



NLPSPA Convention 2024

October 10, 2024

PAMELA DAWE

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY
CONSULTANT

Seniors' Advocate Act: Role

- (a) identify, review and analyze systemic issues related to seniors;
- (b) work collaboratively with seniors' organizations, service providers and others to identify and address systemic issues related to seniors; and
- (c) make recommendations to government and government agencies respecting changes to improve seniors' services.

Seniors' Advocate Act: Powers and Duties

- (a) receive and review matters related to seniors;
- (b) initiate and participate in reviews related to seniors;
- (c) conduct research related to seniors, including interviews and surveys;
- (d) consult with seniors, service providers and the public;
- (e) request information, other than personal health information;
- (f) make recommendations to government, government agencies, service providers and community groups respecting legislation, policies, programs and services impacting seniors; and
- (g) inform the public about the Office of the Seniors' Advocate and promote awareness of systemic issues related to seniors.

Seniors' Advocate Act: Definitions

“Senior” means an individual who is

- (i) 65 years of age or older, or
- (ii) less than 65 years of age and receives seniors' services;

“Systemic” means issues and concerns that impact a large number of seniors.

Accountability

- Independent Statutory Office
- Reports
- Recommendations
- Public engagement
- Media presence

Systemic Advocacy - Levers Available to the Seniors' Advocate

ISSUE	MECHANISM
☐ Ageism	☐ Education, public awareness, media
☐ Isolation	☐ Promote models (AFC) to all levels of government
☐ Inadequate staff training and oversight	☐ Consultations, reports and recommendations
☐ Loss of independence/health challenges	☐ Policy advice and expertise
☐ Vulnerability of seniors	☐ Collaboration i.e. community, researchers
☐ Accountability of the system	☐ Annual Status of Recommendations Report

Public Engagement



PROVINCIAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

SENIORS' PRIORITIES

Overall, results were consistent through the different regions.

One exception: residents in Labrador-Grenfell (22%) were more likely than residents in Eastern (7%) and Central (8%) to say **housing** was an issue to them.

Table 1: Top Responses by Seniors per Region

	Overall NL	Eastern	Central	Western	Labrador -Grenfell
	(n=913)	(n=667)	(n=111)	(n=80)	(n=55)
Health concerns (including access to health care, health coverage, long-term care, and home care)	39%	39%	41%	36%	40%
Cost of living and financial concerns	39%	40%	39%	35%	27%
Housing	8%	7%*	8%*	10%	22%
Social issues, community, and quality of life	7%	8%	4%	9%	7%

In participants' own words:

“Access to community services or organizations that support seniors’ ability to attend appointments, educational services, i.e. computer operation and security knowledge.”
- Senior

“Ensuring seniors are not separated from their partners because of level of care requirements. There should be care homes that specialize in all levels of care.”
- Family Member and Caregiver

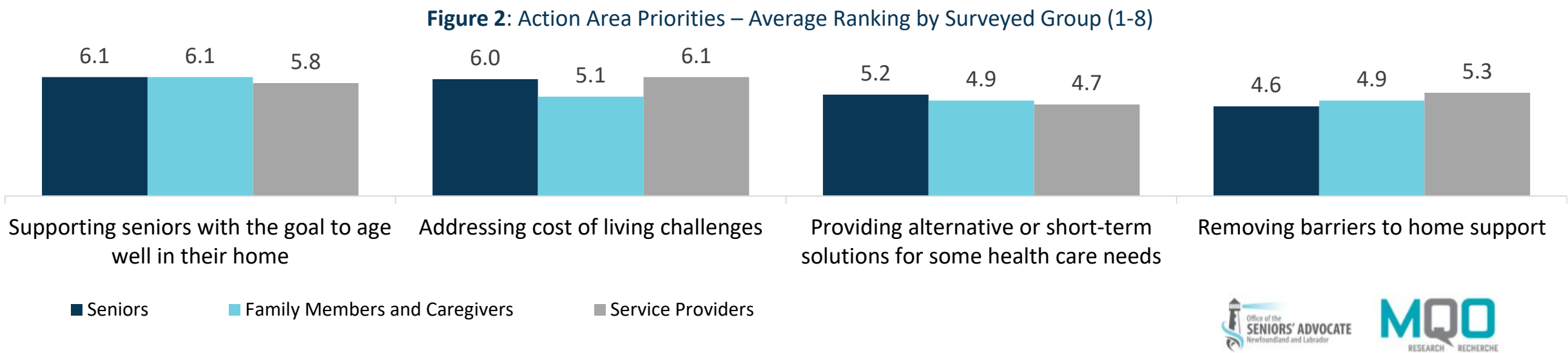
RANKED PRIORITIES

The top-ranked priorities were consistent for seniors, family members and caregivers, and service providers:

