handout).

CONCLUSION

There are many reasons to plan for healthy aging. Good planning involves a multi-dimensional approach, including consideration of each of the key areas discussed above. Planning for healthy aging is best started earlier in life, rather than later, to provide the most options, satisfaction and independence in older age.

Appendix III

Healthy Aging Planning Tools: A Set of Examples

An initial environmental scan conducted by Ministry of Health staff identified many healthy aging tools. The following list provides examples of the types of tools available in each of the key categories. This is by no means an exhaustive list, nor are the tools listed below endorsed by the Government of B.C. Rather, the following resources were selected to demonstrate the variety of healthy planning tools available to the public.

HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH

Get Going to Keep Going Guide We Care - Canadian home health service

www.wecare.ca or call: 1-877-853-1195

- Provides free, simple, positive and action-oriented guides with tips, checklists, recommendations and resources to help older adults stay healthy and active.

Women: Stay Healthy at 50+/Men: Stay Healthy at 50+ (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and American Association for Retired Persons)

<http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/men50.htm>,

<http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/women50.htm>

- This US website helps adults over 50 learn how to maintain their health and prevent disease.
- Includes checklists for daily health, recommended screening tests and frequency, and a template to record and track tests.

HOUSING

The Safe Living Guide (Public Health Agency of Canada)

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines>

- Free guide to help older adults live more safely and in better health.
- Provides useful and reliable checklists for identifying hazards in the home, and tips for safety improvements.

Maintaining Seniors Independence Through Home Adaptations (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CHMC))

www.cmhc.ca or call 1-800-668-2642

- Free self-assessment guide for older adults.
- Includes many suggestions, illustrations and recommendations.

Independent Living Guide (We Care – Canadian home health service)

www.wecare.ca or call 1-877-853-1195

- Free booklet with checklists on safety features for each room of the house, plus tips for home safety, fire prevention, fraud protection, safe driving and medication safety.

TRANSPORTATION

The Mature Drivers Program (BC Automobile Association Traffic Safety Foundation)

<http://www.tsfbcaa.com/18.aspx>

- Includes resources such as a Safe Driving Review, Safe Driving Checklist and a Planning Ahead Worksheet.
- Information on alternatives to driving and the safety features of vehicles.

SOCIAL NETWORKS

Online Communities

Examples: www.seniorsdaily.net, www.zoomers.ca, www.meetup.com.

- Provides online discussion forums and information on a range of topics of interest to older adults, and opportunities to join, or form groups.

FINANCE

Services for Seniors Guide (Service Canada)

www.servicecanada.gc.ca/seniors

- Retirement planning information on federal services and programs for seniors.

Investor Education Fund (IEF)

www.getsmarteraboutmoney.ca.

- Canadian website that promotes unbiased, independent financial information, programs and tools to help consumers make better financial decisions.
- Provides planning tools for pre- and post retirement, such as lifestyle calculators, tips on how to make your pension savings last, and information on planning your estate.

VOLUNTEERING

Attention Boomers: Change the World...Again! (Government of Ontario)

www.renaissance50plus.ca

- Website that provides a free guide with tips for finding the right fit in a volunteer position, source examples for finding volunteer work and expectations of volunteers and agencies.

Baby Boomers – Your New Volunteers (Volunteer Canada)

<http://www.volunteer50plus.ca/index.php>

- Website that provides free workbook for organizations wanting to attract baby boomers to volunteer.
- Provides background information and statistics, research and key approaches for designing positions, recruiting and retaining baby boomers as volunteers.
- Useful for mid-life adults wanting to explore volunteer role ideas and find a best fit.

BOOKS AND MORE

- *You Could Live a Long Time: Are You Ready?* - Lyndsay Green
- *What Colour is Your Parachute? For Retirement* - Richard Bolles
- *To Move or Not to Move?* - Senior Living Magazine
- *The Best the Rest – Downsizing for Boomers and Seniors* - Doug and July Robinson
- *Keep Your Brain Alive* - Lawrence Katz and Manning Rubin
- *Healthy Aging for Dummies* - Brent Agin and Sharon Perkins
- *At Home With Alzheimer's Disease* – handbook on home adaptations – Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- *Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities* –World Health Organization
- *A People Lens: 101 Ways to Move Your Organization Forward!* - Vantage Point

Appendix IV

Showcases:

ActNow BC: This cross-government health promotion initiative seeks to improve the health of British Columbians by taking steps to address common risk factors and reduce chronic disease. This program is being integrated into the new Healthy Families BC initiative.

