



COSCO NEWS

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DON'T PLAN FOR SENIORS PLAN WITH SENIORS

This issue of the COSCO News is composed of editorials from past years which reflect the desire of seniors to get government, and society generally, to plan WITH seniors, not FOR seniors. We still have a long way to go to assure that planning is done with full input from seniors. Not only do we have to convince governments and the public, but we also have to convince many of our fellow senior citizens that older adults must be involved in the planning process and also in the establishment, execution, promotion and evaluation of programs affecting seniors and civil society generally. This will require increased and continued advocacy, organization, education and participation by seniors in public life. COSCO prefers discussion over confrontation, but we wouldn't be worth our salt if we turned a blind eye to seniors' abuse and neglect for example. We will continue to respond strongly to unjust treatment of individual seniors and to government decisions which adversely affect the well-being of British Columbia's senior population.

Hopefully the conference on Seniors' Health, Housing and Income in a Global Age - Friendly Community' will help us forge a strong 'best practice' seniors' agenda. In addition it will allow seniors, planners, educators, program deliverers and policy makers to establish contact with each other, which is something new in this country. For COSCO it will be another step forward in dealing positively with our increased longevity and consequently improving the quality of life of all seniors.

The World Health Organization (WHO) 'Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide' and the 'Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide' are useful tools for us, but successful outcomes for Age-Friendly Communities, both rural and urban, will only come about if endeavours are senior driven. We fully endorse the recommendations in the WHO Guide which emphasize the necessity of strong seniors' organizations and public support for them. Many other segments of society have strong advocacy organizations and it's time seniors did too.

We commend and thank all three levels of government for their financial contributions to our health promotion program and for their assistance with our September conference. COSCO is particularly grateful for the assistance we have received from many trade unions and from 'Working Enterprises' who, with financial and in kind contributions, allowed us to grow and become a major voice for seniors in BC and Canada. Naturally nothing would have happened if it weren't for literally thousand of seniors who heeded COSCO's calls for action and who volunteer daily to promote COSCO initiatives and to carry out the programs of our affiliated organizations.

In closing we ask you to review our past editorials because they reflect from whence we came and point to where we are going. Yes, we have come a long way in a very short time, but at our age time is precious and we do not intend to waste it. There are so many things to be done, but the generosity and support of people of all ages who share our vision of what life should be like for seniors in our communities is of enormous value. We thank you.