

# Healthy Aging in Place



## An Overview of Healthy Aging Strategies in Rural and Urban Canada



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June 2018



SASKATCHEWAN POPULATION HEALTH AND EVALUATION RESEARCH UNIT

## Acknowledgements

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This document was prepared by researchers at the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU) as part of the *Healthy Aging in Place* research program.

SPHERU is a multidisciplinary research unit affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. SPHERU engages in population health research – the study of social factors that contribute to the well-being of various groups within a population. Our focus is on population health intervention research, looking at ways in which inequities can be addressed by taking action on the social determinants of health. Working in collaboration with policy makers and communities throughout the province, SPHERU is committed to conducting leading edge policy-relevant research. For more information please visit [www.spheru.ca](http://www.spheru.ca)

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# Executive Summary

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## Background

In Canada, the rural population is aging faster than their urban counterpart. As people age, their needs increase for services such as home support and care to age in place. As policy makers, researchers, and community leaders work to address the needs of the aging rural demographic, information on healthy aging frameworks and interventions from different jurisdictions can offer innovative alternatives.

## Purpose

The Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU) conducted this environmental scan to document healthy aging frameworks and interventions across Canada at the federal and provincial/territorial levels of government. The purpose of this environmental scan is to document the current landscape of healthy aging frameworks and interventions to provide a foundation for future planning to support older adults in rural communities and beyond. The methods used in this scan include a review of online documents, direct contact with government ministries and departments and electronic searches of the ProQuest database and Google internet search engine for the period 1994-2018.

## Findings

Findings from this environmental scan suggest that there are important gaps in the distribution of healthy aging strategies across Canada. Healthy aging frameworks and interventions remain largely decentralized requiring individual provinces to take the lead in the development of actions to support healthy aging in place. Since 2005, provincial healthy aging strategies have been developed in all provinces except Saskatchewan.

The most well developed components are supportive environments/age-friendly communities, active living, aging in place supports (home care, community and long-term care) and elder abuse, with some provinces having separate strategies for each of these components.

This scan found that having a provincial seniors' secretariat or ministry was key to the development, coordination, and promotion of healthy aging initiatives. Every province except

Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, and the three territories were identified as having senior secretariats or ministries.

At the federal level, this environmental scan suggests that leadership is needed to facilitate and promote provincial collaboration and build upon best practices that currently exist within Canada. Doing so would reduce provincial resources required to develop effective and innovative interventions to improve healthy aging in place.

Improving healthy aging in place is often about making simple changes to improve how existing interventions and programs operate. Innovative frameworks and interventions from different jurisdictions can offer effective alternatives to support healthy aging. After conducting a review of the federal and provincial/ territorial websites, this scan identified some key areas where action could be taken to improve healthy aging in place.

### **Key messages**

- Promote awareness of and access to information on existing services and supports available to older adults
- Promote the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration to address the identified needs of older adults across rural, urban and northern locations
- Support multi-sectoral planning to create built environments supportive of older adults' mobility, by identifying potential barriers and risks early on
- Support multi-sectoral collaboration to identify opportunities to enhance physical activity and mobility for older adults
- Identify and promote strategies that address the diversity of older adults' experiences
- Develop a framework to measure, monitor, and report on interventions that support rural healthy aging in place

## Introduction

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### **Why is healthy aging important?**

In Canada, individuals aged 65 years and older are one of the fastest growing population groups. By 2036, it is projected that 10.4 million Canadians will be aged 65 and older. As people age, their needs increase for services such as home support and care to age in place. Developing economically viable yet effective interventions to support older adults' independence and ability to age in place has become an increasingly critical issue for community leaders and decision-makers across the country. However, it is important to recognize that older adults are diverse, and that effective strategies to support healthy aging in place will greatly depend on the local context.

In rural Canada the population is aging faster than their urban counterpart and approximately 15% of the rural population is aged 65 and older (Dandy & Bollman, 2008). Where older adults reside and how these environments support them are key determinants that need to be examined in order to support healthy aging in place. For example, existing literature indicates that rural older adults have poorer functional health (Crowther, Scogin & Johnson Norton, 2010), higher risk for mental illness (Chalifoux, Neese, Buckwalter, Litwak & Abraham, 1996) and more chronic illness than urban seniors (Krout, 1994; Ortega, Metroka & Johnson, 1993).

Although rural-urban health disparities are documented, there is limited knowledge of existing strategies used in Canada to support healthy aging in place. As policy makers, researchers, and community leaders work to address the needs of the aging rural demographic, information on healthy aging frameworks and interventions from different jurisdictions can offer innovative alternatives.

### **Purpose**

This environmental scan provides an overview of the national, provincial and territorial healthy aging strategies in Canada. The purpose of this environmental scan is to document the current landscape of healthy aging frameworks and interventions to provide a foundation for future planning in rural communities and beyond. This environmental scan is intended to provide a basis to inform community leaders and policymakers who are working to support older adults' independence and ability to age in place.

The objectives of this review are to:

- a) Document the current landscape regarding healthy aging initiatives in Canada at the national, provincial and territorial levels of government;
- b) Identify frameworks and interventions specific to supporting healthy aging for rural seniors.

### **Key Terms**

**Healthy aging in place:** *The ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of income, location of residence or age*

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/terminology.htm>

**Older adults / seniors:** *People aged 65 years and older*

**Healthy aging intervention:** *Programs, policies, practices or any other form of action on the determinants of health to affect the health outcomes of a population.*

**Framework:** *A conceptual structure typically containing a vision, set of principles, plans and goals to guide actions plans, based on extensive research and consultation with stakeholders.*



## Methodology

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This environmental scan was guided by a population health framework which recognizes that healthy aging is influenced by a range of factors such as social support, physical environment and culture. The online search included English language documents from 1994 to 2018. The following is a list of key words used in the search:

Aging	Programs	Canada
Healthy aging	Best Practices	Alberta
Active aging	Initiatives	British Columbia
Aging in place	Strategies	Manitoba
Older adults	Policies	Ontario
Elderly		Saskatchewan
Seniors		Nunavut
		North West Territories
		Prince Edward Island
		Quebec
		Yukon
		Newfoundland and Labrador
		New Brunswick
		Nova Scotia

Information in this environmental scan was gathered using three methods:

- 1) A review of online government documents at the federal and provincial/territorial levels related to supporting older adults' independence and aging in place, including:
  - Government programs, legislation and policies focused on older adults
  - Frameworks developed or adopted by governments to support older adults
  - Federal and provincial/territorial websites related to healthy aging
    - Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
    - Service Canada
    - Public Health Agency of Canada
    - National Seniors Council
    - Seniors' secretariats
    - Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors
    - Canadian Institutes for Health Research
    - Special Senate Committee on Aging

- Referenced citations found in government publications related to healthy aging and non-governmental organizations including:
  - World Health Organization
  - United Way Centraide
  
- 2) Contacting ministries and departments via e-mail to request information on healthy aging initiatives. Those contacted included:
  - Nova Scotia Department of Seniors
  - Yukon Health and Social Services
  - Saskatchewan Seniors' Consultant
  - Nunavut Department of Culture, Language, Elders & Youth
  
- 3) Conducting electronic searches of the ProQuest Database and Google Internet search engine to identify additional data on healthy aging strategies at the federal and provincial/territorial levels (i.e. news releases).

The frameworks and strategies found in the search were then summarized into table form and reviewed to identify the issues addressed and components found within each. A brief discussion of healthy aging initiatives within the particular jurisdiction precedes each table.

## Findings: Strategies and Frameworks

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This section provides a description of healthy aging strategies and frameworks found across Canada. These include both past and current initiatives and are organized into jurisdictional sections beginning with the federal government and followed in alphabetical order by the provinces and territories. Each section briefly summarizes the development of healthy aging strategies within the jurisdiction, followed by a table of key initiatives. The tables provide a description of the components found within each framework or strategy, along with the issues or challenges the strategy addresses.

### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Government of Canada has a history of promoting and developing initiatives targeting seniors. In 1980, the National Advisory Council on Aging was created in order to advise the minister of health on issues related to aging and the quality of life for seniors in Canada (Health Canada, 2002). In 1994 the National Framework on Aging (NFA) was proposed by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Ministers Responsible for Seniors, an intergovernmental body focused on applying a ‘seniors lens’ to government initiatives at all levels; federal, provincial and municipal. Although no reference could be found of publication of the initial 1994 framework, an accompanying policy guide *Principles of the National Framework on Aging: A Policy Guide* was released in 1998 (F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 1998). Described as a component of the National Framework on Aging the guide articulated the NFA vision statement: “*Canada, a society for all ages, promotes the well-being of seniors, recognizes their valuable contributions and reflects the goals of elimination of ageism in all sectors*”. The policy guide described the NFA’s five key principles for creating policies for older adults: dignity, independence, participation, fairness and security and provided a set of policy questions to guide the application of these principles across government policies. These principles can be found in both current federal and provincial frameworks and are restated in an updated version of the policy guide *The Seniors Policy Handbook: A guide for developing and evaluating policies and programs for seniors*. (F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2009).

The F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors released several documents on a variety of issues related to older Canadians. The *Healthy Aging in Canada: A New Vision, A Vital Investment*

discussion paper (F/P/Territorial Committee of Officials, 2006) focused on health, wellness and security through proposed initiatives aimed at improving social connectedness, physical activity, healthy eating, falls prevention and tobacco control. The *Working Together for Seniors: Toolkit to promote seniors' social integration in community services, programs and policies* (F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2007b) focused on social isolation among seniors, suggesting ways in which organizations can promote social inclusion.

*Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide* (F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors, 2007a) was the first federal government initiative inspired by the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Age-friendly Cities project, launched in 2006. Based on a research project conducted in 10 communities across 8 provinces with populations of 600 to 5000, the guide highlights findings from the study using the framework from the WHO Age-friendly Cities Guide (WHO, 2007). This framework contains 8 themes: (1) outdoor spaces and buildings; (2) transportation; (3) housing; (4) respect and social inclusion; (5) social participation; (6) civic participation and employment opportunities; (7) communication and information; and (8) community support and health services. From 2007 to present, almost all provinces and territories continue to carry out age-friendly initiatives and many frameworks, policies, and programs are built around the Age-friendly concept. Information resources available from the WHO and both provincial and federal governments continue to be of significant use for developing programs in this area. Figure 1 provides a description of the eight Age-friendly Community features.

**Figure 1.** Features of an Age-friendly community

***Eight key features of an Age-friendly community:***

- ***Outdoor spaces*** and public buildings that are pleasant, clean, secure and physically accessible
- ***Public transportation*** that is accessible and affordable
- ***Housing*** that is affordable, appropriately located, well built, well designed and secure
- Opportunities for ***social participation*** in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages and cultures
- Older people are treated with ***respect*** and are included in civic life
- Opportunities for ***employment and volunteerism*** that cater to older persons' interests and abilities
- Age-friendly ***communication and information*** is available
- ***Community support and health services*** are tailored to older persons' needs

Source: World Health Organization (WHO) *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*

In 2009 the Special Senate Committee on Aging released the final report of a three year study reviewing the programs, services and supports in place to serve Canada’s current and future older adult population. In *Canada’s Aging Population: Seizing the Opportunity* (Government of Canada, 2009) the committee identified gaps and implications for future needs as the population ages. Seniors’ organizations across Canada were solicited for input across four broad themes: defining seniors; the diversity of seniors and their needs; promising approaches; and the role of the federal government. Following two interim reports, a series of public hearings was held on a range of potential options. The final report “set out a comprehensive vision for government, organizations and individuals to embrace the challenges of an aging population” (Government of Canada, 2009, p.1) with 32 recommendations across five key action areas.

A recent document released by the Government of Canada is the *Action for Seniors Report* (Government of Canada, 2014). The report identifies six key priority areas: (1) ensuring financial security for seniors; (2) enabling active participation in the labour force and the community; (3) helping seniors to age in place; (4) healthy and active aging; (5) combating elder abuse; and (6) ensuring seniors have access to information, services and benefits. Initiatives supported include the New Horizons for Seniors Program which promotes community involvement through community-based projects for seniors, support for the Age-friendly Communities initiative, and development of the [canada.ca/seniors](http://canada.ca/seniors) website which offers information on federal, provincial, territorial and some municipal government benefits and services for seniors.

**Table 1: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Federal Government**

Ministry or Dept. / Year	Framework Description
<b>Minister of State (Seniors) 2014</b>	<p><b>Government of Canada - Action for Seniors Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created by the Minister of State (Seniors) to provide the Cabinet with a current perspective of seniors’ issues.</li> <li>• Six priority themes:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensuring financial security for seniors</li> <li>2. Enabling active participation in the labour force and the community</li> <li>3. Helping seniors to age in place</li> <li>4. Healthy and active aging</li> <li>5. Combating elder abuse</li> <li>6. Ensuring seniors have access to information, services and benefits</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Ministry or Dept. / Year	Framework Description
<p><b>Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors</b></p> <p><b>2009</b></p>	<p><b>The Seniors Policy Handbook: A guide for developing and evaluating policies and programs for seniors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated version of the 1998 Principles of the National Framework on Aging</li> <li>Targeted at those involved in policy and program planning in areas that directly or indirectly affect seniors, handbook provides step-by-step process and guidelines for analyzing programs and policies through a seniors' lens</li> </ul>
<p><b>Special Senate Committee on Aging</b></p> <p><b>2009</b></p> <p><b>Senate of Canada</b></p>	<p><b>Canada's Aging Population: Seizing the Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final report of the Special Senate Committee on Aging that examined a wide range of seniors' issues</li> <li>32 specific and five key action recommendations to address gaps and "create conditions so Canadians have access to services that will give them choices as they age"</li> <li>Key Actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote active aging, healthy aging, combat ageism</li> <li>Coordinate strategies and funding transfers to provinces with highest aging populations</li> <li>Address needs of older workers, pension reform, income security</li> <li>Facilitate aging in place with housing, transportation, integrated health &amp; social care services</li> <li>Implement immediate changes for populations under its jurisdiction</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors</b></p> <p><b>2007</b></p> <p><b>Public Health Agency of Canada</b></p>	<p><b>Age-Friendly Rural/Remote Communities Initiative and Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modeled after WHO Age Friendly Cities project, study of 10 communities in 8 provinces to identify elements of age-friendly rural communities (Turtleford, SK participated)</li> <li>Themes: outdoor spaces/buildings, transportation, housing, respect and social inclusion, social, civic and employment participation, communication, community support, health services</li> <li>Guide created to assist jurisdictions to identify barriers and find solutions to make their communities more age-friendly and supportive environments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors</b></p> <p><b>2006</b></p> <p><b>Public Health Agency of Canada</b></p>	<p><b>Healthy Aging in Canada: A New Vision, A Vital Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion brief to provide rationale and evidence for investing in healthy aging and describe mechanisms for action</li> <li>Principles: dignity, independence, participation, fairness, security</li> <li>Mechanisms: supportive environments, mutual aid, self-care</li> <li>Strategies: educate leaders/professionals in health, recreation, urban planning, etc. on healthy aging ; build capacity among seniors' groups; support research and knowledge transfer</li> <li>Focus areas: social connectedness, physical activity, healthy eating, falls prevention, tobacco control</li> </ul>

Ministry or Dept. / Year	Framework Description
<p><b>Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors</b></p> <p><b>1998</b></p> <p><b>Public Health Agency of Canada</b></p>	<p><b>Principles of the National Framework on Aging: A Policy Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework guide to apply NFA principles in development of policies and programs relevant to seniors</li> <li>• Principles: dignity, participation, fairness, security</li> <li>• Mechanisms: policy guide, access database of programs</li> <li>• Strategies: create policies/programs relevant to seniors through research and evaluation, and determinants of health approach</li> </ul>
<p><b>Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors</b></p> <p><b>1994</b></p> <p><b>Public Health Agency of Canada</b></p>	<p><b>National Framework on Aging</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundation document for Principals of the National Framework on Aging: A Policy Guide</li> <li>• Principles: dignity, participation, fairness, security</li> <li>• Four Pillars – policies applied/delivered through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- health care system</li> <li>- income and social programs</li> <li>- health promotion</li> <li>- past and current aging/seniors initiatives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

### *British Columbia*

In 2005 the British Columbia (B.C.) Ministry of Health launched their first healthy aging policy and planning framework: *Healthy Aging through Healthy Living* (Government of British Columbia, 2005) which built on the *ActNow BC* integrated health promotion and chronic disease prevention strategy. This was the first step of a strategic redesign and new vision for a health system aimed at supporting British Columbians throughout their lives, with a focus on prevention rather than acute care. That same year, the B.C. government created the Premier’s Council on Aging and Seniors’ Issues, responsible for identifying how to best support seniors’ independence, health and participation in society. This led to the *Aging Well in British Columbia Report* (Government of British Columbia, 2006) detailing 16 recommendations for change. Specific recommendations targeting rural older adults contained in the report included: creating neighbourhoods and communities that support older people to maintain their social networks and ability to age in place, improving access to transportation, and developing innovative solutions in order to provide quality health services.

Building on the initiatives and recommendations set in motion by the *Aging Well in British Columbia Report*, the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport released *Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework* (Government of British Columbia, 2008). This framework set the stage for the continued progress of the Age-friendly Communities program by increasing government support through the provision of tools and incentives for communities. The Age-friendly Community program was initially launched in 2007 after two rural B.C. communities participated in the Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities initiative. This remains a strong initiative across B.C. to date, with the provincial government committing \$500,000 in 2016 alone for Age-friendly Community Planning and Project grants to help local governments establish or continue projects and community planning. The framework also highlighted the importance of the continued progress of the Healthy Living for Seniors initiative which continues to build on *ActNow BC*. One significant initiative included the investment of \$1.8 million to 18 communities across B.C. to establish Seniors' Community Parks, aimed at keeping older adults physically active and healthy in their communities. Additionally, in response to suggestions made by the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors, the B.C. government also established the Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat within the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, which would be responsible for leading the implementation of the framework and for monitoring and reporting on progress.

In 2011, a Minister of State for Seniors was appointed and in collaboration with the Minister of Health became responsible for leading the implementation and development of programs, services and provision of information for seniors. This led to *Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan* (2012) which detailed six key themes to improve seniors' care. Importantly, this action plan introduced the establishment of an Office of the Seniors' Advocate, making B.C. the first province in Canada to establish such a position. The position was officially appointed in 2014 and is responsible for information and referral, monitoring B.C.'s senior's services, developing key indicators of seniors' service delivery and reporting. The 2014 progress report of the *Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan* (Government of British Columbia, 2014) highlights the positive progress made on action items, with almost all of the action items completed to date.



