



## Why Priority Populations for United Way BC Healthy Aging?

Over the past decade, the proportion of BC's population that is over 65 has significantly increased – from 15% of the population in 2010 to 20% in 2022. Within the context of limited resources and a growing seniors' population, it is important to consider where the Community-Based Seniors' Services (CBSS) sector can make the most impact with its programming.

It has been estimated that 84% of health outcomes are determined by socioeconomic factors (e.g., education, income, family and social support), the physical environment (e.g., transportation, housing), and health behaviors (e.g., diet, physical activity)<sup>1</sup>.

Older adults who have experienced racism throughout their lives may also carry the psychological burden of chronic stress. Racism related stressors, contribute to higher rates of anxiety, depression, dementia, and other mental health disorders<sup>2</sup>.

## Definitions

### **Low to Modest Income**

In general, low income is meant to refer to seniors who have challenges affording items like:

- i) adequate food
- ii) monthly mortgage/rent
- iii) sufficient home heat
- iv) prescribed medication
- v) transportation
- vi) other required prescribed health care

### **Socially Isolated/Lonely**

A socially isolated senior is one who describes themselves as alone, disconnected from life and community, with reduced ability to participate and enjoy life as they have in the past. Challenges can include physical or mental health issues, mobility challenges (using a walker or cane), loss of a driver's license, a recent move challenges with digital literacy, or loss of a partner, friends, community supports, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Hood, C. M., Gennuso, K. P., Swain, G. R., & Catlin, B. B. (2016). County Health Rankings: Relationships Between Determinant Factors and Health Outcomes. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 50(2), 129–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2015.08.024>.

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (CAMH). Aging and Mental Health Policy Framework. Toronto: <https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/pdfs---public-policy-submissions/camh-aging-and-mental-health-policy-framework-pdf.pdf>,



### **Low to Moderate Frailty**

People who need help with finances, transportation, heavy housework and similar tasks of daily living. Typically, mild frailty progressively impairs shopping, walking outside alone, meal preparation, and taking medications, and begins to restrict light housework. Those with moderate frailty may need assistance with some aspects of personal care from the healthcare system or family/friend caregivers (adapted from the [Clinical Frailty Scale \(Rockwood\)](#)).

### **Member of an Underserved Group**

Seniors who identify as:

- Indigenous
- An ethnocultural minority
- Newcomers and immigrants
- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Living with a disability (may include cognitive, mental health, physical etc.)
- Speaking a primary language that is not English
- Living in a remote community without access to essential services
- And others, as identified by the organization, who may be experiencing barriers to program access.

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