- 1. Supporting seniors with the goal of aging well in their home
- 2. Addressing cost of living challenges; and
- 3. Providing alternative or short-term solutions for some health care needs to improve access to health care.

Service providers and family and caregivers ranked **removing barriers to home support** among its top 3 priorities, while seniors didn't.

There was widespread consistency across regions within all surveyed groups.



Town Hall Sessions



What We've Heard

Health Care - Area in need of most focus for improvement

- Affordability
- Medical Transportation
- Access
- Long Term Care
- Personal Care Homes
- Home Support



Advocacy Actions

Health Care

- LTC and PCH review & Community Stakeholder Committee
- Dementia Care Plan
- Cabinet Committee on Seniors
- Advocacy on cataracts, audiology
- Free drivers' medicals
- Free shingles vaccine
- Free high dose flu vaccine

What We've Heard

Cost of Living

- Not enough income/insufficient pension
- Increased cost of living



Advocacy Actions

Cost of Living

- Budget submissions
- Spoke with Federal Minister re: pension
- Community Collaboration
 - * Basic Income
 - * Rethinking Food Charity
- Poverty Reduction Plan for Seniors
- Report Recommendation



What We've Heard

Housing

- Aging in Place
- General home maintenance
- Access and affordability
- Homelessness



Advocacy Actions

Housing

- Recommendation to NLHC on subsidies and repairs
- Age Friendly Communities
- Collaboration with Community Organizations
- Called for an All-Party Committee on the housing crisis.



What We've Heard

Transportation

- Access
- Expense/affordability
- Bad traveling conditions
- Dependent on family and friends



Advocacy Actions

Transportation

- Called for review of MTAP and an increase in the per KM rate
- Discuss with municipalities re: AF Transportation Program
- Addressed with the Provincial Government/ Federal Minister & National Seniors Council
- Drivers' license medicals

What We've Heard

Social and Community Support

- Social Isolation
- Community Integration
- Senior Awareness
- Ageism
- Recreation