**Table 2: Healthy Aging Frameworks – British Columbia**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2012</b> <b>Ministry of Health</b></p>	<p><b>Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action 1: Concerns and complaints (establish Office of the Seniors' Advocate)</li> <li>• Action 2: Information (Enhanced www.SeniorsBC.ca; added more online information; Updated BC Seniors' Guide)</li> <li>• Action 3: Standards and Quality Management (establish consistent province-wide standards for residential care services)</li> <li>• Action 4: Protection (from abuse and neglect)</li> <li>• Action 5: Flexible Services (important to have access to the majority of care needs and support within your own community)</li> <li>• Action 6: Modernization (modernize and renew B.C.'s home and community care system)</li> </ul>
<p><b>2008</b> <b>Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors</b></p>	<p><b>Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework to promote health and well-being of seniors</li> <li>• Seniors Healthy Living Secretariat created to implement framework</li> <li>• Four cornerstones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- create age-friendly communities</li> <li>- mobilize and support volunteerism</li> <li>- promote healthy living</li> <li>- support older workers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Includes a focus on non-medical home support services</li> <li>• Accountability component with progress report issued in 2010 &amp; 2011</li> </ul>
<p><b>2006</b> <b>Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues</b></p>	<p><b>Aging Well in British Columbia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five Key Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change the Human Rights Code to extend human rights protections to those over the age of 65, thereby eliminating mandatory retirement in B.C.</li> <li>- Enhance healthy living initiatives focused on older adults, customized for British Columbia's diverse population</li> <li>- Introduce a new, broader and more widely available home support system</li> <li>- Implement aggressive quality improvement initiatives across health system in a culturally appropriate way</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Appoint a Minister of State and secretariat to lead changes needed to adapt to an older population and monitor and report on progress</li> </ul>
<p><b>2005</b> <b>B.C. Ministry of Health</b></p>	<p><b>Healthy Aging through Healthy Living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five Key Priority Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Healthy Eating</li> <li>- Injury Prevention</li> <li>- Physical Activity</li> <li>- Tobacco Cessation</li> <li>- Social Connectedness</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Goal was to move toward a more sustainable health system focused on prevention to alleviate overcrowded hospitals and wait lists</li> </ul>

## Alberta

In 2008, the Alberta government released two reports: *Demographic Planning Commission: Findings Report* (Government of Alberta, 2008b) and *Continuing Care Strategy: Aging in the Right Place* (Government of Alberta, 2008a). The Demographic Planning Commission was responsible for creating the foundations for the development of an aging population policy framework, receiving input from over 10,000 Albertans and 100 stakeholder organizations who expressed their concerns and opinions on current and future needs of seniors. Issues highlighted by the commission became the basis of Alberta's *Aging Population Policy Framework* (Government of Alberta, 2010). The framework incorporated existing initiatives and partnerships, including the 2008 Continuing Care Strategy which was unique in that it built strategies for 'aging in place' into its continuing care system. Other Initiatives included investing in supports such as creating funds for community initiatives and health system navigation.

The *Aging Population Policy Framework* took a cross-ministerial approach, incorporating eight key outcomes that support seniors' ability to age in place into initiatives already started by a number of ministries. These include support for Alberta's participation in the WHO Age-friendly Communities initiative. Although the Government of Alberta has provided no direct funding for the Age-friendly Communities Initiative, its website provides a list of alternative funding options available through other programs which could be used to support age-friendly initiatives. They have also created guides for communities and businesses, and established an Age-friendly Alberta Recognition Award which was first issued in 2013.

Government bodies responsible for advising the province on matters related to Alberta's seniors include the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and a Senior's Advocate. The Council was established in 2000 as an appointed body and currently reports through the Minister of Seniors and Housing. It is responsible for collecting information on issues important to seniors by consulting the public and stake holders, and publishes an annual report with suggested directions and feedback. The recommendations, gathered through a consultation process, are used to develop policies, legislation and coordinate programs and services for seniors. The Council's report for 2014-2015 identified key issues existing in transportation, affordable accommodation and aging at home. The Senior's Advocate was established in 2014. As one of Alberta's health advocates they are responsible for patient navigation, public education on the rights, interests and needs of

seniors, as well as requesting inspections, investigations and safety assessments related to seniors' care facilities.

**Table 3: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Alberta**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2015</b></p> <p><b>Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta</b></p>	<p><b>Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta: Annual Report 2014-2015</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified Key Issues:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transportation</li> <li>- Affordable Accommodation</li> <li>- Aging at Home</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Council's Advice to Government:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seniors' Sexual Health</li> <li>- Special Need Assistance for Seniors Program (Medical Trips)</li> <li>- Quality of Meal Services</li> <li>- Health and Supportive Living Standards</li> <li>- Funding for Community Agencies and Services for Seniors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2010</b></p> <p><b>Alberta Health</b></p>	<p><b>Aging Population Policy Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-ministerial framework for coordinated policies, programs and services to meet changing needs of aging population (includes rural perspectives)</li> <li>• Guiding principles: fair and equitable to future generations; encourage independence; proactive, flexible; outcome oriented; affordable; effective and efficient; designed to assist those most in need; evidence based; community collaborative; respects individual choice</li> <li>• 8 key theme areas:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial security and income</li> <li>2. Housing and aging in the right place</li> <li>3. Continuing care</li> <li>4. Healthy aging and health care</li> <li>5. Transportation and mobility</li> <li>6. Safety and security</li> <li>7. Supportive communities</li> <li>8. Access to government</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2008</b></p> <p><b>Alberta Health</b></p>	<p><b>Continuing Care Strategy – Aging in the Right Place</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic approach to developing new service delivery models to provide more choices to remain in homes and communities</li> <li>• Guiding principles: respect and dignity; information to make responsible choices; quality living supported by family, community, services and settings</li> <li>• Includes five strategic directions, initiatives and implementation plan:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investing in community supports</li> <li>2. Building infrastructure to support 'aging in place' vision</li> <li>3. Changing the way long-term accommodations are paid for</li> <li>4. Options to fund individuals and/or providers, based on needs</li> <li>5. Providing equitable drug coverage for people, wherever they live</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

## *Saskatchewan*

Initially the Government of Saskatchewan was a leader in developing strategies for an aging population, appointing the Provincial Advisory Committee of Older Persons in 2000 and developing *A Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan for Older Persons* (Government of Saskatchewan, 2003). This plan identified the needs and concerns of Saskatchewan's seniors, with a clear set of recommendations for future directions. The Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Seniors was to be responsible for facilitating effective and appropriate programming and services for older persons, and creating an implementation plan. No follow-up reports or information releases could be found regarding enactment of this initial 2003 action plan.

The development of a seniors care strategy was announced by the Government of Saskatchewan in 2007, but remains in progress. In 2010 the *Focus on the Future: Long Term Care Initiative* report (Government of Saskatchewan, 2010) was released with recommendations based on public consultations of 450 older adults and health-care professionals from each of the regional health authorities at the time. The report investigated five areas including targeted funding for home care supports, creation of a seniors' secretariat and council of seniors and awareness campaigns aimed at falls prevention and elder abuse. Two priority areas arose from this report: accessibility to personal care homes and home care supports. It was largely left to the regional health authorities (RHAs) to follow through on these initiatives. It was suggested that a Council of Seniors be established, however, no Seniors' Secretariat or Council of Seniors exists to date, at least not to the public's knowledge. The Government of Saskatchewan website includes information for seniors on housing, finances and home care, but no other healthy aging initiatives or information links are provided.

In May 2018 the Minister of Health announced an Age-friendly community recognition program. The Age-friendly initiative has been implemented by the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, a non-profit organization that advocates for issues related to older adults in the province.

**Table 4: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Saskatchewan**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2010</b> <b>Minister of Health</b></p>	<p><b>Focus on the Future: Long-Term Care Initiative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Areas of Discussion (and Recommendations):               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Personal care homes (Subsidy needed, more frequent inspections, more information)</li> <li>2) Home care supports (Inadequate level of homemaking and home maintenance services , no consistent care providers)</li> <li>3) Establishing a seniors’ secretariat ( inquiry line needed, but no development needed of a seniors’ secretariat)</li> <li>4) Falls Prevention (Increased awareness and education, coordination of falls prevention resources at a provincial level)</li> <li>5) Abuse of older adults (Increased awareness and education)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2003</b> <b>Saskatchewan Health</b></p>	<p><b>Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan for Older Persons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed by Saskatchewan Provincial Advisory Committee of Older Persons</li> <li>• 6 goals:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ensure provision of and access to affordable and supportive housing and services for older persons.</li> <li>2) Provide safe and affordable transportation for older persons.</li> <li>3) Ensure the access and availability to the continuum of quality and appropriate health care services for all older persons.</li> <li>4) Promote active living and lifelong learning.</li> <li>5) Enhance the recognition of contributions of older persons.</li> <li>6) Ensure the safety and security of all older persons.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

## **Manitoba**

The Government of Manitoba does not have a distinct set of policies in place for healthy aging, but instead has made efforts to partner with non-governmental organizations in order to create a number of cohesive initiatives targeting older adults. The Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat (SHAS, formerly Seniors Directorate) is part of the Department of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, and is central to creating and maintaining these connections. SHAS is also a central information source for seniors, their families, caregivers, seniors’ organizations and government departments. SHAS is largely responsible, alongside the Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors, for ensuring seniors’ needs are considered in all aspects of government policy, programs and law. Another important group, closely associated with the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat, is the Manitoba Council on Aging which was established in 1980 and currently acts as an advisory body to the Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors. The council is responsible for providing the Minister

with information and advice regarding programs, services, policies and legislation related to the needs and interests of older adults.

The Age-friendly Manitoba Initiative (AFMI), launched in 2008, is an example of a successful government and NGO co-operative. AFMI is led by the Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat in partnership with the University of Manitoba Centre on Aging, but has connections with other organizations as well. The involvement of organizations such as the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, the Active Living Coalition of Older Adults (ALCOA-MB), Creative Retirement Manitoba, Age and Opportunity, Manitoba Association of Multi-Purpose Senior Centers, and Manitoba Society of Seniors, contributes to the success and sustainability of AFMI initiatives. This collective co-operation between government and non-government organizations has led to the creation of an abundance of resources available to communities across Manitoba, including a milestone recognition program and community grants. This collaborative environment also led to the creation of the Transportation Options Network for Seniors (TONS), an initiative that brought together stakeholders from both the private and public transportation sectors to provide transportation options for seniors throughout the province.

The Manitoba Government has also made efforts within a number of their core programs and policies to specifically identify supports needed for older adults, including housing. Resources such as a housing guide and a dedicated website page provide information on a variety of housing options with an emphasis on aging in place. A supportive housing initiative covers the cost of personal care for residents living in a community, while those in senior housing can receive enhanced supports at no charge.

