

Promoting Wellness, Preserving Health



**A Provincial Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors,
and Caregivers Living on Prince Edward Island**



2018

Promoting Wellness, Preserving Health

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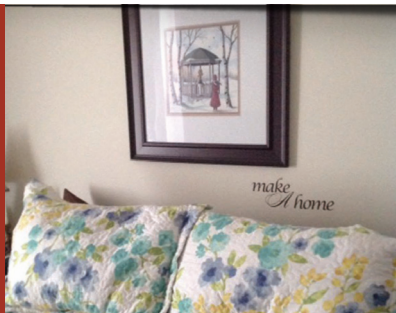
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A Provincial Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors, and Caregivers Living on Prince Edward Island

Promoting Wellness, Preserving Health is PEI's first ever Provincial Action Plan for Seniors (age 65+), Near Seniors (age 55-64), and Caregivers.



Understanding where we are and then determining where we need to be.

Message from Ministers

Promoting Wellness, Preserving Health is PEI's first ever Provincial Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors, and Caregivers.

Prince Edward Island has more seniors than ever before, and our province is shifting to match our changing demographic. Seniors make up 19.4% of the population today. By 2025 approximately 25% of Islanders will be seniors and that growth will continue.

Promoting Wellness, Preserving Health is PEI's first ever Provincial Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors, and Caregivers. It has been designed to improve the lives of Islanders and support the enhancement and sustainability of the overall health and wellness system.

The priority areas of the Action Plan build on existing strengths



The priority areas of this Action Plan build on existing strengths and partnerships.



Minister of Health and Wellness
Robert Mitchell



Minister of Family and Human Services
Tina Mundy

and partnerships. They provide direction in increasing system capacity through innovation and expanding services to better meet the needs of individuals, and address the social determinants of health through both community and government endeavors. The result will be a better, more efficient continuum of programs and services to meet the needs of Island seniors, present and future.

We would like to acknowledge the work of the Executive Advisory Committee and their leadership in the development of the Action Plan. We would also like to thank the over 250 individuals who contributed to this strategic framework, including the Advisory Network that consisted of seniors, near seniors, and caregivers who generously volunteered their

time, members of government and non-governmental sector, including individuals from the private and not-for-profit sector. All of those who participated in the development of this Action Plan provided valuable input on the future directions for senior's health and wellness on Prince Edward Island.

The way forward begins with understanding where we are and then determining where we need to be. This Action Plan shows clearly that PEI has a great foundation that benefits seniors; however, there is more important work that needs to be done to build their health and wellness and to meet the needs of our growing and aging population.

We all have a role to play, and together we can make a difference.



INTRODUCTION

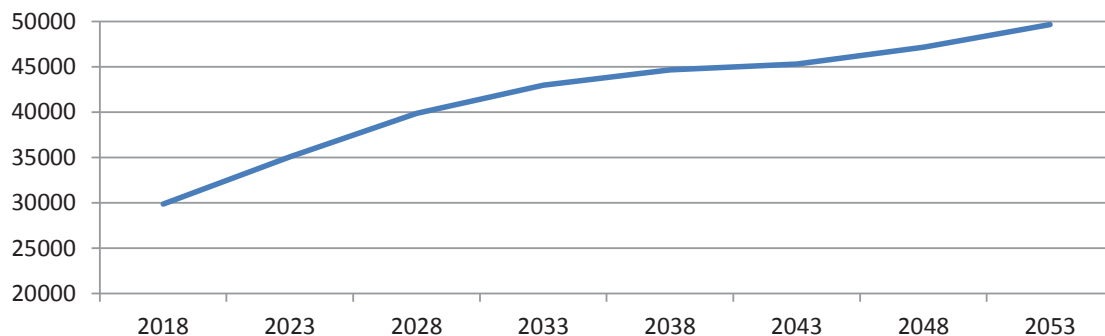
Promoting WELLNESS, Preserving HEALTH

Policy and practice that benefits seniors benefits people of all ages. Everyone – young and old – has a vested interest in the health and wellness of seniors.