British Columbia Automobile Association Road Safety Foundation: The BCAA Road Safety Foundation works with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. The program focuses on five areas, one of which is the mature driver. It highlights the importance of continued mobility balanced with the safety of the individual and other road users.

CARP: A New Vision of Aging in Canada: CARP is a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization committed to "A New Vision of Aging for Canada," promoting social change that will bring financial security, equitable access to health care and freedom from discrimination. Its mandate is to promote and protect the interests, rights and quality of life of Canadians as they age.

Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC: COSCO is the largest federation of seniors' organizations in the province of British Columbia, representing seniors for over 50 years. COSCO members assemble, coordinate and advance proposals and resolutions concerned with the welfare of elder citizens, and submit them to the appropriate government bodies while advancing the social and physical welfare of all elder citizens in B.C.

Patient Voices Network: The Patient Voices Network is about giving patients a greater voice to help shape B.C.'s health care system. The Patient Voices Network recruits, trains and support patients in B.C. (and their families) to participate in primary health care changes on an individual, community and system level.

Self-Management Programs - University of Victoria: Self-management programs through the University of Victoria Centre on Aging are evidence-based programs run by volunteer leaders throughout B.C. Sessions are provided by leaders on Chronic Disease Management, Chronic Pain Management, Managing Diabetes, and Arthritis & Fibromyalgia Self-Management Programs, Active Choices and Matter of Balance.

Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat: The Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat (SHLS) is part of the Ministry of Health. It was established in 2008 to work collaboratively across government, engage with stakeholders, and integrate programs and services for older British Columbians to help them maintain their health and independence. SHLS builds on successful programs that support older people, makes sure information on these programs is easy to find and understand, and forges innovative partnerships with others who play an important role in the lives of older people – such as local government, business and community organizations. It also produces a variety of resources to support seniors in healthy, active aging.

Seniors Program - SFU Continuing Education: The Simon Fraser University Seniors Program is open to anyone 55 or better, and offers 65 intellectually stimulating courses, forums, and outreach programs annually in Vancouver. Course topics include “Health Care: How to Be an Effective Advocate for Yourself and Others,” “Living Well: A Health Workshop,” and “Opera Studies.”

Service Canada: Service Canada offers single-window access to a wide range of Government of Canada programs and services for citizens through more than 600 points of service located across the country, call centres, and the Internet.

Appendix V

Evaluation feedback:

Of symposium participants who filled in the evaluation form (just under half of total participants), 97 per cent found the symposium to be a valuable experience. More than 96 per cent agreed that the presentations, panel discussions, and breakout sessions were useful, and 97 per cent thoroughly enjoyed the fitness break featuring the Move for Life DVD.

Over 94 per cent of respondents said that the symposium encouraged information sharing and networking, that they made new contacts, and had plenty of opportunity to have their suggestions and opinions heard.

Responding to questions about the registration process, usefulness of materials, and quality of the facilitation, venue and food, more than 88 per cent stated it was excellent, very good or good. There were some comments about the room being long and narrow, with some in the back having difficulty seeing the slides, and about the amount of time it took to reconfigure the main room for the breakout session.

Feedback from the evaluations confirmed that participants enjoyed having older adults share their personal challenges and insights. They noted in particular that having people relay their personal stories provided a much more meaningful context, insight into how people can adapt to and manage change as they age, and how, through health challenges, they can become more balanced and health-conscious.

Additional topics that participants would like to see discussed include elder abuse, low-income seniors discussing their experience of aging, emergency/environmental disaster planning for seniors, palliative care, complementary medicines, physical disability, and the need for more resources at the community level to support healthy aging programs. Some participants would have liked more time to network and more time devoted to the small group discussions. Others wanted to know what was going to happen with the results of the symposium and next steps. There were also comments about how healthy, active aging really starts at a much younger age. Participants enjoyed the short film on positive images of aging, and felt it was a “positive, energizing way to end the day.”

For more information about programs and services for seniors:

Visit: www.SeniorsBC.ca

Or call the Health and Seniors Information Line
Toll-free 1 800 465-4911 or 250 952-1742 (Victoria)