An important landmark for the Government of Manitoba was the development of the Caregiver Recognition Act, proclaimed by the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba 2011, making the province the first in Canada with legislation recognizing caregivers. The coordination of activities surrounding the Act is carried out by the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat with the aid of the Caregiver Advisory Committee, which has released a follow up report on achievements accomplished under the Act (Government of Manitoba, 2015). Recognizing that caregivers are critical to the well-being of communities, the Act acknowledges their importance and aims to provide additional supports in the future, including a Primary Caregiver Tax Credit.

**Table 5: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Manitoba**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2015</b> <b>Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors</b></p>	<p><b>Caregiver Recognition Act: Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Caregiver Tax Credit</li> <li>• Recognition of the roles that caregivers play</li> <li>• Public education and information provision on supports available to caregivers and older adults</li> <li>• Caregiver Recognition Day</li> <li>• Caregiver Advisory Committee established</li> </ul>
<p><b>2009</b> <b>Manitoba Health</b></p>	<p><b>Aging in Place: Housing Options for Older Manitobans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central principle in planning of government housing and long-term care initiatives</li> <li>• Provides affordable alternatives to prevent premature personal care home placement</li> <li>• <i>Supports to Seniors in Group Living</i> provides enhanced supports for seniors living in existing seniors housing</li> <li>• <i>Supportive Housing</i> provides 24 hour support and supervision in an apartment setting within the community</li> </ul>
<p><b>2008</b> <b>Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat</b></p>	<p><b>Age Friendly Manitoba Initiative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modeled after WHO Age-friendly Communities projects</li> <li>• Participating communities meet milestones and are designated ‘age-friendly’ by designing policies, programs and services that support seniors to lead active, socially engaged, independent lives</li> <li>• Key Partners promote and contribute to the goals of the initiative; include Association of Manitoba Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Rural Development Institute, University of Manitoba’s Centre on Aging, the Manitoba Association of Seniors Centres, and other NGO organizations</li> <li>• Well designed and comprehensive website supports initiative with extensive information on program, activities and innovative solutions</li> </ul>
<p><b>2007</b> <b>Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat</b></p>	<p><b>Healthy Aging Strategy (Active Living Coalition for Older Adults)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership of organizations and supporting partners committed to promote active aging</li> <li>• Key component is training peer leader ambassadors to encourage and engage other seniors</li> <li>• Raises awareness and education; reviews, shares and disseminates information; loans equipment locally; hosts provincial 55+ games</li> </ul>

## Ontario

In 2017 Ontario's Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility (formerly Ontario Senior's Secretariat) released *Aging with Confidence: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors*, (Government of Ontario, 2017) built upon the successful initiatives of the province's first cohesive strategy, *Independence, Activity and Good Health: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors* released in 2013 (Government of Ontario, 2013). The 2013 action plan set out three main goals: (1) improve access to health care services to allow older adults to stay in their home longer and improve their quality of life; (2) promote the development of age-friendly communities; and (3) provide programs, services and supports that help seniors live safely, independently and with dignity. The 2017 action plan updates the progress on these goals, and establishes four guiding principles for continued actions: (1) inclusion; (2) diversity; (3) choice and self-determination; and (4) safety and security. Initiatives include easier access to information through a comprehensive website; improving community transportation; increasing support for Age-friendly Communities; elder abuse education and consumer protection programs; and supports to help seniors remain in their communities, including social engagement initiatives, assistance with technology, and increasing housing and health care supports.

Prior to the 2013 action plan a number of initiatives existed, but lacked an overarching framework for addressing the needs of seniors. This plan brought together government ministries and external organizations in a coordinated plan for service delivery and communication, primarily informed by the *Living Longer, Living Well* (Sinha, 2012) report which provided a number of recommendations following a jurisdictional review of existing strategies, inter-ministerial consultations, and comprehensive public consultations. The 2013 action plan was also built on a number of existing programs including: *Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care* (Government of Ontario, 2012) focused on improving community care and home care; *Aging at Home Strategy* (2007) addressing community-based services; and the Ontario Trillium Foundation which provides grants for projects to help seniors remain active, healthy and engaged in their communities.

Ontario's Age-friendly Initiative began in 2010 with the partnering of the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat with the University of Waterloo, the Ontario Interdisciplinary Council on Aging and Health (OICAH), and the Seniors Health Knowledge Network (SHKN). Together these organizations were responsible for administering the initiative, providing support through Age-friendly grants, and assisting with development of programs. Recently, there have been additional funds devoted to Age-friendly Community Planning Grants and a Francophone Age-friendly Initiative.



**Table 6: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Ontario**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2017</b> <b>Government of Ontario</b></p>	<p><b>Aging with Confidence: Ontario’s Action Plan for Seniors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging with Confidence builds on successful initiatives that were launched through Ontario’s 2013 Action Plan for Seniors</li> <li>• Guiding principles               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inclusion</li> <li>2. Diversity</li> <li>3. Choice &amp; Self-Determination</li> <li>4. Safety and Security</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2013</b> <b>Ontario Seniors’ Secretariat</b></p>	<p><b>Independence, Activity and Good Health: Ontario’s Action Plan for Seniors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overarching plan that provides a framework for addressing the needs of vulnerable seniors, while supporting active, healthy aging for the broader senior population</li> <li>• Based on recommendations from Living Longer, Living Well report</li> <li>• Identifies three main goals, and programs/initiatives to meet them:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Healthy Seniors: help seniors find and access the health care services they need to be healthier and stay at home longer</li> <li>2. Senior-Friendly Communities: promote and develop age-friendly communities</li> <li>3. Safety and Security: put in place programs, services and supports to help seniors live safely, independently, and with dignity</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2012</b> <b>Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care</b></p>	<p><b>Living Longer, Living Well</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to inform the Ontario Government’s Seniors Strategy; recommendations cover health and wellness, social services, and community living (includes rural perspective)</li> <li>• Principles: access, equity, choice, value and quality</li> <li>• Key recommendations:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote health and wellness</li> <li>- Strengthen primary care for older adults</li> <li>- Enhance home and community care services</li> <li>- Improve acute care for elders (senior-friendly hospitals)</li> <li>- Enhance long-term care home environments</li> <li>- Address specialized care needs of older adults</li> <li>- Medication management</li> <li>- Support caregivers</li> <li>- Address ageism and elder abuse</li> <li>- Address unique needs of older Aboriginal peoples</li> <li>- Support development of elder-friendly communities</li> <li>- Develop enablers to support seniors strategy</li> <li>- Establish a mandate for implementation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2007</b> <b>Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care</b></p>	<p><b>Aging at Home Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four year \$700M strategy to expand community living options and deliver integrated continuum of community-based services</li> <li>• Delivered through Ontario’s 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), covers community support services, home care, assistive devices, supportive housing, long-term care beds, end-of-life care</li> <li>• Focus on locally developed projects and innovative projects/ partnerships implemented across health care sectors</li> </ul>

## Quebec

In 2012 the Government of Quebec, led by the Minister responsible for Seniors, released its first policy on aging; *Aging and Living Together: At home, in one's community, in Quebec* (Gouvernement du Quebec, 2012). Based on the World Health Organization active aging framework (World Health Organization, 2002) this policy is centered on three main issues: social participation, healthy living, and creating a safe and welcoming environment within communities. This five-year action plan is the result of a cumulative effort by 16 government departments and agencies, with the additional input of nearly 40 non-governmental organizations. The action plan consists of three main components: (1) financial support for projects which enable seniors to age well at home and in their community; (2) support for Age-friendly Communities action plans; and (3) support for community action regarding the implementation of Age-friendly action plans. An investment of \$2.7 billion over five years was made to support a number of projects including the development of outreach initiatives and the hiring of outreach workers, a work-retirement balance program, additional home supports, and an investment in health promotion and disability prevention programs.

Age-friendly Community (AFC) programs continue to be supported through the action plan. Quebec was one of the first adopters of the AFC initiatives and hundreds of municipalities across Quebec are participating, including large cities, through an adaptation of the AFC approach. Since 2007 the combined efforts of the Government of Quebec and the Research Centre on Aging at the Université de Sherbrooke have provided financial and resource support to municipalities that undertake AFC initiatives. Support continued to be provided with the goal of implementing AFC initiatives in nearly 860 municipalities by 2017.

**Table 7: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Quebec**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2012</b> <b>Quebec Ministry of the Family and Seniors</b></p>	<p><b>Aging and Living Together: At Home, in One’s Community, in Quebec</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive policy and action plan to create conditions enabling older adults to live at home and in their community as long as possible</li> <li>• Based on WHO active aging framework, includes set of strategic choices and actions under three pillars (directions):               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participation in one’s community</li> <li>2. Leading a healthy life</li> <li>3. Creating healthy, safe and welcoming environments</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Two component approach:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- inter-sectoral participation and partnerships</li> <li>- community development</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Action principles: respect diversity of seniors; promote empowerment of seniors and communities; ensure inter-generational fairness; strengthen, adapt and innovate (on existing actions and practices)</li> <li>• \$2.7B over 5 years including funding for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Age-friendly Quebec Program</li> <li>- Program to Develop Outreach Initiatives for Vulnerable Seniors</li> <li>- Work-Retirement Balance Program</li> <li>- Strategy for active participation by experienced workers</li> <li>- Home support initiatives</li> <li>- Residential and accommodation initiatives</li> <li>- Tax incentives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### ***New Brunswick***

In 2007 a Minister of State for Seniors was appointed to improve representation for seniors within the Government of New Brunswick and by 2008 a long term care strategy was released. The 10-year *Be Independent. Longer* strategy (Government of New Brunswick, 2008) reflects a shift away from institutional care to a focus on keeping seniors in their homes and communities. A strong emphasis was placed on promoting active, healthy living and support for caregivers in an attempt to enhance community level support and reduce the need for more costly long-term care services. A Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat was established to co-ordinate the implementation of the strategy. In 2009 a progress report *Being there for Seniors: Our Progress in Long-Term Care* (Government of New Brunswick, 2009) was released highlighting a number of important programs and initiatives being launched. Notable programs included the development of Seniors’ Community Resource Centres to provide access to information on healthy lifestyles, illness prevention, disease management, and program eligibility. The centres also provide services such as foot-care clinics, blood-pressure clinics, and care-giving workshops. Increased home supports were also

implemented as part of the strategy including the Extra-Mural Program where individuals can receive short-term home support services for up to 30 days. This support allows clients to return home while waiting for a long-term care assessment, preventing unnecessary hospitalization. The government also subsidized day-activity centres to provide daytime accommodations and activities while family caregivers attend work, personal appointments or errands.