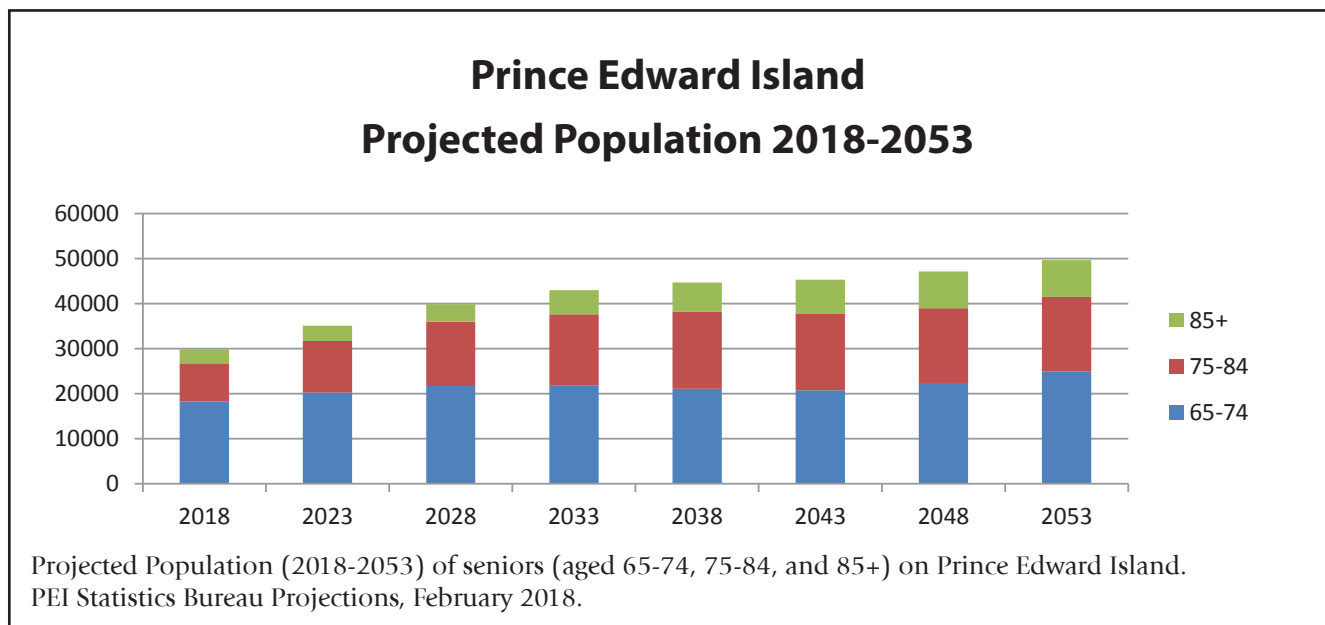
Islanders are living longer on average, such that seniors are a growing share of the provincial population. In 2016, approximately 19.4% of the total population of PEI – 28,092 Islanders – were aged 65 years and older. This percentage is higher than the national average of 16.5%,

and is expected to increase in the foreseeable future. Seniors have an important influence on our society and particular consideration must be given to the health and wellness of these Islanders.

**Prince Edward Island Population
Projections Age 65+**



Projected Population (2018-2053) of seniors 65+ on Prince Edward Island.
PEI Statistics Bureau Projections, February 2018.



The Department of Health and Wellness in collaboration with the Department of Family and Human Services, have listened closely to Island seniors and others to develop A Provincial Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors, and Caregivers Living on Prince Edward Island. The Action Plan offers a Vision for a healthy future, sets out a Mission to guide policy programs and services, and details a three-year Action Plan aimed at achieving tangible progress in promoting wellness and preserving the health of Island seniors.

This Action Plan aims to provide a framework to better address the needs of the aging population, in a sustainable way.



The priority areas of the Action Plan build on existing strengths and partnerships.

