

Manitoba Seniors Coalition – Call to Action

Communication/Information

1) There is a need to establish a provincial call centre similar to the current 311 initiative that has been established to support older Winnipeggers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a partnership involving key older adult serving organizations, the United Way Winnipeg, A & O: Support Services for Older Adults, Winnipeg Harvest & CAA. Older adults are connected with a number of resources available through A & O, including assistance with delivery of groceries, medications and specialized services. Many older adults are aging in place.

When will a provincial line offering similar supports where older Manitobans and those that care about them can be connected to a variety of older adult serving organizations and supports required to address the needs of the population aging – pre COVID-19, during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 pandemic?

2) Who should organizations contact in government to assist with older people who are affected by the pandemic?

3) Manitoba is in a state of emergency. At the municipal level, there are Emergency Measures plans – how are they involved today with COVID?

Safety

4) Many older people are aging in place. They are relying on Senior Support Coordinators for support. How do front line senior support coordinators deliver meals, etc obtain PPE equipment on very limited funding?

5) For a variety of reasons, elder abuse is quite likely on the rise during the pandemic, from COVID-19 specific scams, to potentially familial issues due to financial or physical abuse or even neglect. Has the province instituted any specific initiatives to alleviate the situation?

Transportation

6) Who is providing oversight and recommendations to Rural transportation programs and services such as the “Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program” funded through the MB Government and other groups such as vehicles for hires and volunteer driving programs that service Older Adults?

7) Who is ensuring Older Adults have safe means of transportation to get to medical appointments that are not being cancelled during COVID?

8) If medical appointments for Older Adults will be deemed as essential, who will be providing groups and drivers with adequate training and supplies to safely deliver those services?

Active Aging & Wellness

9) Owing to the weeks and potentially months of physical isolation, many older people are likely going to suffer from the consequences of sedentary living.

Will the province be responding with increased supports for rehabilitation and physical activity programs?

Also, during the pandemic, is the province going to provide individuals with consultation and services for rehabilitation and physical activity to prevent declines in physical function?

Are any innovative programs being developed to reach a large proportion of older people utilizing technologies that are readily available to most (e.g., TV)?

Healthcare

10) Post pandemic, many older adults could be susceptible to the flu this coming winter. Will the 'high dose' flu shot be distributed free of charge to all older adults over 65 years?

11) How are the policies and procedures being developed surrounding care decisions and the potential lack of resources that could result if healthcare centres become overwhelmed during the pandemic?

Who is providing input?

Are older adults and individuals specifically affected by disabilities involved?

12) It has been reported by Shared Health that the WRHA has cut some services. People rely on homecare services to ensure that they do not need to reside in a personal care home.

How are you ensuring that homecare services will not be reduced for the long-term?

When will these services be reinstated so that older people are not forced to reside in a personal care home, which is more expensive and also riskier?

13) Are residents of personal care homes receiving sufficient interaction, engagement, and contact with families to prevent declines in cognition and to maximize function and mental health?

How will these issues be managed in the months to come?

14) The majority of current personal care home infrastructure is more than 40 years old. The physical layouts are obsolete, especially in terms of treating individuals with dementia, and in times when isolation techniques are required, putting both residents and staff at risk. These outdated designs feature two to three beds in ward-like rooms, shared washrooms and bathing facilities, crowded dining rooms, narrow hallways, and noisy, hospital-like nursing stations that are in close proximity to residents' rooms. This

creates situations of extreme risk especially during the current pandemic, as we have seen in Ontario and Quebec where 80% of deaths were in long term care homes.

Currently \$40 Billion in Federal funding is available for seniors housing where care is NOT provided. Will the Provincial Government lobby for change in the Federal funding criteria for seniors' housing to include seniors residences where care is provided?

15) At this time traditional programs and services, including those supporting persons with dementia and their families and caregivers, may have been canceled or changed. In addition, isolation is changing how we interact.

Will the Government ensure that adequate supports are in place to support persons with dementia, families and **caregivers** living at home during this time?

Income Security

16) The COVID-19 virus has changed economies around the world which in turn affects income security of all older adults and those on fixed incomes. What effect, if any will occur to older adult government pension and benefits (such as rent assist)?

17) How can the Provincial Government ensure that all seniors receive \$200 for pandemic expenses by using income tax returns as the guideline for issuance when many older adults who only receive Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement as a means of income often do not file an income tax return?