A change in government in 2010 led to the creation of the Premier's Panel on Seniors, which released a report *Living Healthy, Aging Well* (Government of New Brunswick, 2012). The report follows the principles contained in the World Health Organization active aging framework (World Health Organization, 2002) recommending a framework and actions to support healthy aging through policy supports, engagement with communities, and a legislative agenda. Building on this framework, a summit on aging and seniors in New Brunswick was held in order to develop an action plan. The published report: *Living Healthy, Aging Well – What was Heard* (Government of New Brunswick, 2013) highlights important themes discussed, including the importance of programs covering all facets of well-being: mental, physical and social and the need for government to do more to facilitate initiatives between government and non-governmental bodies in providing recreation services for healthy aging. They also expressed a need for more inter-generational activities, community driven projects, and greater public awareness of government and community-based initiatives for senior activities. However, following a government change in 2014, no new senior specific strategies have been released; instead, the *New Brunswick Wellness Strategy 2014-2021* (Government of New Brunswick, 2014) was developed. Although not specific to seniors, this strategy is built on a framework that aims to enable all residents of New Brunswick, from infants to seniors, to live well. The strategy calls for the development of inter-generational programs and a focus on inclusiveness and equity.

The most recent strategy *We Are All in This Together: An Aging Strategy for New Brunswick* (Government of New Brunswick, 2017) was developed by the 17-member New Brunswick Council on Aging, who were directed to develop both a short term strategy (1-3 years) and a long term strategy (10+ years) to address the needs of older adults. This is the first example of a provincial government report that acknowledges the specific needs of First Nations older adults. The report highlights the importance of supporting age friendly communities, supporting independence and self-management, and addressing community and family supports for health and wellbeing.

**Table 8: Healthy Aging Frameworks – New Brunswick**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2017</b> <b>New Brunswick Council on Aging</b></p>	<p><b>We are all in this together: An Aging Strategy for New Brunswick</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three main goals, each goal has four initiatives, and each initiative has several actions:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enable seniors to live independently (Self-management, community-based health and wellness, family and community, and age-friendly communities)</li> <li>2. Achieve sustainability and innovation (System and policy renewal, shared financial responsibility, research and innovation, and technology enablement).</li> <li>3. Embrace a provincial culture of person-centred care and support (Care workforce management and training, access to care and services, person-centred care and coordination, and System navigation and community support).</li> </ol> </li> <li>• 10 Core Goals (slightly modified from 2012 living Healthy, Aging Well report) : respect, collaboration, meaningful participation, age-friendly communities, equity, independence, choices in aging, lifelong learning, wellness, and continuum of care</li> </ul>
<p><b>2012</b> <b>New Brunswick Premier’s Panel on Seniors</b></p>	<p><b>Living Healthy, Aging Well</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundational Principle: That New Brunswick be a place where aging is a positive experience because we value, respect and recognize the integral role older adults play in our families, in our communities and in our society</li> <li>• 10 Core Goals: respect, collaboration, meaningful work, age-friendly communities, equity, independence, age in place, lifelong learning, wellness, and continuum of care</li> <li>• Includes appointing a minister responsible for aging, creating an aging secretariat and charter of rights for older persons</li> <li>• Cornerstones are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active Aging</li> <li>- Age-friendly Communities</li> <li>- Continuum of Care Strategy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2008</b> <b>Ministry of Social Development Minister of State for Seniors</b></p>	<p><b>Be Independent. Longer. New Brunswick’s Long Term Care Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 year strategy to be implemented by 2018</li> <li>• Focused on efforts to keep seniors out of the long-term care system for as long as possible</li> <li>• Set of goals and action plans in each of five themes:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Informal caregivers</li> <li>2) Formal caregivers</li> <li>3) Affordability and sustainability</li> <li>4) Quality of service delivery</li> <li>5) Quality of care</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Healthy aging in place supports include increased home care options (i.e. home maintenance, snow removal, transportation); use of technology in the home (i.e. health monitoring sensors); and providing funds directly to individuals to purchase services</li> </ul>

## *Nova Scotia*

The development of a seniors' strategy in Nova Scotia began with the release of *Discussion Paper for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia* in 2004 (Government of Nova Scotia, 2004). Created by the Task Force on Aging led by the Senior Citizens' Secretariat, this paper introduced nine positive aging goals and was designed to give the public opportunity to respond to the discussion paper. The release of the paper was followed by an extensive public consultation process including public meetings across the province to discuss the paper. After this extensive period of consultation the *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia* (Government of Nova Scotia, 2005) was released and remains as a guide for continued program and policy development in the province. The strategy incorporates the social determinants of health as defined by the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2003) as a critical part of its framework, while also promoting collaboration among government, business, not-for-profit organizations and community groups. Goals of the strategy include promoting health and well-being, supported living, transportation, and supportive communities.

Over the years, a number of projects and programs have been developed to meet the mandate of this Strategy. *Connecting Seniors to Active Living Project* (Government of Nova Scotia, 2007) developed by Recreation Nova Scotia is one such project, focused on the need to increase active living. A stakeholder survey and focus group with seniors was conducted and followed up with a number of recommendations to support seniors in leading healthy, active and productive lives. Recommendations included greater public awareness of the opportunities available for physical activity as well as the need for more 'senior friendly' opportunities, along with increased infrastructure to support active living and promote active transportation.

In 2010 a memorandum of understanding between the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) and the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors *Promoting and Developing Age-friendly Communities* (Government of Nova Scotia, 2010) was created in order to promote a cohesive Age-friendly Community strategy. The memorandum detailed three grants implemented by the Department of Seniors: the Positive Aging Fund, the Age-friendly Communities Program and the Senior Safety Grant. The memorandum and grants were aimed at supporting the implementation of age-friendly initiatives across Nova Scotia following the guidelines of the WHO's Age-friendly Cities program and the Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities Guide produced by the F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors. Under the agreement the government works in collaboration

with municipalities in the provision of information and resources to promote Age-friendly Communities.

The Department of Seniors released a *Statement of Mandate: 2015-2016* (Government of Nova Scotia, 2015) and while still following the *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia* and *Age-friendly Communities* framework, the mandate identifies three strategic goals: (1) To increase the age-friendliness of communities and promote active, healthy living; (2) to enable seniors to live in safe and supportive living environments, free from danger, fear and exploitation; and (3) to improve innovation and collaboration to ensure the diverse needs of seniors are met. These goals continue to follow the three grant initiatives implemented in 2010. The mandate also includes a number of performance measures to track the continued work towards age-friendly communities.

In 2017, the Nova Scotia government released the report *Shift: Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for an Aging Population* (Government of Nova Scotia, 2017). This report represents a shift in how seniors are defined; they specifically introduce the term ‘older adult’ as a more appropriate term. The report sets out goals to recognize the contribution of older adults, respond to needs with an inclusive, supportive population health approach, and support connection to community life through transportation, housing, and social connectedness. It highlights the importance of monitoring progress and sets out a detailed list of actions to be completed 2017/18 to 2020/21.

**Table 9: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Nova Scotia**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2017</b> <b>Nova Scotia Department of Seniors</b></p>	<p><b>Shift: Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for an Aging Population</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies three main goals               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Value the social and economic contributions of older adults</li> <li>2. Promote healthy, active living</li> <li>3. Support aging in place, connected to community life</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Identifies 12 major commitments               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Value older adults as entrepreneurs</li> <li>2. Value older adults in the workplace</li> <li>3. Value unpaid community and volunteer work</li> <li>4. Promote an inclusive and supportive population health approach</li> <li>5. Reduce the impact of poverty on health</li> <li>6. Promote physical activity and regular exercise</li> <li>7. Support community transportation</li> <li>8. Support appropriate, affordable housing</li> <li>9. Support age-friendly community planning</li> <li>10. Support social connections</li> <li>11. Base decisions and actions on evidence</li> <li>12. Learn from each other</li> </ol> </li> <li>• An implementation plan</li> </ul>

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2015-2016</b> <b>Department of Seniors</b></p>	<p><b>Statement of Mandate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia and Age-friendly Communities</li> <li>• 3 Strategic Goals:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To increase the age-friendliness of communities and promote active, healthy living</li> <li>2. To enable seniors to live in safe and supportive living environments, free from danger, fear and exploitation</li> <li>3. To improve innovation and collaboration to ensure the diverse needs of seniors are met</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Mandate includes a number of performance measures</li> </ul>
<p><b>2005</b> <b>Nova Scotia Department of Seniors</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-sectoral strategy addressing every aspect of society (includes rural perspective); contains 190 societal actions to meet 9 goals:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- celebrating seniors</li> <li>- financial security</li> <li>- health and well-being</li> <li>- maximizing independence</li> <li>- housing options</li> <li>- transportation</li> <li>- respecting diversity</li> <li>- employment and life transitions</li> <li>- supportive communities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Series of grants across sectors:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive Aging Grants – fund community projects advancing strategy</li> <li>- Senior Safety Grants – fund projects addressing health and safety</li> <li>- Age-friendly Community Grants – fund AFC committees or projects</li> <li>- Seniors Literacy and Learning Grants – fund upgrading programs</li> <li>- Community Champions Grants – fund elder abuse workshops</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### ***Prince Edward Island***

In 2008 Prince Edward Island conducted a review of its health care system and commissioned a report on projected trends and recommendations for the delivery of long term care in the province. Based on recommendations from these reports, the Department of Health released *Prince Edward Island’s Healthy Aging Strategy* (Government of Prince Edward Island, 2009). The strategy focused on seniors’ housing with enhancements to home care and expansion of long term care facilities, but did not specifically address active aging.