Development Process

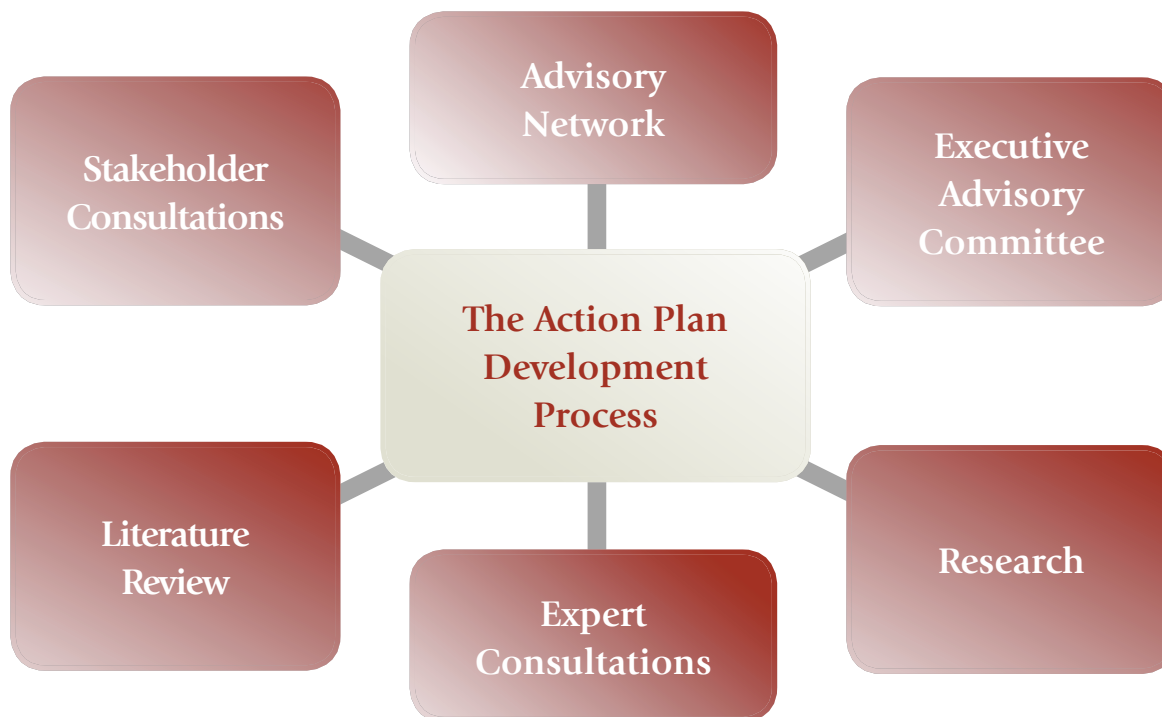
Action Plan

A Provincial Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors, and Caregivers Living on Prince Edward Island is the product of extensive consultation and research. The perspectives of more than 250 Islanders are reflected in this work. This is an Action Plan for seniors, by seniors.

The process used to develop this Action Plan was aimed at providing a roadmap to improve health and wellness that is actionable and achievable.

The following approaches were used in the Action Plan development process:

- Literature reviews of “best practices”
- Guidance from recognized experts in the field of gerontology
- Consultations and focus groups with diverse groups of stakeholders
- Creation of an Executive Advisory Committee
- Creation of an Advisory Network and facilitated information gatherings
- Engagement in research with seniors, near seniors, and caregivers across PEI





The Executive Advisory Committee was comprised of officials from the Departments of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services together with a community seniors' representative to provide a varied base of experience. These individuals were tasked with designing and overseeing an effective Action Plan development process and writing the Action Plan based on the information collected.

The Advisory Network consisted of Seniors (age 65+), Near Seniors (age 55-64), and Caregivers, together with six "care groups" involving representation from Mental Health and Addictions, Long-Term Care, Home and Community Care, Primary Care, Acute and Emergency Care, and Palliative Care. Each group was comprised of 7-10 members.

Seniors, near seniors, and caregivers used the *Photovoice* methodology to give voice to their experiences. The care groups completed a *Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SOAR) Analysis*, as well as a Stakeholder Analysis.

Engagements took place with over 25 stakeholder groups, including the Alzheimer's Society, Arthritis Society, Mi'kmaq Confederacy, Community Health Engagement Committees, Senior Citizens' Federation, PEI Council of People with Disabilities, the Francophone Community, Seniors' Secretariat, and others.

Photovoice

Photovoice is a participatory type of research that requires participants to take pictures describing their lived realities and group discussion of the photographs to identify possible gaps or future needs. This methodology was used to inform the development of this Action Plan.

SOAR Analysis

The SOAR Analysis provided an understanding of the current state of affairs for health and wellness services on PEI, an opportunity for groups to develop their Vision of health and wellness services, and a forum for discussing how their Vision could be achieved.

Guiding FRAMEWORKS

The following frameworks guide the development of this Action Plan:

1. **The Social Determinants of Health**
2. **Upstream Approaches to Health and Wellness**
3. **Age-friendly Communities**
4. **Progressive Change aimed at Transformation**



Guiding Framework #1

The **SOCIAL** Determinants of Health

The social determinants of health refer to the social factors that shape and impact the health and wellness of individuals and society.

Examples of social determinants of health include:

- Income and Social Status
- Social Support Networks
- Education and Literacy
- Employment/Working Conditions
- Social Environments
- Physical Environments
- Personal Health Practices and Coping Skills
- Healthy Child Development
- Biology and Genetic Endowment
- Health Services
- Gender
- Culture

“The health of a population is now understood to be primarily driven by socioeconomic factors that shape the conditions in which people live, learn, work and play. Recent estimates indicate that socioeconomic factors account for 50% of all health outcomes, while health care, genetics, and physical environments account for 25%, 15%, and 10% of health outcomes.”

(Health for All Islanders report, 2016)

The Social Gradient

The social gradient illustrates the powerful role the social determinants of health play on an individual’s health and wellness.



Source: Making Partners: Intersectoral Action for Health 1988 Proceedings and outcome of a WHO Joint Working Group on Intersectoral Action for Health, The Netherlands.

