

Declaration of the Community-Based Seniors' Services Sector in BC and 20 Strategies for Outreach/Engagement

Introduction – One of the mechanisms employed for increasing the capacity of CBSS is to unite under a shared Declaration that recognizes the importance of CBSS health promotion and prevention work, and the need for capacity building. This Declaration also acknowledges the importance of closer collaboration between non-profits, municipalities and the provincial health system to maximize the potential for older adults to “age in place” and remain in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

The **Declaration of the Community Based Seniors' Services Sector** was signed by 140 key stakeholders and decision makers at the Provincial Summit on Aging, and can now be used as an organizing tool in local communities. Regularly updated lists of signatories are available, along with ideas and examples of how to use the Declaration to increase awareness and engagement in local communities.

CBSS Declaration

As representatives from the federal, provincial and municipal governments, leaders from the Community-Based Seniors' Services sector, leaders from community foundations, and allies of the sector, we recognize the important role played by the many programs and services offered by municipal governments and not-for-profit organizations to the overall health, well-being and quality of life of the older citizens of this Province (<http://www.seniorsraisingtheprofile.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/RPP-Literature-Review.pdf>).

At the same time, we acknowledge that the capacity of the Community-Based Seniors' Services sector to deliver programs and services will need to be enhanced if, as a province, we are to maximize the potential for older adults to have the choice to “age in place” and remain in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. We also acknowledge that this will require closer collaboration between the not-for-profit organizations, municipalities, and the provincial health system.

We therefore call on all those involved in the Community-Based Seniors' Services sector – as funders, policy makers, decision makers, seniors, families, friends, caregivers, service providers, organizations, leaders, and volunteers – to sign on to this Declaration to ensure that:

Community-Based Seniors' Services are formally recognized as a sector that plays an essential role in supporting seniors' independence, resilience and social connectedness.

The definition of the Community-Based Seniors' Services (or CBSS) sector includes all municipal and notfor-profit organizations that provide services and programming for older adults at the local level -- at community centres, single-and multi-service agencies, seniors' centres, community coalitions and neighbourhood houses -- throughout our province.

The seven core programs and services offered by the Sector reflects the diversity of British Columbia's geography and seniors' population and includes: Nutritional Supports; Wellness Programs; Physical Activity; Recreation, Education and Arts Programming; Information and Referral; Transportation; and Affordable Housing.

This Declaration is intended as a demonstration of our commitment to the seniors of British Columbia and to ensure that Community-Based Seniors' Services are a priority for all stakeholders who serve the people of British Columbia.

20 Strategies for Outreach/Engagement

To engage local government, elected representatives, community organizations, and businesses:

- 1.** Presentations to local Seniors Planning and Action Tables (SPATs) encouraging them to become signatories and to promote the Declaration in their community.
- 2.** Presentations to boards of directors of seniors and other community based organizations inviting the organization to become a signatory.
- 3.** Presentations to local municipal, regional district, and tribal councils to gain support and request the municipality to become a signatory.
- 4.** Meet with local municipal, regional district, and tribal council “seniors champion” or appointee for seniors’ issues to inform them about the Declaration and gain their support.
- 5.** Presentations to local Health Authority staff, Division of Family Practice, and Community Response Network to raise awareness, gain support, and request that they become a signatory.
- 6.** Meet with local government and tribal council staff to inform them about the Declaration and gain their support.
- 7.** Meet with MLAs and MPs to present the Declaration and request support.
- 8.** Presentation of the Declaration and opportunities to sign at Annual General Meetings of seniors’ and other community based organizations.
- 9.** Presentations to local funding organizations, such as community foundations and service clubs, to raise awareness, gain support, and request they become a signatory.
- 10.** Connect with the local business community through groups such as Chamber of Commerce, Board of Trade, and Business Improvement Associations, by piggy-backing on Age Friendly strategies.

To engage individuals:

- 11.** Set up a Declaration display at community centres, libraries, or malls, and encourage people to read, discuss, and sign.
- 12.** When holding displays at community events, have a copy of the Declaration as part of the display and encourage people to read, discuss, and sign.
- 13.** At health, community, and other relevant conferences, let participants know about the Declaration and encourage them to sign.
- 14.** Promote signing of the Declaration in articles in organization newsletters. Include a copy of the Declaration and a link to submit signatures.
- 15.** Write an op-ed piece for your local community newspaper about the Declaration and why it should be supported. Include information on where to view and sign the Declaration.
- 16.** Blog about the Declaration and invite readers to sign. Include a link to submit signatures.

17. Set up a display in the local seniors' centre that includes a copy of the Declaration and a signature sheet, as well as information about signing on-line.
18. Promote signing of the Declaration in your organization's social media or website.
19. Piggy-back on other seniors focused events and initiatives.
20. Offer to speak at community meetings, such as neighbourhood associations, to raise awareness and encourage people to sign.

Some ideas to support outreach and engagement strategies

- Circulate the CBSS Healthy Aging Summit Report to: local municipal or regional district councils and staff; funders; community-based organizations.
- Develop a collection of local examples of CBSS programs, activities, photos, videos, data, and graphics that can be used in presentations, displays, social media, newsletters, media releases.
- When using the CBSS Healthy Aging Summit presentation materials (PowerPoint and Facilitation Guide), insert local statistics, examples, stories, photos, and program information.
- Share stories about the difference CBSS makes for older adults, caregivers, and others in the community.
- Include seniors in your activities and make sure their voices are heard in presentations and materials.
- Profile CBSS people – staff, volunteers, program participants/seniors, families, caregivers – to give a face to the sector.
- Translate and adapt materials for cultural accessibility.
- Publicly acknowledge outstanding CBSS volunteers and leaders.
- Create Declaration “post cards” with a copy of the Declaration and a link to submit signatures, and states that your organization is a signatory.
- Have an “elevator speech” or apply the “3 foot rule” – whenever anyone gets within three feet of you, tell them a concise and compelling CBSS impact story!
- “Drip feed” information and stories through social media, releasing brief pieces of information, statistics, stories, photos, etc. over a period of time.
- Extend an invitation to your facility, program, or event to demonstrate first-hand the kinds of CBSS activities that are making a difference in the lives of older adults in BC communities every day.
- Partner with other organizations to promote the Declaration.
- Highlight relevant resources used or produced in CBSS programs.

- Use the release of relevant studies or reports as an opportunity to promote the Declaration.
 - Contact United Way's Community Engagement Coordinator to share highlights of your Declaration activities, ask questions, or find out what else is happening in your area to promote the Declaration.
 - Use designated days, weeks, or months to highlight CBSS. These are dates for 2019, and some will change from year to year. A current calendar for many designated days, weeks and months can be found at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/calendar-health-promotion-days.html>
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- March: Nutrition Month
 - April 2nd: National Caregivers Day
 - April 7th- 13th: National Volunteer Week
 - May: National Vision Health Month and Speech and Hearing Month
 - May 6th -12th: Mental Health Week
 - June 1st: National Health and Fitness Day
 - June 3rd- 8th : Seniors Week
 - June 15th: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
 - June 21st: BC Aboriginal Day
 - July 24th: International Self-Care Day
 - September: World Alzheimer's Month
 - September: Healthy Aging Month
 - October 1st-7th : Active Aging Week
 - October 1st: International Day for Older Persons; National Seniors Day
 - October 10th: World Mental Health Day
 - November: Fall Prevention Month

The Declaration can be signed at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CBSSDeclaration>

For more information, please contact:

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