The province does, however, have a myriad of programs available to seniors and provides a considerable list of resources and information materials on their provincial website. Initiatives include Healthy Aging, which encompasses healthy eating, active living, mental health and safety;



Seniors Housing Program, covering home renovation programs and community care; and Planning for Aging in Place, which provides a variety of informational and support materials. Although there are no direct links to any Age-friendly Community initiatives, a public forum on the age-friendly community concept was held in 2009 producing a number of suggestions for development of an action plan, but nothing further has since been developed.

A review of the *Progress Report: Seniors' Secretariat 2011-2012* (Government of Prince Edward Island, 2012) seemed to indicate there was a clear action plan for seniors. Priority areas identified in this report include: ageism and promoting positive images of aging, age-friendly communities, mature workers and social isolation. There were also funds available for communities through the Seniors' Secretariat Community Grant Projects to promote healthy aging projects. Yearly progress reports are available on the Seniors' Secretariat site highlighting programs and initiatives underway for their senior population.

In 2018, the Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Family and Human Services jointly introduced *A Provincial Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors, and Caregivers Living on Prince Edward Island* (Government of Prince Edward Island, 2018). The action plan is guided by four frameworks: the social determinants of health, upstream approaches to health and wellness, age-friendly communities, and progressive change aimed at transformation. These frameworks support four priority pillars for action over the next three years. An Implementation Council will be created to explore opportunities for achieving the action plan and will report annually to the government departments on progress.

**Table 10: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Prince Edward Island**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p>2018</p> <p>Department of Health and Wellness</p> <p>Department of Family and Human Services</p>	<p><b>Promoting Wellness, Preserving Health: A Provincial Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors, and Caregivers Living on Prince Edward Island</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority pillars for action               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop and implement ‘home first’ age-in-place initiatives</li> <li>○ Incorporate an age-friendly approach to communities, housing, workplaces, and health care facilities</li> <li>○ Address ageism and support active aging</li> <li>○ Support upstream endeavors that address the social determinants of health</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>2009</p> <p>Department of Health</p>	<p><b>Prince Edward Island’s Healthy Aging Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term and continuing care strategy with focus on providing more community-based care to support seniors to remain independent in their homes and communities</li> <li>• Five areas (pillars) to be addressed:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manor replacement</li> <li>- Palliative home care drug pilot project</li> <li>- Enhanced home care</li> <li>- Expanded / improved long term care</li> <li>- Transition care (between hospital and home)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### ***Newfoundland and Labrador***

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador began identifying healthy aging as a priority in 2003 with the release of *Our Blueprint to the Future*, followed with establishment of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors in 2004, housed within the Department of Health and Community Services. The council then released a discussion paper *Healthy Aging for All in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2006) which was used as a tool for the development of a framework to support healthy aging. Following an extensive consultation process with over 1000 people across 17 communities, the *Provincial Healthy Aging: Policy Framework* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2007b) was released. The framework contains 28 goals under 6 priority directions: (1) recognition of older persons; (2) celebrating diversity; (3) supportive communities; (4) financial well-being; (5) health and well-being; and (6) employment, education and research. The *Provincial Healthy Aging: Implementation Plan* (2007a) followed, along with the formation of an Aging and Seniors Division with representation from seniors’ organizations. Located within the Department of Health and Community Services the Office for Aging and Seniors implemented a number of the framework goals through a multi-

faceted grants program. As well as supporting local and municipal projects and seniors organizations, grants are also available to directly fund healthy aging research at the university level.

In 2014 the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development was appointed Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors. The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors is still in existence with the Office for Aging and Seniors serving as its secretariat. The framework developed in 2007 continues to guide the development of legislation, policies, programs and services for older adults. The *Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework: Status Report* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2015) continues to follow the six priority directions, but also identified a number of advances and future directions including a focus on rural communities through the Age-friendly Newfoundland and Labrador program.

Launched in 2010 the program provides grants of \$200,000 annually for municipalities, Inuit community governments, First Nations, seniors' organizations, and retiree groups. There has also been continued implementation of \$1.3 million Age-friendly Transportation Project, launched in 2012 whose goal was to meet the needs of both those with disabilities and older adults to continue performing activities of daily life. Other important programs include the Provincial Home Repair Program for Aging in Place, the Newfoundland and Labrador Low-income Seniors Benefit Program, Health and Wellness Grants which includes grants for age-friendly initiatives, Age-friendly Workplaces, and a renewed long-term care strategy, *Close to Home*.

**Table 11: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Newfoundland and Labrador**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2015</b></p> <p><b>Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development</b></p>	<p><b>Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework: Status Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of the initial framework designed in 2007</li> <li>• Same 6 priority directions:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognition of older persons</li> <li>2. Celebrating diversity</li> <li>3. Supportive communities</li> <li>4. Financial Well-being</li> <li>5. Health and Well-being</li> <li>6. Employment, Education and Research</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2007</b></p> <p><b>Ministry of Health and Community Services</b></p>	<p><b>Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy framework provides policy directions and goals to support healthy aging (includes rural perspective)</li> <li>• Based on principles of dignity, self-fulfillment, social inclusion, independence, safety and security, and fairness</li> <li>• Six priority directions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognition of older persons</li> <li>- Celebrating diversity</li> <li>- Supportive communities</li> <li>- Financial well-being</li> <li>- Health and well-being</li> <li>- Employment, education and research</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Strategy included one year implementation plan</li> <li>• Grants support initiatives including community projects, research, awareness campaigns, seniors organizations, seniors recognition awards</li> </ul>

## **Yukon**

The Yukon territory has been working to develop an Aging Well Strategy. Public consultations were held in 2010, but a strategy has not been released. Some priority areas of the planned aging well strategy were identified in *A Better Yukon for All: Government of Yukon’s Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy* (Government of Yukon, 2012). These include a public information campaign to address ageism, and providing broader access to participation in sports, recreation and culture for seniors. Creating age-friendly communities is another priority area, and an age-friendly business guide was developed in 2011. The Government of Yukon has also developed a seniors website which when fully implemented will be a useful directory with links to information resources including federal government documents and information hotlines.

The Yukon Council on Aging, Golden Age Society, Yukon Order of Pioneers, YOOP-Ladies Auxiliary, Gray, Elder Active Recreation Association and Elders and Youth Advisory Council, have collaborated to create their own informational web site (<http://www.yukon-seniors-and-elders.org/index.php>) and develop their own programs and initiatives. Some funding has been provided to these organizations by various departments in the Government of Yukon to support programs they offer, including the creation of a Seniors Information Centre. However, it appears that most organizations run on a not-for-profit basis, operating on fundraising efforts and applying for grants.

### **Northwest Territories**

The Government of Northwest Territories, led by the Minister Responsible for Seniors in the Department of Health and Social Services, introduced a *Seniors' Action Plan* (Government of Northwest Territories, 2002). The plan was released after a comprehensive review of seniors programming was conducted beginning in 2000 by an inter-agency working group made up of individuals from various government departments and other non-governmental organizations who work with seniors. This initial action plan contained 28 action items under five areas: (1) Integration and coordination of programs; (2) improving programs; (3) a voice for seniors; (4) research and policy development; and (5) informing seniors and the public. The action items highlighted a need for increased coordination at both the community and inter-departmental levels and greater community participation to achieve an enhancement in seniors' programs. However, no evidence of the action plan's implementation or new developments in healthy aging frameworks could be found until the development of *Our Elders: Our Communities* (Government of Northwest Territories, 2014). This new framework highlighted seven key priorities: (1) healthy and active aging; (2) home and community care services; (3) integrated and coordinated service delivery; (4) caregiver support; (5) Elder responsive communities; (6) accessible and current information; and (7) sustainable best practices. Within the key priorities is a call for greater health promotion programs for older adults, increased services to allow seniors to remain independent and age in place, and further support for age-friendly communities.

**Table 12: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Northwest Territories**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2014</b> <b>Department of Health and Social Services</b></p>	<p><b>Our Elders: Our Communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategic framework aimed at meeting the health care and social needs of Elders and Seniors</li> <li>• Guiding Principles: Choice, respect and dignity, equity, awareness, access, safety, empowerment</li> <li>• 7 priority areas:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Healthy and Active Aging</li> <li>2. Home and Community Care Services</li> <li>3. Integrated and Coordinated Service Delivery</li> <li>4. Caregiver Supports</li> <li>5. Elder Responsive Communities</li> <li>6. Accessible and Current Information</li> <li>7. Sustainable Best Practices</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2002-2003</b> <b>Minister Responsible for Seniors</b></p>	<p><b>Seniors' Action Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After a comprehensive review of seniors' programming in NWT, 28 recommendations were created under 5 areas:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A voice for seniors (i.e. seniors' forum, review of programs and services, community participation)</li> <li>2. Integration and coordination of programs (i.e. organization and administration of programs, coordination at the community level, departmental coordination)</li> <li>3. Improving programs (i.e. income assessment, standardized age of eligibility, adequacy of income, seniors' home heating subsidy, independent living and housing needs)</li> <li>4. Informing seniors and the public (i.e. seniors' database, seniors-friendly workshops)</li> <li>5. Research and policy development (i.e. research, program principles and policy framework)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

## Nunavut

The Government of Nunavut, led by the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, released its first *Elders Program Strategy 2010-2014* (Government of Nunavut, 2010) after a two stage consultation process. The strategy is based on initial consultations with Elders in 2005 which sought to identify their needs, followed by a second consultation in 2008 where workshops were planned to develop strategies to meet the needs identified. Four action items were identified: (1) empower Elders; (2) promote respect for Elders; (3) traditional knowledge; and (4) healthy lives and families. Given the important position Elders hold in Nunavut there is strong support for the development of intergenerational programs to allow opportunities for young people to learn from their Elders’ cultural and linguistic experience, and for ensuring that healthy living programs developed are culturally relevant. Building on the 2010-2014 strategy, the *Strategic Framework: Addressing the needs of Nunavut Seniors* report (Government of Nunavut, 2016) received unanimous support in the Legislative Assembly in March 2016. The report outlines issues related to seniors’ care in Nunavut and recognizes the importance of consolidating the work of multiple departments. To this end, the Premier’s office serves as the major advocate for seniors’ programs.