Initial Area of Focus From Public Engagement Sessions

Cost of Living

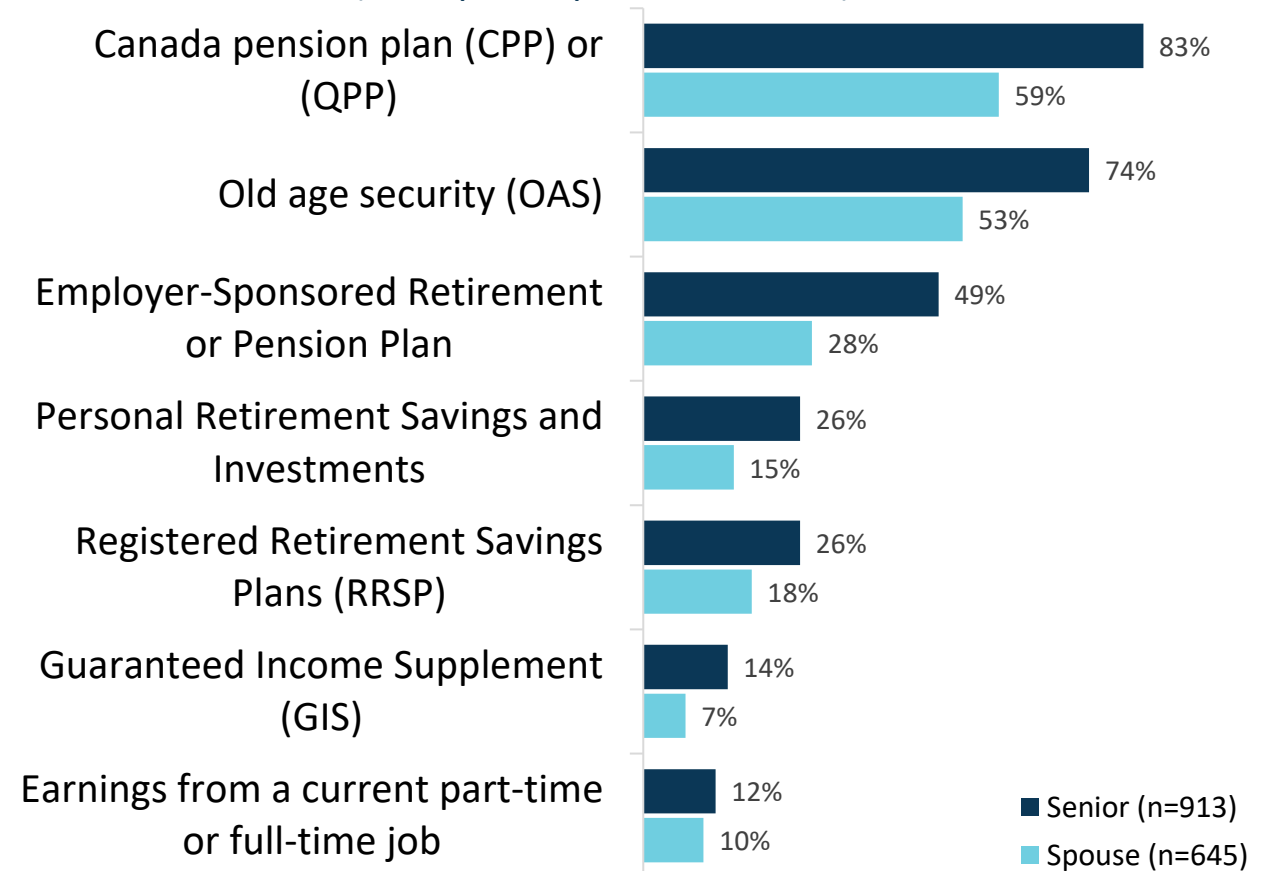


Seniors' Household Income Sources

2022 survey respondents were asked about their household income composition.

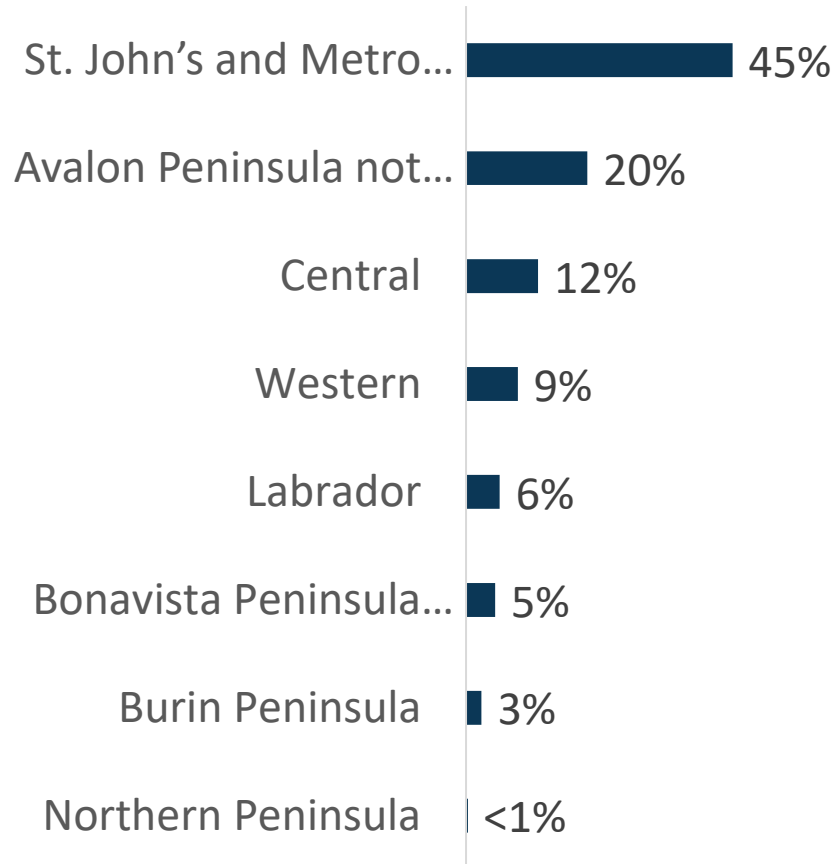
- Only 11% of seniors were employed.
 - 5% were employed full-time and 6% part-time
- Most seniors reported receiving **Canada Pension Plan** and **Old Age Security**.
- Similarly, most seniors with spouses reported that their partner received **CPP** and **OAS**

