



ALBERTA
SENIORS AND HOUSING

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Edmonton-Riverview*

AR 44598

November 27, 2017

Dr. Sheree Kwong See
Seniors Advocate
Office of the Seniors Advocate
6th Floor, Forestry Building
9920 - 108 Street
Edmonton AB T5K 2M4

Dear Dr. Kwong See:

Thank you for submitting the 2016-17 Annual Report of the Office of the Seniors Advocate. I appreciate your efforts in your first seven months as Seniors Advocate to swiftly establish your office and, in particular, your support to over 550 seniors in resolving their concerns with respect to programs and services. I also appreciate receiving your recommendation on trends and systemic issues and I have forwarded this to department staff for review.

As Seniors Advocate, you have an extraordinary opportunity to serve Alberta seniors. Your mandate is to provide information and resolution support to seniors and their families on issues relevant to them, and advise government on trends and systemic issues that impact seniors. Your work is guided by the principles of dignity, accountability, inclusion and collaboration. In the coming year, I would like you to consider focussing on the following priorities, and include a summary of this work in your annual report for my review and consideration. This work may be informed by meeting with researchers, conducting literature reviews and reviewing government actions and reports in Alberta and other jurisdictions.

Ageing in Community – Age-Friendly Communities

Our government is committed to supporting seniors to remain in their communities as long as they are able and to supporting communities to develop age-friendly approaches. Your responsibility is to identify successful approaches underway in Alberta that facilitate ageing in community and age-friendly communities that may inform further action throughout the province.

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Affordable Housing for Seniors

A key component of supporting seniors to continue to live in their communities is ensuring seniors have access to safe, suitable, and affordable housing options. Our government introduced the Seniors Home Adaptation and Repair Program in July 2016 and announced the *Provincial Affordable Housing Strategy* in June 2017. I ask that you identify additional innovative approaches that communities and organizations have undertaken to improve seniors' options for housing that may be applicable to other areas of our province.

Creating an Inclusive Alberta by Overcoming Ageism

Alberta has a rich and diverse history and our government is committed to ensuring all Albertans have opportunities to realize their potential. Ageism is discrimination of people based on their age and, in particular, the elderly. However, ageism does not generate a similar level of social action as other forms of discrimination. Our government values the positive contributions seniors make to our province and has recognized October 1 as International Day of Older Persons and June 1 as Intergenerational Day. I ask that you recommend specific actions for organizations and communities to implement that may help to address ageism and contribute to diversity in our province. Examples of this might include identifying the positive role seniors play in Alberta and promoting inclusion in areas such as labour force participation.

I look forward to learning about the progress of your work in these areas during our quarterly meetings. In advance of each meeting, I ask you to provide me with a progress report that outlines activities related to each of these priorities, as well as the top five casework topics your office has dealt with in that particular quarter. I also ask that you include a summary of this work in your annual report for my review and consideration.

Thank you for your commitment to making life better for Alberta's seniors.

Sincerely,



Lori Sigurdson
Minister of Seniors and Housing