**Table 13: Healthy Aging Frameworks – Nunavut**

Year/Department	Framework Description
<p><b>2016</b> <b>Government of Nunavut</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic Framework: Addressing the Needs of Nunavut Seniors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds on the work of the Elders Program Strategy</li> <li>• Informed by stakeholder engagement and recognizes importance of culturally appropriate services</li> <li>• The government will work with the <i>Nunavuumi Inutugait Katujjigatigiingit</i>- Nunavut Seniors’ Society</li> <li>• Key components of the strategy:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creation of a Seniors Information Handbook</li> <li>2. Attention to long term care issues (home and community care; continuing care centres; out of territory residential care)</li> <li>3. Addressing issues of elder abuse</li> <li>4. Address subsidy programs</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2010-2014</b> <b>Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth</b></p>	<p><b>Elders Program Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on understanding and respecting role of elders in passing on traditional knowledge and addressing factors that undermine knowledge transfer (language loss, southern influences, erosion of traditional learning environments)</li> <li>• Programs aimed at supporting elders to pass knowledge to youth</li> <li>• 4 action items:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Empower elders; 2. Promote respect for Elders; 3. Passing on of language and culture; 4. Healthy Lives and Families</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

## Rural Older Adults

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The second objective of this environmental scan of healthy aging strategies throughout Canada was to assess the connection of these strategies to those older adults living in rural areas. This section provides an overview of examples of where healthy aging strategies or initiatives have been connected to rural communities through a summary of issues identified for rural seniors, suggested programs to address these issues, and some examples of programs or interventions.

The Federal government has made an effort to create tools and information packages to assist in the development of age-friendly solutions specific to rural communities. The most useful was a guide created by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Ministers Responsible for Seniors for rural communities: *Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide* (2007).

### **British Columbia**

British Columbia is primarily using the Age-friendly Community initiatives as a vehicle to promote healthy aging in place in rural areas.

#### *Identified issues for rural seniors:*

- Access to health and medical services; local unavailability of medical services (Aging Well in BC, 2006)
- Distance and travel times; high cost of travel (Aging Well in BC, 2006)

#### *Suggested programs for rural seniors:*

- Volunteer driver program (Aging Well in BC, 2006)
- Provide incentives and assistance to promote the establishment and expansion of transportation services (Aging Well in BC, 2006)

#### *Examples of programs or interventions:*

- East Kootenay Senior Caregivers' Network: Rural network provides information and support for caregivers through local group meetings, buddy system, newsletter and toll-free phone line (Aging Well in BC, 2006)
- Village of Alert Bay and Namgis First Nation, using funds from the Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities Initiative created a new Information for Seniors brochure and installed community benches (A Healthy Living Framework, 2008)
- Village of Lumby using funds from the Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities Initiative identified transportation as priority and provide low-cost door-to-door transportation to area activities, events and services (A Healthy Living Framework, 2008)



## *Alberta*

Alberta's Aging Population Framework (Government of Alberta, 2010) recognizes that gaps for rural seniors exist in home support services, housing, health care access and transportation and includes specific policy directions for developing affordable housing options, rural health care strategies (i.e. telehealth and patient navigators), and transportation needs, "especially in rural and remote communities." Alberta also has a program to recruit physicians to rural communities.

### *Identified issues for rural seniors:*

- Limited housing options in rural and remote communities (Aging Population Framework, 2010)
- Lack of access to home supports, such as home maintenance services (Aging Population Framework, 2010)
- Limited, or lack of local health care services (Aging Population Framework, 2010; Demographic Planning Commission Report, 2008; SACA Annual Report, 2015)
- Lack of, or limited, transportation options; considerable cost of travel (Aging Population Framework, 2010; Demographic Planning Commission Report, 2008; SACA Annual Report, 2015)

### *Suggested program/solution for rural seniors:*

- Government aims to work with community partners to provide a *reasonable* level of assistance for home support and adaptations for seniors with the *most* need (Aging Population Framework, 2010)
- Develop incentive programs to encourage members of other health professions to work in rural settings (Aging Population Framework, 2010)
- Work with municipal governments and community partners to address transportation needs (Aging Population Framework, 2010)

### *Examples of programs or interventions:*

- The Government of Alberta provides funding for non-profit organizations which provide services for seniors through two programs: Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) and Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI)" (Demographic Planning Commission Report, 2008)

## **Saskatchewan**

Saskatchewan has a Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health (located within the Ministry of Health) and while the Ministry of Health *Plan for 2017-2018* highlights the needs for seniors to have access to appropriate community-based services to support aging at home, there is no specific reference to the unique needs of rural older adults.

## **Manitoba**

Manitoba's Age-friendly Community initiatives and Healthy Aging Strategy were rural focused at the outset and continue to support healthy aging in place in communities across the province. Priorities for action were developed at a symposium for Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities and Places held in 2012.

## **Ontario**

Ontario's recommendations specifically related to rural seniors include expanding Community Paramedicine programs across Ontario, especially in northern and rural communities (in these programs emergency responders focus on health promotion, injury prevention and make referrals to healthcare or support services). It also recommends engaging Aboriginal peoples and organizations in the development of an Aboriginal Seniors Strategy, and developing transportation systems for older residents in urban and wherever possible, rural communities.

### *Identified issue for rural seniors:*

- Lack of locally available health care (Action Plan for Health Care, 2012)

### *Suggested program/solution for rural seniors:*

- Improving and strengthening Ontario's Telemedicine Network (Action Plan for Health Care, 2012)

## **Quebec**

Quebec supports healthy aging in its rural communities through well developed and funded Age-friendly Community initiatives. Other programs specifically outlined in the Aging and Living Together Framework include financial assistance for major home repairs, especially for rural older adults, and the development of innovative housing models with special attention given to needs in rural and devitalized areas.

- “Moreover, the portrait of aging in Québec varies depending on whether seniors live in rural, semi-urban, urban or suburban settings. The actions taken under the policy must take these different situations into account.” (Aging and Living Together, 2012)

*Examples of programs or interventions:*

- RénoVillage Program and Emergency Repair program: provide financial assistance for low- and modest-income seniors, particularly rural seniors, for home repair/modification (Aging and Living Together, 2012)

## **New Brunswick**

New Brunswick’s Living Healthy, Aging Well strategy supports aging in place as one of 10 key goals, including transportation, housing and home support services in both urban and rural environments. Special consideration of the transportation needs of rural seniors is recognized, particularly related to accessing primary health.

*Issues identified for rural seniors:*

- Lack of appropriate housing and home-based services (Living Healthy, Aging Well, 2012)
- Limited, or lack, of access to primary health care services can lead to preventable hospitalizations (Living Health, Aging Well, 2012)

*Suggested program/solution for rural seniors:*

- Provide accessible transportation options; community based options such as volunteer driving programs, health care day trips and carpooling programs (Living Healthy, Aging Well, 2012)
- Provide affordable community-based housing (Living Healthy, Aging Well, 2012)
- Provide appropriate home-based services (Living Healthy, Aging Well, 2012)

*Examples of programs or interventions:*

- Transportation allowance for home support workers in rural areas, implemented in October, 2009. A \$240,000 investment in home support. (Be Independent. Longer, 2008)

## **Nova Scotia**

Nova Scotia’s 2005 strategy includes much discussion and focus on rural issues. Nine actions specifically address rural seniors’ issues, including programs that promote healthy living, and expanding transportation options, “especially in rural communities”. An overarching action is aimed at ensuring that “policy development acknowledges and responds to the particular

challenges faced by rural communities.” The province’s transportation strategy also addresses the needs of rural seniors.

- “Eliminating Ageism: Ensure government communications portray a realistic and accurate image of seniors in all their diversity, including urban and rural distinctions and differences between the youngest old and the oldest old.” (Strategy for Positive Aging, 2005)
- “Community Supports: Recognize and respond appropriately to the distinct differences in service needs between rural and urban areas.” (Strategy for Positive Aging, 2005)
- Ensure policy development acknowledges and responds to the particular challenges faced by rural communities. (Strategy for Positive Aging, 2005)
- “Respite programs need to acknowledge the unique challenges in rural communities, e.g. the distance residents need to travel to access amenities and services often means respite programs that provide four to eight hours per week are used up with mostly travel time alone.” (Strategy for Positive Aging, 2005)

*Issues identified for rural seniors:*

- Lack of transportation (Positive Aging Discussion Paper, 2004)
- Lack of locally available health care options (Positive Aging Discussion Paper, 2004)

*Suggested programs/solutions for rural seniors:*

- Create more affordable supportive housing options to allow low and middle income seniors, in rural areas, to remain in their communities as they age (Positive Aging Discussion Paper, 2004)
- Improve transportation (Positive Aging Discussion Paper, 2004; Strategy for Positive Aging, 2005)
- Develop and improve access to programs that promote healthy living, especially in rural areas (Strategy for Positive Aging, 2005)
- “Encourage the development of community-based publications that detail the programs and services available to seniors.” (Strategy for Positive Aging, 2005)

## ***Prince Edward Island***

Prince Edward Island’s healthy aging strategy is limited to improving long-term and continuing care and does not include any specific references to rural seniors, possibly because of the small size of the province. Reference to rural seniors was made when discussing the involvement of the Association of Rural Community Halls in disseminating age-friendly community and grant opportunity information. (Seniors Secretariat Report, 2012)

## *Newfoundland and Labrador*

Newfoundland's policy framework recognizes the impact of location on aging issues, and actions include identifying opportunities and challenges of aging in remote and rural areas, and supporting community development that meets the needs of seniors in these areas. It also calls for government to ensure that a rural lens is applied when forming legislation, policies, programs and services that impact seniors in rural and remote communities. An age-friendly transportation project is underway that will fund projects that support the key area of transportation as outlined in the Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities guide.