What makes Canadians healthy or unhealthy?

“Over time, society’s response to this question has changed. For many years, health was thought to be determined by a strong healthcare system that cared for the sick by means of hospitals, healthcare providers and medications. However, since the 1970s there has been growing consensus that the healthcare system plays only a small role in improving the health of a population.”
(Health for All Islanders report, 2016)



Guiding Framework #2

UPSTREAM Approaches to Health and Wellness

Health care systems typically focus on “downstream endeavors,” responding to illness once it occurs rather than promoting the health and wellness of individuals and populations.

Upstream approaches to health and wellness address the social determinants of health. They represent a shift away from the biomedical approach to health care that tends to focus on individuals and bodies, to looking at factors – the social conditions or the “cause of causes” – that promote health and prevent illness.



In addition to the enhancement of more traditional forms of health care (e.g. care in the hospital and long-term care facilities), this Action Plan envisions a refocusing of health and wellness to more upstream endeavors.

The Upstream Metaphor

“My friend ... relates the story of a physician trying to explain the dilemmas of the modern practice of medicine: ‘You know,’ he said, ‘sometimes it feels like this. There I am standing by the shore of a swiftly flowing river and I hear the cry of a drowning man. So I jump into the river, put my arms around him, pull him to shore and apply artificial respiration. Just when he begins to breathe, there is another cry for help. So I jump into the river, reach him, pull him to shore, apply artificial respiration, and then just as he begins to breathe, another cry for help. So back in the river again, reaching, pulling, applying, breathing and then another yell. Again and again, without end, goes the sequence. You know, I am so busy jumping in, pulling them to shore, applying artificial respiration, that I have no time to see who ... is upstream pushing them all in”
(McKinlay, 1997, pp. 519–20).

“The health care system account[s] for only 25% of health outcomes . . . The socioeconomic environment is the most powerful of the determinants of health” (Dutton et al., 2018, p. E66).



Guiding Framework #3

AGE-FRIENDLY Communities

The framework of age-friendly communities incorporates an age and inclusion lens to the development of policy and practice. The goal is to promote good health and wellness and foster social connectedness and inclusion. When policies and practices are designed this way, the goal of promoting wellness and preserving health is supported.



Taken by a near senior, this photo depicts a complex, confusing and fragmented healthcare system that is difficult to navigate. It draws attention to the need for a health and wellness system that is age-friendly.

“In an Age-Friendly Community, policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to ‘age actively’ – that is, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society. For example, public and private transportation is accessible, streets and buildings are hazard-free, and there are opportunities for seniors to participate in civic, cultural, educational and voluntary activities.”
(Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011)

Many seniors, near seniors, and caregivers who contributed to the development of this Action Plan drew attention to the need for a rebalancing of the health and wellness system in order to promote an age-friendly society that supports aging-in-place. The image below was provided by one of those seniors and represents the need for an age-friendly society:

“Most seniors would prefer to stay in their own home, but there may come a time when we need care ... Nursing homes are not sustainable and the answer is to increase the availability of home care wherever possible ... Home care could encompass different categories from light to more intensive care. This will entail specific planning and training and this should start immediately since the need is constantly increasing.”





Guiding Framework #4

PROGRESSIVE Change

aimed at Transformation

Progressive change aimed at transformation alters what we do and how we do it. These are changes that are organization-wide, which involve changing the underlying processes, policies, and practices of a specific organization.

Progressive change will be targeted to support aging-in-place and to create a more holistic, upstream, and coordinated system of supports and services that help seniors now and in the future.

Transforming health and social systems will better address the needs of an aging society. Implementing this Action Plan that is grounded in the frameworks of social determinants of health, upstream approaches to health and wellness, and age-friendly communities will lead to change on PEI.

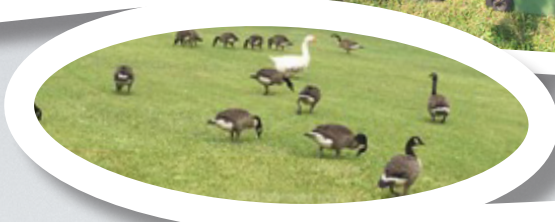
Key to this Action Plan is the idea that the formal health care system is *part of the solution, not the solution.*

Canada's health care system was not built to address the needs of an aging population. Rather, the system was designed to treat acute, episodic care, as opposed to managing complex and ongoing health issues. As the Canadian Medical Association (2016) explains, "Canada's health care system is not built to meet the challenges of our aging population . . ." (pp. 4-5).

This photo, taken by a senior and caregiver, represents a desire and "will for real change."