Figure 13: Sources of Household Income – Top Mentions – Top Mentions (Multiple responses allowed)

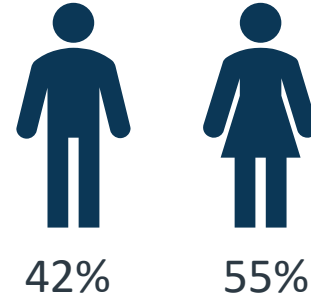


WHO WE HEARD FROM - SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Regional distribution

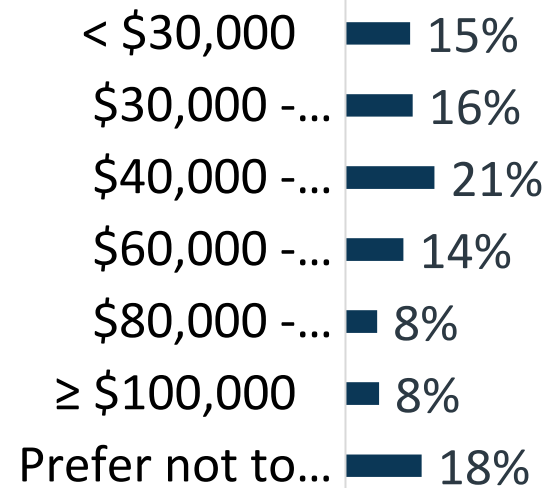


Gender distribution

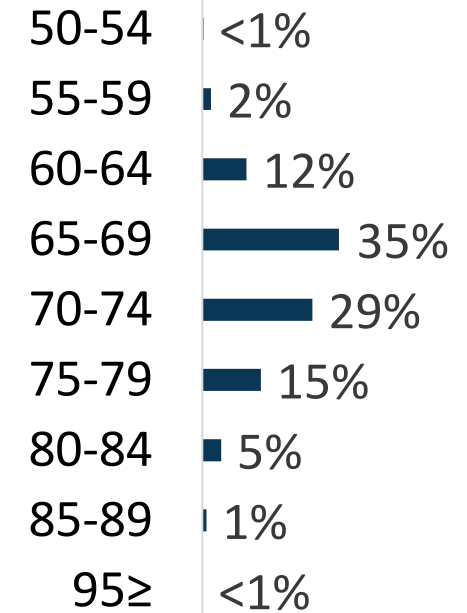


2% preferred not to say
or to self-identify

Income distribution



Age distribution



Impacts of Insufficient Income

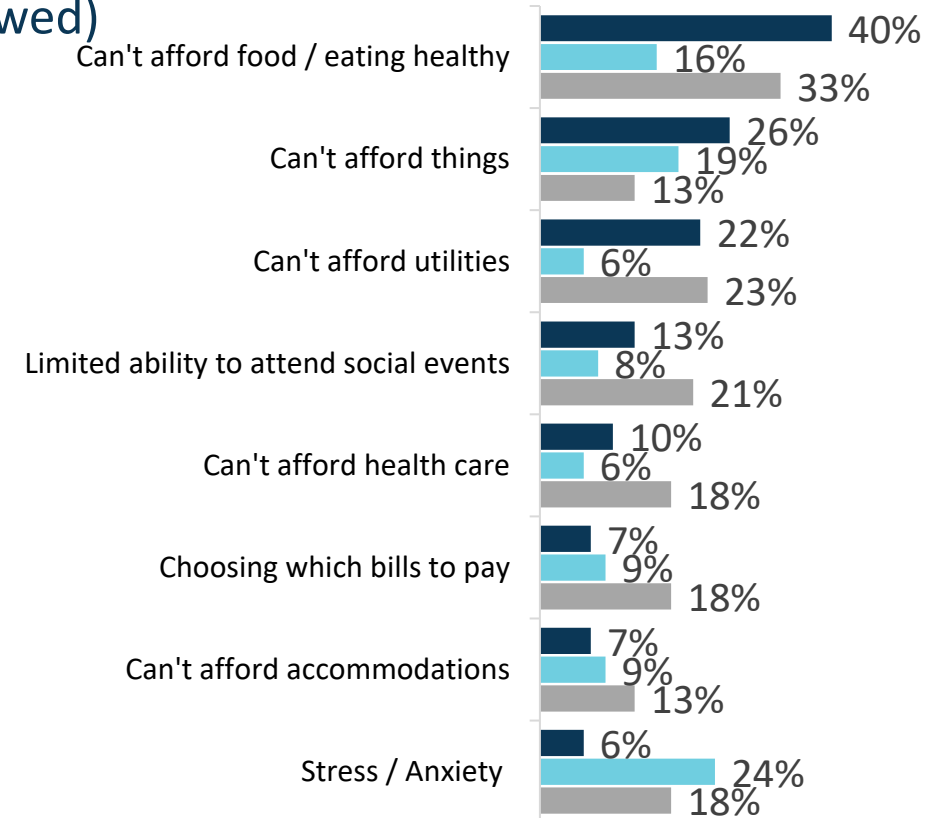
Seniors who reported not having enough income, family members and caregivers who reported that