

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Canada's Three Seniors' Advocates Meet in Ottawa

VICTORIA - British Columbia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Advocates identified key issues to improve the aging process for Canadian seniors during a first in-person meeting in Ottawa this month which included a series of discussions with organizations and federal officials including Minister of Seniors Kamal Khara.

Discussions between the advocates and the minister centred on how the federal government would ensure support for new national standards for long-term care and that these standards apply to all publicly-funded long-term care homes in Canada.

In addition, the advocates spoke of the need for better supports to enable seniors to age well in their own homes, the importance of age-friendly communities, and met with the National Seniors Council to discuss their work on the federal Age Well at Home initiative.

The advocates met with representatives of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology to discuss how issues related to seniors might find a stronger voice in the Senate. The advocates also met with the Conservative Party of Canada Shadow Cabinet Minister for Seniors, MP Anna Roberts, and the NDP Critic for Seniors, MP Rachel Blaney, to discuss matters of importance to seniors.

In addition to the issues of long-term care and home support, the advocates spoke of the need for income security given the rising cost of living, adequate housing and home-repair programs to help Canadian seniors age in place.

The three advocates look forward to continuing to work together to help ensure seniors throughout Canada enjoy a high quality of life.

Quotes

"Though we come from different provinces and opposite ends of the country, the issues that are of importance to seniors are similar. While the solutions may look somewhat different in Springdale, Newfoundland and Labrador than downtown Vancouver, B.C., unfortunately the impact of the rising cost of living on food security, the challenges accessing health care and home supports, and the increased demand for adequate and safe housing to age well at home are the same."

Susan Walsh

Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Advocate

“Without a doubt, meeting the needs of seniors will require the support of all levels of government. While the three of us were welcomed by all we met with, it would be more effective if all provinces and territories had a seniors advocate in order to allow the collective voice of seniors to be heard as we work together to improve the lives of Canadian seniors.”

Kelly Lamrock, K.C.

New Brunswick Seniors' Advocate

“There was some encouraging news from many of the officials we met with; however, as we move forward, we must ensure that policies, regulations and funding aimed at better supporting seniors in this country are meeting their mark. The role of seniors' advocates in monitoring the provincial delivery of programs and services is vital and I know we are all hopeful that newly announced standards for long-term care in Canada will have meaningful outcomes in the daily lives of seniors.”

Isobel Mackenzie

BC Seniors Advocate

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BACKGROUND

Susan Walsh, Seniors' Advocate for Newfoundland and Labrador

Susan Walsh has over 30 years' experience in various capacities working with the social system in Newfoundland and Labrador. She began her career as a social worker in community development, proceeded to work through progressive leadership positions within numerous departments of the provincial government focused on mental health, geriatrics, disabilities, and child welfare and income support. In recognition of her leadership on a number of progressive policy and program initiatives, Ms. Walsh was nominated on two separate occasions by her peers for the Public Service Award of Excellence. As an executive within the provincial government, Ms. Walsh led a number of reform initiatives and represented on various provincial and national boards. Her most recent role, prior to her appointment as the Seniors' Advocate in June 2022, was Deputy Minister of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

Kelly Lamrock, K.C., Seniors' Advocate for New Brunswick

Kelly Lamrock has held a variety of valuable roles before his appointment as NB Child, Youth and Seniors' Advocate. He has worked as a lawyer, was elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, taught as a professor and worked with First Nations and international NGO's. His experience includes positions with the New Brunswick Healthcare Association and St. Thomas University as well as appointments as Opposition House Leader, Minister of Education, Minister of Social Development, Minister of Justice and Attorney-General. Internationally, Mr. Lamrock served as Chair of CONFEMEN, the education ministers' roundtable of La Francophonie and served as Honourary Principal of New Brunswick-supported schools in Beijing and Shenzhen, China. Kelly has also served as Executive Director of the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs in New Brunswick and worked in Tunisia as Parliamentary Affairs Director for the National Democratic Institute. In 2021, he was appointed Vice-Chair of the Labour and Employment Board of New Brunswick and he began his mandate as New Brunswick's Child, Youth and Seniors' Advocate in February 2022.

Isobel Mackenzie, BC Seniors Advocate

Isobel Mackenzie has over 20 years' experience working with seniors in home care, licensed care, community services and volunteer services. She led British Columbia's largest not-for-profit agency, serving over 6,000 seniors annually. In this work, Ms. Mackenzie led the implementation of a new model of dementia care that has become a national best practice and led the first safety accreditation for homecare workers, among many other accomplishments. Ms. Mackenzie is widely recognized for her work and was named BC CEO of the Year for the not-for-profit sector and nominated as a Provincial Health Care Hero. Prior to her appointment as BC Seniors Advocate in 2014, Ms. Mackenzie served on a number of national and provincial boards and commissions, including the BC Medical Services Commission, the Canadian Homecare Association, BC Care Providers, BC Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry and the Capital Regional District Housing Corporation. Ms. Mackenzie also served on the University of Victoria's Board of Governors.