

## Moving Toward a Seniors Strategy for Saskatchewan

Statistics indicate that older adults make up an increasing percentage of the population.

### Population of Saskatchewan 2016

- Total Population 1,142,570
- Population 65 or over 177,000 or 15.5%
- Population 55 or over 308,500 or 27%

**Projections** (based on Statistics Canada scenario M3)

### Population of Saskatchewan 2038

- Total Population 1,173,900
- Population 65 or over 266,360 or 22.7%
- Population 55 or over 400,460 or 34.1%

Many people worry that the increasing percentage of older adults will put greater stress on community resources. However, older adults are also a resource:

- They contribute a tremendous amount of volunteer time to our communities.
- They bring a wealth of experience and wisdom.
- They are living longer, more active lives, with a greater awareness of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Whether you see the increasing population of seniors from the perspective of increasing needs or increasing benefits, the real issue for our province and our communities is to plan for this population shift.

Like Saskatchewan, most provinces place the overall responsibility for seniors' issues within the Ministry of Health. However, most other provinces have significantly more structure and resources dedicated to this area.

	BC	AB	MB	ON	QC	NS	NB	PE	NL	SK
Ministry/Minister		X		X	X				X	
Secretariat							X			
Division									X	
Department						X				
Branch			X							
Age Friendly	X	X	X	X						
Srs Advocate	X	X								
Strategy	X			X		X	X	X		
Advisory Council			X					X	X	
Consultant										X

These factors are the motivation for the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM) Seniors Strategy Project. It is important to recognize that a Seniors Strategy needs to consider issues related to infrastructure and services as well as the related, but more intangible, things like quality of life and community involvement. We are focussing on six areas of community life:

- housing

- health care
- transportation
- services
- finances
- meaningful participation in the community

For the most part, governments, community leaders, community organizations and individuals have an understanding of what the problems are when addressing the needs of an aging population. What seems to be lacking is a plan for how to get there – a Seniors Strategy. SSM is focussing the discussion not on what the problems are, but rather how we can create the future we want and need to provide the best possible quality of life for older adults and others in our province.

### **Possible Actions for SUMA**

- Municipal governments have a stake in what a provincial seniors strategy would look like
- Share information in your community
- Discuss and share your communities' responses to these questions:
  - **“How do we get from where we are now to where we want to be to provide quality life for Saskatchewan’s aging population?”**
    - What needs to happen to get us there?
    - What actions need to be taken?
    - Who is best placed to contribute to the transition?
    - What would be some of the enabling factors?
- Municipalities can indicate support for the need for a seniors strategy for Saskatchewan
- Share the survey SSM is developing which will be available early in the new year
- If you have responses you would like SSM to include in a Seniors Strategy please e-mail [exdir@skseniorsmechanism.ca](mailto:exdir@skseniorsmechanism.ca)

The information we gather will be collated and shared with governments and with any organizations who might be interested.

### **About Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism**

*The Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism is a non-profit, volunteer organization. The mission of SSM is to bring together Saskatchewan seniors' organizations to contribute to a better quality of life for seniors.*

*We do this by:*

- *Researching and acting on issues affecting seniors*
- *Being a unified voice advocating for seniors*
- *Engaging and supporting member organizations*
- *Partnering with member organizations and others*
- *Creating awareness and coordination of resources and services for seniors.*

*The eighteen member organizations of the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism are provincial and local seniors' groups composed of more than 100,000 seniors throughout the province. We also have 6 supporter organizations and a partnership agreement with SUMA.*