the seniors they care for did not have enough income, and service providers, were asked about the challenges and in what way seniors' quality of life was impacted by not having enough income.

Results by all surveyed groups:

- Inability to afford food or eat healthy.
- Stress and anxiety was the main impact.
- Inability to afford things and to afford utilities.

Seniors in all NL regions noted challenges due to insufficient income.

Figure 11: Quality of Life Impacts of Inadequate Income – Top Mentions (Multiple responses allowed)



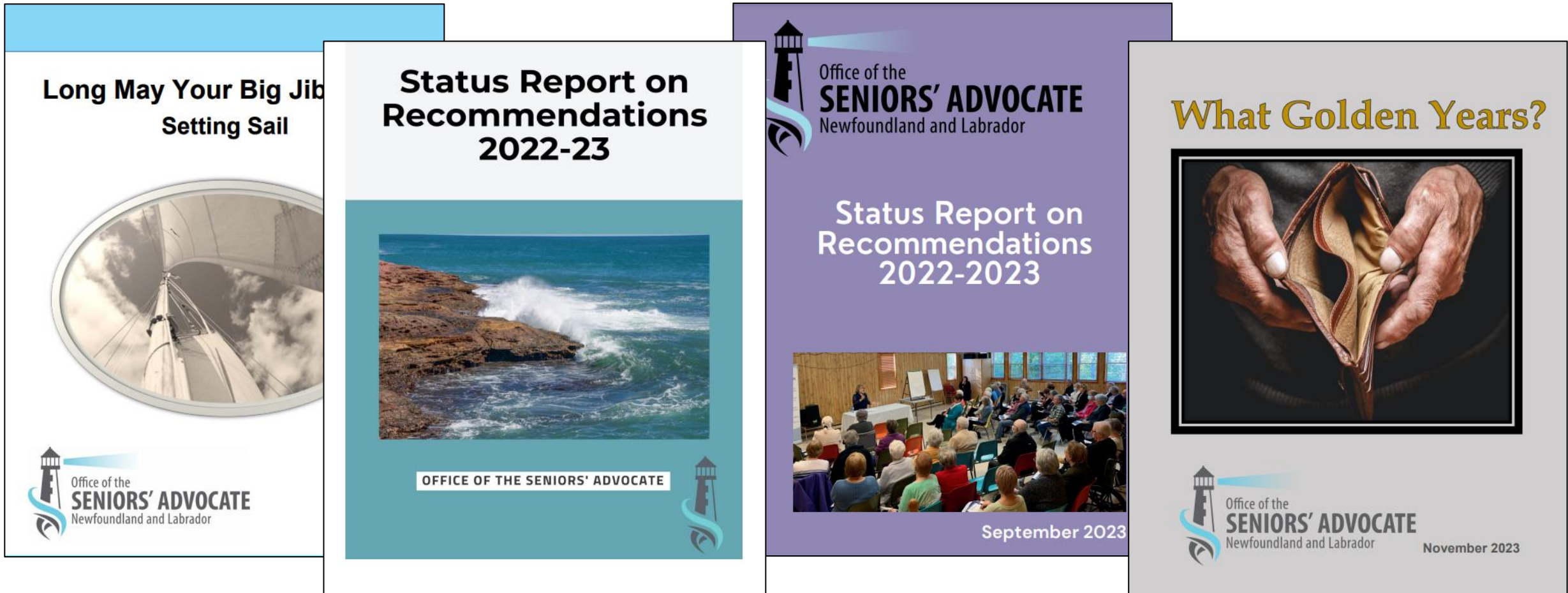
What Golden Years?