- “The interests and contributions of seniors are important, no matter where they live. Research shows that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are very attached to their communities. There was a sense during the consultations that attachment to community is stronger in rural and remote communities.” (Policy Framework, 2007)
- “Support community development that meets the needs of aging in remote, rural and urban areas. Ensure that a rural lens is applied when forming legislation, policies, programs and services that impact seniors in rural and remote communities.” (Policy Framework, 2007)

### *Issues identified for rural seniors:*

- Remoteness of communities creates challenges for transportation: cost of maintaining infrastructure and improving is great (Healthy Aging for All, 2006; Policy Framework, 2007)
- Lack of access and availability (Policy Framework Status Report, 2015)
- “Older adults who wish to age in place in rural communities may face barriers to their independence such as limited housing and transportation options. In addition, seniors in rural and remote areas often must travel for health services, which creates a range of challenges for themselves and their families. With at least 85 per cent of older Newfoundland and Labrador adults living with at least one chronic disease/condition, ease of access to support systems becomes even more critical.” (Policy Framework Status Report, 2015)

## Discussion

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Findings from this scan indicate that no formal federal strategies exist to support collaboration, coordination, and leadership in healthy aging strategies across Canada. However, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors Forum has played an important role in influencing the development of provincial policies and frameworks through a number of reports, the most important of which was *Healthy Aging in Canada: A New Vision, a Vital Investment*, released in 2006. Most recently the 2009 final report and earlier-released interim reports of the Special Senate Committee on Aging – *Canada’s Aging Population: Seizing the Opportunity* provide an extensive review of the current issues surrounding healthy aging and provides recommendations in five key areas. A recent report on pan-Canadian health organizations notes that two of the commonly cited roles for the federal government in the area of health are that of catalyst and that of enabler or ‘midwife’ of new health practices (Forest & Martin, 2018, viii). With regard to healthy aging it seems the federal government has embraced neither of these roles to any substantial degree.

Since 2005, provincial healthy aging strategies have been developed in all provinces except Saskatchewan. The remaining provinces have comprehensive strategies with a range of components to support the many facets of healthy aging. The territories have programming in place to support healthy aging and the Northwest Territories released a strategy in 2003, but no recent frameworks are in place. Similarly, the Government of Yukon announced in late 2017 they would be starting work to develop ways to engage Yukoners in defining aging in place but no strategy has yet been developed.

Eight provinces have senior secretariats or ministries specifically mandated to coordinate and lead healthy aging initiatives. In Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and the three territories, responsibility for seniors falls within other departments.

This environmental scan found there is a growing distinction between healthy aging strategies and long-term care strategies, and of the seven provinces that have strategies targeted specifically at long term care, six also have a separate healthy aging strategy. Most strategies have a number of components in common, however, specific recommendations, initiatives and actions within components varies by province, as does the level of implementation. These components are listed

below, and Table 14 shows the distribution across provinces. It is important to note that in cases where these domains do not appear in the formal strategy, they are often addressed through other initiatives.

- Access to information – including websites, toll-free lines, information guides
- Active or healthy aging – healthy eating, physical activity, social inclusion, falls prevention
- Aging in place – home care supports, housing
- Caregiver support – including both formal and informal caregivers
- Lifelong learning and/or literacy
- Older workers/employment
- Research
- Rural perspective
- Safety and security – including ageism and elder abuse
- Supportive environments – including WHO Age-friendly community program and/or age-friendly characteristics
- Transportation

**Table 14: Healthy Aging Framework Components by Province**

Component	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NFLD
Access to information	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Active aging	✓	✓*		✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aging in place	✓*	✓*		✓*	✓*	✓	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓
Caregiver support	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Lifelong learning					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Older workers	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Research	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Rural and/or multi-cultural focus	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Safety & security	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Supportive environments	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
WHO Age-friendly province	✓			✓		✓		✓		
Transportation	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*		✓*
Senior secretariat/ministry	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

\* Indicates a separate strategy exists in this area



The most well developed components are supportive environments/age-friendly communities, active living, aging in place supports (home care, community and long-term care) and elder abuse, with some provinces having separate strategies for each of these components. Recommendations, initiatives and actions within each component area vary by province, but examples of best practices can be found in each.

Quebec, Manitoba and Nova Scotia were the earliest adopters of healthy aging initiatives and have come the farthest in terms of implementation. It is interesting to note that cities in all three provinces participated in the WHO Age-friendly Cities project in 2007. Quebec and Manitoba have directed efforts through extensively developing and funding Age-friendly community initiatives, which have become a grass roots and transformative movement introducing change throughout their provinces. Nova Scotia developed a strong, comprehensive strategy in 2005 and this solid base has allowed continuous implementation without interruption to reconfigure the plan. Along with community-based initiatives, Nova Scotia has entrenched the idea of supporting healthy aging throughout the provincial and municipal government system, and has changed the image of aging issues from addressing a need to seizing an opportunity.

Although the promotion of active aging/healthy lifestyles was found to be a key component among strategies, there has been less development in the area of physical activity for older adults than in other areas. Calls for the creation of physical activity strategies aimed at older adults are evident in a number of reports and framework recommendations. Alberta released its *Active Alberta 2011-2021* strategy (Government of Alberta, 2011) which is notable in that it is focused on social inclusion and community well-being, as well as recreation and sport. Manitoba's Healthy Aging Strategy delivered through the Active Living Coalition for Older Adults supports many aspects of active living, including physical activity.

Strategies generally recognize the need to respond to the geographic and cultural differences among seniors across Canada and most strategies contain recommendations directed at rural seniors, with some also addressing issues for northern, Aboriginal and other groups of seniors. Nova Scotia's strategy contains the most thorough examination of the issues facing rural seniors. Although respecting diversity is a recognized principle, it is often unclear the extent to which programs address diverse needs.

This review shows that through their frameworks, some provinces and territories are recognizing that rural and remote residents face unique challenges, and that interventions and responses will have to vary with the needs of each community. By its very nature, the Age-friendly Communities program works to create supportive environments in both urban and rural areas, and through it most provinces have adopted rural initiatives. Recommendations call for action on innovative housing, accessible transportation, access to health care, community supports and health promotion. Transportation was identified as one of the key rural issues, and two provinces have responded – Nova Scotia with a transportation strategy and Newfoundland by funding a set of community projects within the Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities guidelines.

This scan found that most strategies have been developed after extensive research and consultations with stakeholders to examine the current state of affairs and emerging issues facing older residents. Few gaps can be found in the range of issues identified or the findings and recommendations contained in the strategies. However, there are gaps in the extent to which each province has adopted, funded and/or implemented these strategic components. There is also a lack of evaluation to assess the effectiveness of strategies. A review of implemented programs and policies to assess the extent to which these principles and strategies have been acted upon would be an area for future research.

While collectively much research has been done to identify the issues and provide recommendations, there is a gap in the range of responses across provinces and territories. There is evidence to support increased collaboration amongst provinces to capitalize on the extensive research and work done to date and to incorporate best practices into individual frameworks. Federal leadership is needed to facilitate collaboration and support healthy aging initiatives across Canada. This leadership is needed to build upon and identify best practices that currently exist to support healthy aging. Doing so would reduce the resources required for provincial and territorial governments to develop stronger responses in areas still under development. In the case of provinces and territories still working to develop a strategy, a thorough scan of existing strategies and interventions offers the opportunity to be informed in identifying and adopting best practices into their plans of action.

## Summary

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Findings from this environmental scan suggest that there are important gaps in the distribution of healthy aging strategies across Canada. Healthy aging frameworks and interventions remain largely decentralized requiring individual provinces and territories to take the lead in the development of actions to support healthy aging in place. Since 2005, provincial healthy aging strategies have been developed in all provinces except Saskatchewan.

This scan found that having a provincial seniors' secretariat or ministry was key to the development, coordination and promotion of healthy aging initiatives. Every province except Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, and the three territories were identified as having senior secretariats or ministries.

At the federal level, this environmental scan suggests that leadership is needed to facilitate and promote provincial collaboration and build upon best practices that currently exist within Canada. Doing so would reduce provincial resources required to develop effective and innovative interventions to improve healthy aging in place.

Improving healthy aging in place is often about making simple changes to improve how existing interventions and programs operate. Innovative frameworks and interventions from different jurisdictions can offer effective alternatives to support healthy aging. After conducting a review of the federal and provincial/ territorial websites, this scan identified some key areas or messages where action could be taken to improve healthy aging in place.

### Key messages

- Promote awareness of, and access to, information on existing services and supports available to older adults
- Promote the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration to address the identified needs of older adults across rural, urban and northern locations
- Support multi-sectoral planning to create built environments supportive of older adults' mobility, by identifying potential barriers and risks early on
- Support multi-sectoral collaboration to identify opportunities to enhance physical activity and mobility for older adults
- Identify and promote strategies that address the diversity of older adults' experiences
- Develop a framework to measure, monitor, and report on interventions that support rural healthy aging in place

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