Insights from Participants



SENIORS, NEAR SENIORS, AND CAREGIVERS

Seniors, near seniors, and caregivers took these photos to represent their voices, which form the foundation of this Action Plan. Many valuable insights were shared, including:

- Formal and informal care can be costly, both monetarily and socially;
- The current health care system could be easier to navigate;
- The health and wellness system should continue to integrate services across the continuum of care;
- The health and wellness system, including governmental and non-governmental departments/organizations, should strengthen partnerships in order to support an age-friendly society and aging-in-place initiatives;
- Policies and practices should continue to consider the diversity of PEI's aging population.

THE WAY FORWARD SENIORS, NEAR SENIORS, AND CAREGIVERS

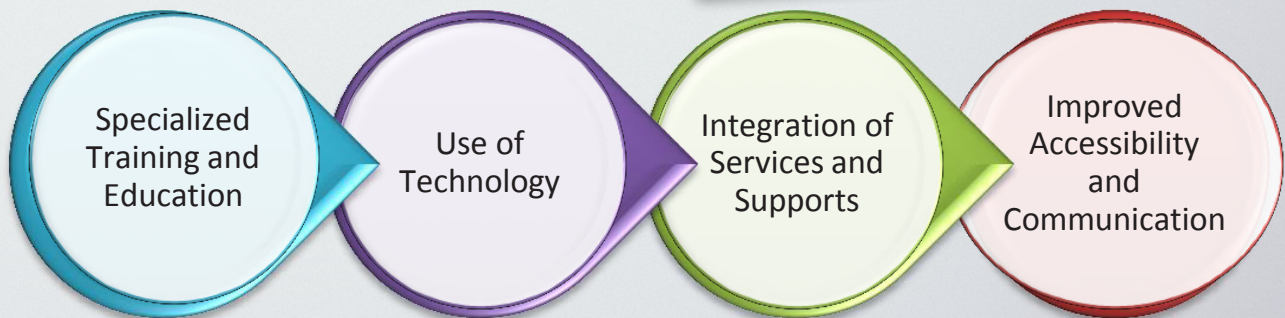
Seniors, near seniors, and caregivers pointed to aspects of the system that were working well and others that required change. Many felt that there was a strong need to enhance the support for informal caregivers, recognizing that the well-being of caregivers impacts the well-being of those they are caring for. Lastly, seniors, near seniors, and caregivers desired a better integrated system whereby elements of the system worked together in cooperation.

CARE GROUPS

The care groups played an integral role in informing the development of this Action Plan through their SOAR and stakeholder analyses.

The insights from the care groups complemented what was learned from the seniors, near seniors, and caregivers groups. The following themes emerged from their analyses:

- Focusing on improved education and training in relation to health, wellness, and aging;
- Incorporating evidence-based technologies;
- Enhancing communication and collaboration between all segments of the health and wellness system;
- Addressing ageism and promoting diversity.



THE WAY FORWARD CARE GROUPS

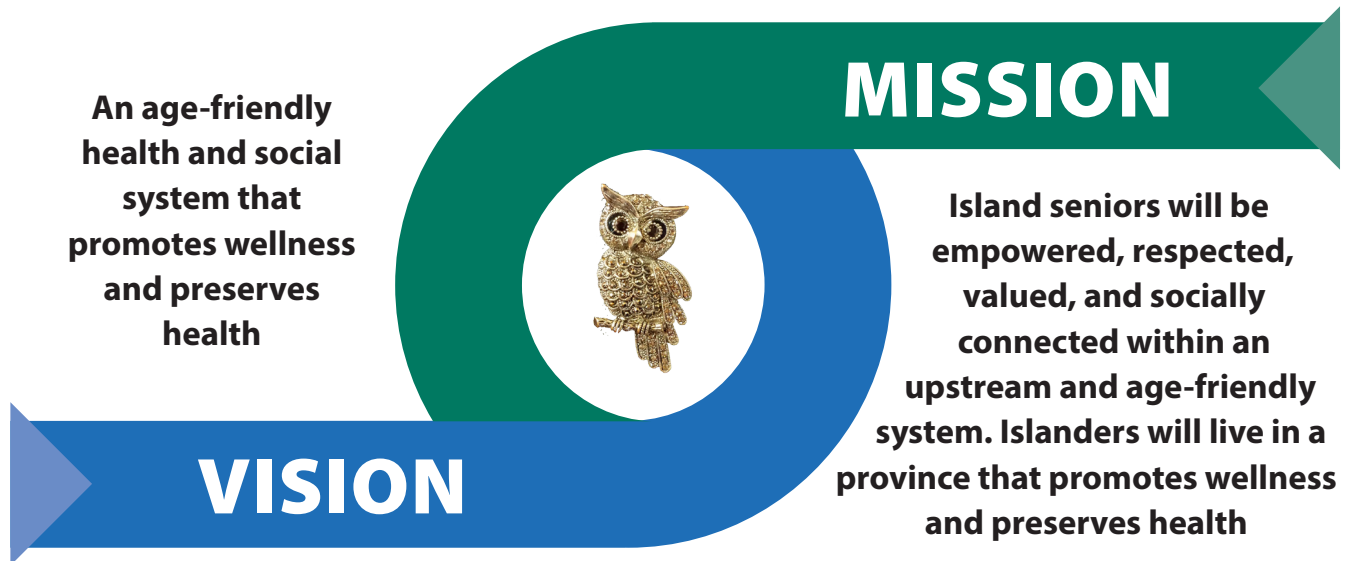
The care groups provided ample evidence of what is working well and where enhancements can be made. The overarching theme from these groups was

the need to augment the health and wellness system to include a more comprehensive, preventative, upstream, and person-centered approach.



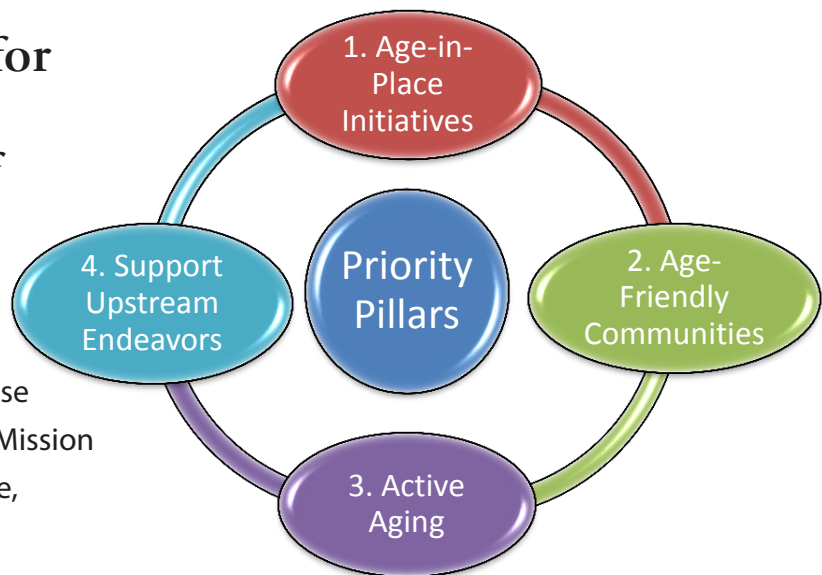
Vision & Mission

The **Vision and Mission statements** are based on the voices of key stakeholders who contributed to the development of this Action Plan, including Island seniors, near seniors, and caregivers.



Four Priority PILLARS for Change to Improve the Health and Wellness of Island Seniors

After thorough research and consultations, the following Priority Pillars for Change were identified. These pillars will ensure that the Vision and Mission are put into practice in an accountable, transparent, and sustainable manner.





PRIORITY PILLAR 1

Develop and implement “home first” age-in-place initiatives

- Home First refers to policies and practices that support individuals to age-in-place in their home and communities.
- This can be accomplished by enhancing home, community, and long-term care services and supports.

PRIORITY PILLAR 2

Incorporate an age-friendly approach to communities, housing, workplaces, and health care facilities

- Age-Friendly refers to principles that are created to enable everyone to live safely, enjoy good health, and stay involved.
- Stakeholders identified the following elements when considering “age-friendly” communities: inclusion, respect, accessibility, communication, education, diversity, and removing stigmas.

Priority Pillars

PRIORITY PILLAR 3

Address ageism and support active aging

- Ageism refers to biases rooted in society that can lead to prejudice and discrimination towards individuals based on their age.
- Active aging refers to being physically, socially, and mentally active. It includes supporting and maintaining positive well-being, which impact physical, social, mental, and spiritual health.

PRIORITY PILLAR 4

Support upstream endeavors that address the social determinants of health

- Endeavors that are “upstream” not only look at physical causes to illness, but also consider the social causes. This relates to many of the social determinants of health.
- Upstream endeavors promote health, prevent illness, and address the social causes of health and wellness.

1

Develop and Implement “Home First” Age-in-Place Initiatives

Priority Pillars

The Goal: Services for seniors to stay in their homes and age-in-place.

Recommended Three-Year Action Items

Support Island seniors to safely return to their own homes following a hospital stay by strengthening restorative care across Prince Edward Island.
Provide additional support to caregivers through increased utilization of existing respite services.
Increase access to long-term care through the addition of 100 new long-term care beds over the next two years, and undertake a comprehensive analysis of future LTC-Bed requirements in subsequent years.
Implement an evidence-based assessment and care planning technology (InterRAI) in Homecare in the province.
Improve access to care for frail seniors with complex needs and support individuals to remain in their communities.
Utilize the Mobile Integrated Health Program to provide additional supports to seniors to remain at home by building on the expertise of paramedics, nurses, and other health care workers.
Build on the success of Seniors Mental Health Resources Teams and the Provincial Geriatric Program to meet the needs of Island Seniors.
Explore ways to further support caregivers by considering new initiatives.
Strengthen health system understanding of the particular requirements of dementia care and identify opportunities to support the growing population of people with dementia and their caregivers.
Continue to engage in the development and subsequent implementation of the National Dementia Strategy to ensure that Islander’s needs are addressed.
Explore the development of a Seniors Companion Program to extend home and social support to seniors in the community.

2

Incorporate an age-friendly approach to communities, housing, workforce, and health care facilities

Priority Pillars

The Goal: Principles of age-friendly communities are incorporated throughout future policy and practice endeavors. Age-friendly principles within and outside of health care will promote wellness and preserve health by providing inclusive designs and social connectedness.

Recommended Three-Year Action Items

Review long-term care financial assessment policies to provide for an equitable balance between the senior’s cost of long-term care while recognizing the needs of partners who continue to live in the community.

Support Island seniors and their caregivers in accessing information and navigating the health system.

Recognize communities that have achieved age-friendly status by implementing an Age-Friendly Community Recognition Program throughout PEI.

Enhance training and awareness for health care workers in the areas of seniors health and wellness.

Enhance specialized geriatric and dementia training for health care providers who support seniors and their caregivers.

Strengthen age-friendly initiatives in hospitals and other health care facilities.

Explore opportunities to investigate transitions of care into long-term care facilities.

In conjunction with the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning, develop a program that educates employers about the advantages of hiring and retaining older workers.

In conjunction with the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning, provide additional training for Skills PEI employees and employment assistance service providers to support seniors and near seniors in finding employment opportunities.

Promote awareness and support the application process for the “New Horizons for Seniors Program” funded by the Government of Canada. This program provides grants to organizations that want to support individuals aged 55+ make a difference in the lives of others and in their communities.

3

Address Ageism and Support Active Aging

Priority Pillars

The Goal: A renewed focus on active aging in combination with initiatives aimed to remove stereotypes to improve the wellness of Island seniors.

Recommended Three-Year Action Items

Support Island seniors to become more active and socially involved by considering an Active Aging dimension into the Wellness Grants program offered in the Department of Health and Wellness.

Engage with communities throughout PEI to develop a media campaign which promotes positive images of aging.

Initiate health and wellness campaign geared towards active aging by strengthening partnerships within the sport and recreation sector and other community organizations on Prince Edward Island.

Promote early integration of palliative care, life-prolonging therapies and advanced care planning.

In conjunction with the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning, explore expanding the Skills PEI “Passport to Employment” program to include individuals 65+. The “Passport to Employment” program is one that assists unemployed, mature workers in developing job search and employment skills that can assist them to re-enter the workforce. Currently, the employment program is only offered to those who are 55-64.

Promote volunteer opportunities for Island seniors.

Develop and initiate a “Connecting Generations” educational program aimed at promoting healthy aging and addressing stereotypes of aging.

Research employment barriers for older workers and explore opportunities to address those barriers in order to facilitate (re)entering the workplace for those 55+.

4

Support Upstream Endeavors That Address the Social Determinants of Health

Priority Pillars

The Goal: Promote health and wellness of Island seniors by recognizing the social factors that shape and impact illness experiences.

Recommended Three-Year Action Items

Explore innovative housing options for seniors in the context of Prince Edward Island's Housing Action Plan.

Invest in new seniors housing units, as announced in the 2018/19 Budget Address.

Explore innovative initiatives to enhance social connectedness for seniors.

Focus on health promotion initiatives to prevent chronic disease and improve mental health.

Partner with the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning to explore inclusive workforce options for seniors.

Develop innovative community based services within our primary care networks to support healthy aging and those living with chronic conditions.

Build on the success of the Seniors' Independence Initiative.