Key Recommendations:

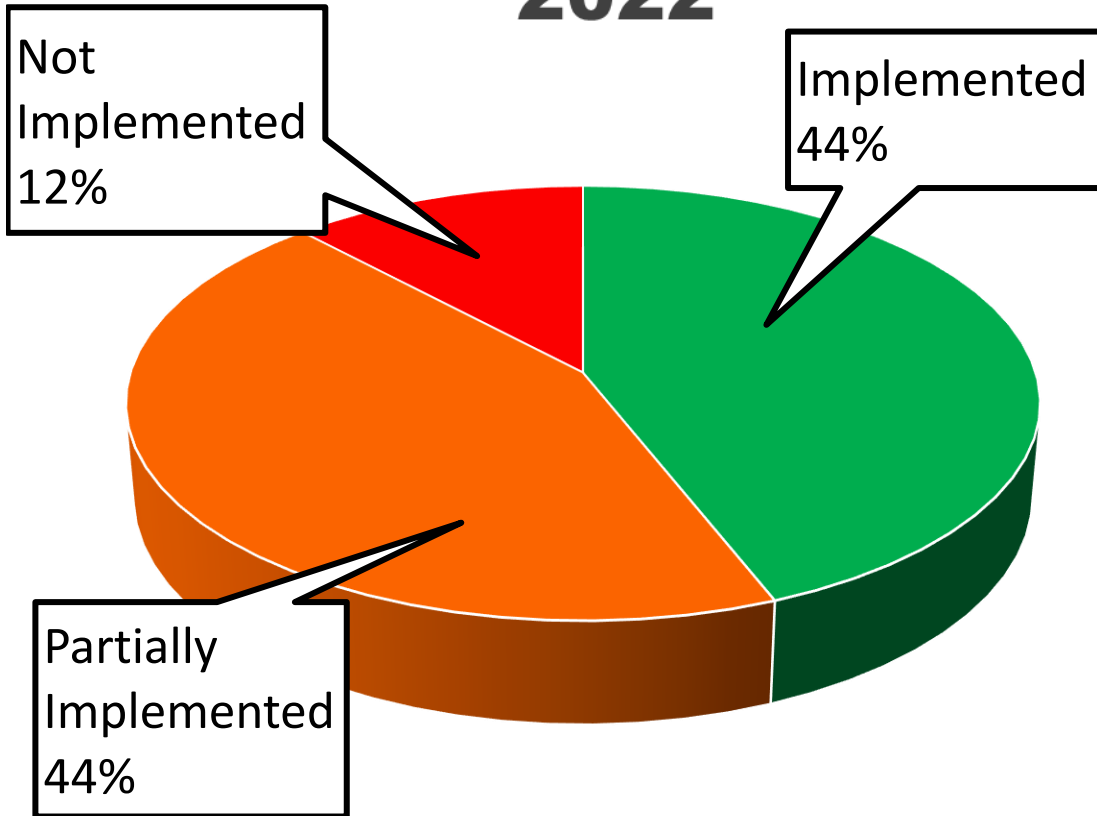
- 1) Indexing the NL Seniors' Benefit;
- 2) Reviewing both the maximum family net income threshold to receive the full NL Seniors' Benefit and the phase out rate;
- 3) Exempting seniors in receipt of GIS from having to pay for their required home supports;
- 4) Exempting households with a family net income of less than \$29,402 from having to pay for their required home supports;
- 5) Implementing the Food First NL recommendation for a shared food delivery service to ensure food can be delivery to seniors if necessary;
- 6) Increasing the amount of money per kilometer people traveling for medical appointments are eligible to receive through the MTAP; and
- 7) Providing all people aged 65 years and older free access to the high-dose influenza vaccine.

