



August 2021

**Re: Virtual Conference ~ Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Seniors' Strategy**

Dear Mayor and Council

Please consider this your personal invitation for you or a representative from your community to attend this important and timely national conference. This virtual conference, co-sponsored by the New Horizons for Seniors Program, the BC Retired Teachers Association, the BC Government Retired Employees Association and the BC Government and Service Employees' Union will be held September 27 and 28, 2021.

Major challenges and opportunities face seniors, our families and our communities. As one of 400 conference participants, you will help identify public policies that will help us find the best way forward. World class speakers will discuss major issues and outline their visions for the future. Issues affecting today's older adults range from healthy aging to human rights, housing needs, technology, social isolation and long-term care, have all come to the forefront during the pandemic. We must work together to address them as we build inclusive, sustainable, age-friendly communities.

Our roster of speakers includes:

- **Pat Armstrong**, Canadian expert on long term care who will provide guidelines for change in a positive direction.
- **Kasari Govender**, BC's Commissioner of Human Rights who will set the scene on rights for older adults now and in the future.
- **David Eby**, BC's Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing who will provide the perspective of the BC provincial government.
- **Isobel Mackenzie**, the BC Seniors Advocate, will provide insights into the latest trends that will inform the future of the lives of older adults in older adults.

These and other experts – as you'll see in the attached preliminary program – will address plenary sessions. We have also assembled high level panels to present and debate current viewpoints on key issues. Workshops will give participants the opportunity to discuss and

share their first-hand experience, and to determine how we can move forward to build communities and public policies that work for all generations.

This unique conference will be of interest to everyone who cares about civil society, and of particular interest to:

- Individual seniors and seniors' representatives from across B.C. and Canada.
- Municipal councillors and planners, social planning representatives, parks and recreation and health authority representatives.
- MLAs, Members of Parliament and First Nations.
- Federal and provincial departments dealing with seniors.
- Non-governmental organizations such as social planning councils, senior and community centre representatives, agencies working with seniors, unions, and advocacy groups.

**We urge municipal councils** to sponsor representatives from seniors' advisory committees to attend. We hope that every municipality in the province will send at least one representative. We encourage **ministries** to sponsor delegates from provincial seniors' coordinating bodies. We ask **unions** to sponsor members who work with seniors. Finally we invite **NGOs** including social planning councils, community centres, advocacy group and all who work with seniors to participate.

You may register for this conference at [www.coscobc.org](http://www.coscobc.org). More information about the conference is included in the preliminary program. The registration fee of \$25 will include a complimentary copy of the final conference report that will be mailed to all conference participants. ***Please register early!*** We are able to accommodate just 400 delegates.

As the organizers of this conference, the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C. (COSCO) believes seniors and their organizations must contribute directly to developing the policies that affect their lives to ensure the policies are fair and just.

We thank the conference sponsors together with a number of organizations which have provided support. We look forward to you or a representative at this conference.

Yours truly,

*Sheila Pither*

Sheila Pither  
COSCO President

Attachment: preliminary conference program