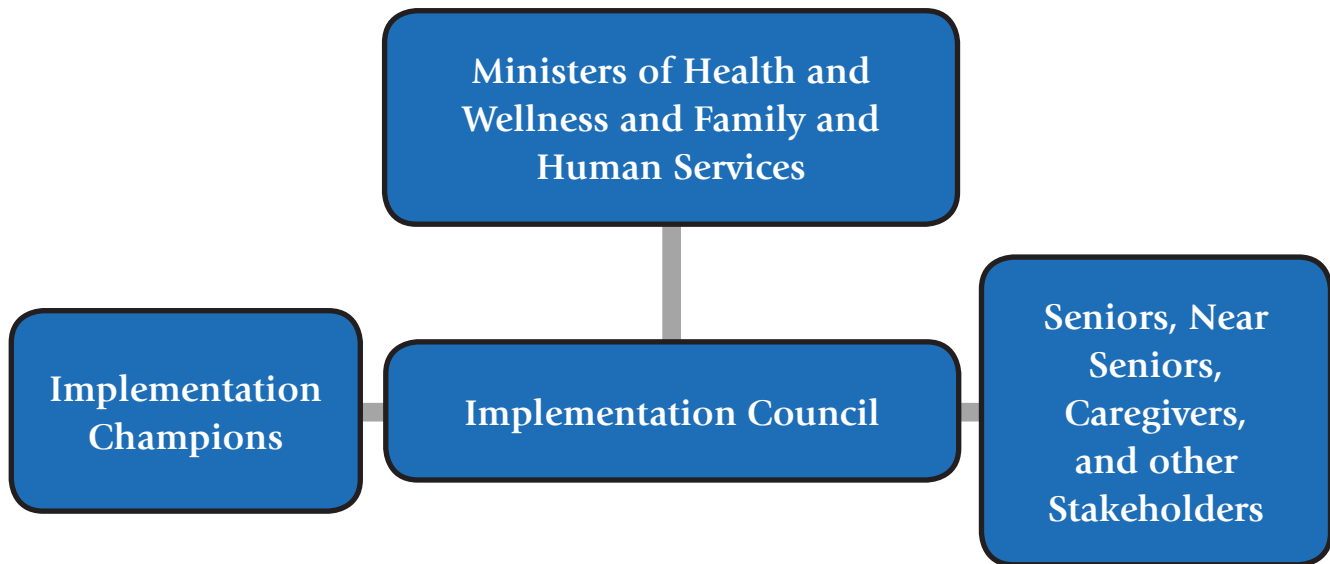
Initiate public campaign to increase awareness of the risk factors and early signs of dementia.

Explore opportunities to develop lifelong learning initiatives to ensure that seniors are supported to enhance and share their knowledge and experience.



Implementation Council

A CALL FOR ACTION



To ensure that the Vision and Actions identified in this Action Plan will be put into practice, an Implementation Council will be created. The Council will be co-chaired by the Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Family and Human Services. The Council will create an annual plan to explore opportunities to achieve the action items identified. It will report annually to the Ministers of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services on progress of the annual plan.

Community Implementation Champions will also be engaged with the Council. Champions, members of the community, will facilitate the implementation of action items necessary to achieve the Vision of this Action Plan. The Council will also create opportunities for the voices of Island seniors, near seniors, and caregivers to continue to inform the work of government in improving the health and wellness of Islanders.



Promoting Wellness, Preserving Health



CONCLUSION

The Government of Prince Edward Island is committed to promoting the wellness and preserving the health of all Islanders.

The voices of Island seniors, near seniors, and caregivers was sought and has helped form the foundation of this Action Plan. The Government of Prince Edward Island is committed to promoting the wellness and preserving the health of all Islanders. This requires collaborative work between a variety of stakeholders in both governmental and non-governmental sectors.

It is important to have an Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors, and Caregivers for the province in order to ensure that health and wellness policy and practice is being organized strategically by an evidence-based framework grounded in the voices of Island seniors, near seniors, and caregivers, and that takes into account the diverse experiences and realities of all Islanders.

The Vision outlined in this Action Plan is progressive in orientation and aligns with other government Visions relating to health and wellness.

Examples of such Visions include the following:

- “Health for All Islanders” – Chief Public Health Office, 2016
- “Empowering individuals and families to be safe, healthy, secure and connected with communities” – Department of Family and Human Services, 2018
- “One Island health system supporting improved health for Islanders” – Health PEI, 2017
- “Prince Edward Islanders live longer, healthier, and productive and fulfilling lives” – Department of Health and Wellness, 2015

This document, “Promoting Wellness, Preserving Health: A Provincial Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors, and Caregivers Living on Prince Edward Island,” describes ideas and initiatives to enhance seniors health and wellness in the province. Utilizing the data collected and with the continued contact with relevant stakeholders and group members, this Action Plan provides a framework to help guide the province.

From small things, big things come



It is important to have a Seniors Action Plan for the province in order to ensure that health and wellness policy and practice is being organized strategically by an evidence-based framework grounded in the voices of Island seniors, near seniors, and caregivers, and that takes into account the diverse experiences and realities of all Islanders.

The Mighty Island

This Action Plan serves to benefit all Islanders. Together we can make a difference. Now is the time for change.
princeedwardisland.ca/Seniors-Health