Recommendations Reports and Status Reports

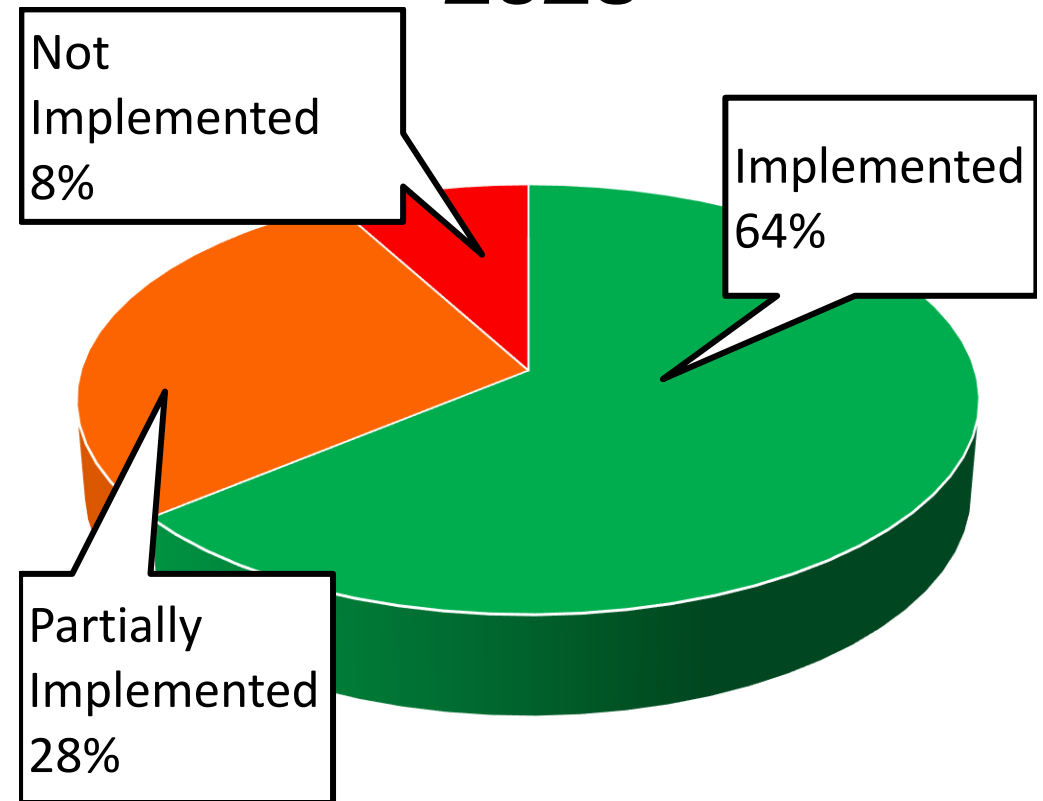


Status Report on Recommendations

2022



2023



Next Steps

- ☐ Annual Status Report on Recommendations
- ☐ Annual Submission to Provincial Budget Process
- ☐ Report on how seniors in NL are doing
- ☐ Focus on Aging Well in your home and community
- ☐ Continued public awareness of seniors' issues and Advocacy

Social Media



Facebook

- Seniors Advocate NL



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- Seniors Advocate NL @SrsAdvocateNL

Newsletter

If you wish to sign up for Emails reach out:

seniorsadvocate@seniorsadvocatenl.ca

CONTACT INFORMATION

P.O. Box 13033

2 Canada Drive, St. John's, NL A1B 3B8

Phone 709- 729-6603

Fax 709-729-6320

Toll free 1-833-729-6603

seniorsadvocate@seniorsadvocatenl.ca

www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca

