

JUL 21 2017

Ms. Sharron Callahan
Chairperson
NL Coalition of Pensioners, Retirees and Seniors' Organizations
sharronc@nl.rogers.com

Dear Ms. Callahan:

This letter is in regard to your correspondence sent to us in December, 2016 requesting that retroactive Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payments not be considered in financial assessments for subsidized services.

Officials from relevant provincial departments have been engaged with the Federal Government since January, 2017 regarding the progress of the repayment plan and potential impact on seniors, specifically Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) seniors.

Employment and Social Development Canada identified that 734 NL seniors of the 1,000 accounts reviewed, were eligible for repayment, with the payments averaging \$1,723. Of the 734 individuals, 623 received payment in 2015 and 111 in 2016. The Federal Government is still working to contact a small number of inactive accounts (less than 10%) to determine whether there is an entitlement.

A meeting was held in June, 2017 with representatives from various government departments including Health and Community Services; Advanced Education, Skills and Labour; Finance; and Children, Seniors and Social Development and it was determined that no clients had services reduced as a result of the retroactive payments.

Although this overpayment is deemed "income", it is not taxable which may explain why there have been no program or service impacts. In addition, if a client presents with a retroactive GIS payment, that amount is deducted from their net income prior to completing the financial assessment.

This is very good news: however, if your organization has heard from individuals claiming evidence to the contrary, I would encourage you to have these individuals contact Suzanne Brake, Director, Seniors and Aging Division at suzannebrake@gov.nl.ca or telephone @ (709) 729-4957 or 1-888-494-2266.

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I thank you for your interest in this important issue.

Sincerely,



SHERRY GAMBIN-WALSH, MHA

Placentia – St. Mary's

Minister

c: Hon. Cathy Bennett, Minister of Finance
Hon. Dr. John Haggie, Minister of Health and Community Services
Heather Hanrahan, ADM, Health and Community Services
Suzanne Brake, Director, Seniors and Aging Division
Judy Foote, MP
Gudie Hutchings, MP
Yvonne Jones, MP
Ken McDonald, MP
Seamus O'Reagan, MP
Scott Simms, MP
Nick Whalen, MP