

New Brunswick
Seniors'
Advocate



Défenseur des
aînés
du Nouveau-Brunswick

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Measuring and Enforcing the Human Rights of Older Persons

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Overview

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"You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing. "

George Bernard Shaw



- The Advocate's mandate for Seniors and Vulnerable Adults
- Staff, functions and operations
- The Human Rights of older persons
- A proposed measurement tool for enforcement of the Human Rights of Older Persons

The Role of the Advocate

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- *Protecting the rights and interests of seniors and vulnerable adults;*
- *Ensuring that their opinions are heard and considered in matters which affect them;*
- *Ensuring that they have access to the services to which they are entitled and any complaints about access to service are addressed effectively;*
- *Providing advice to government regarding the rights and interests of seniors and vulnerable adults and their access to services;*
- *Educating New Brunswickers about the rights and interests of seniors and vulnerable adults;*
- *Acting generally as an advocate for the rights and interests of New Brunswick seniors and vulnerable adults.*

A new small office

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- A new mandate conferred in 2017
- 10 staff assisting with this mandate, but only two dedicated full time
- Education, Communications and Outreach and Systemic Investigations Staff are shared with Child and Youth mandate
- One of three offices of its kind in Canada, along with BC and Newfoundland & Labrador

A Human Rights Approach to Defending Seniors

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The global march for the rights of older persons:

- 1982 World Assembly on Ageing produces *The International Plan on Aging*
- 1991 UN Principles for Older Persons adopted by UN General Assembly
- 2002 Second World Assembly on Ageing produced the *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing*
- 2010 Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing for the Purpose of Strengthening the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons (OEWGA)

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United Nations Principles for Older Persons, 1991:

- Independence
 - Participation
 - Care
 - Self-Fulfilment
 - Dignity
-
- In 2017 the Head of the OHCHR offered her support for the establishment of a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.
 - The UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing is finally moving ahead on this work.
 - It is expected that by 2050 the demographic of persons over 60 will surpass the child & youth demographic globally for the first time

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- The Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- The Two Covenants: ICCPR and ICESCR
- UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons
 - Adopted in 2006
 - Inspired by the Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Ratified by 186 member States of the UN
 - Ratified by Canada in 2010



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UNCRPD General Principles:

- (a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- (b) Non-discrimination;
- (c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- (d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- (e) Equality of opportunity;
- (f) Accessibility;
- (g) Equality between men and women;
- (h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

A proposed measurement tool for enforcement of the Human Rights of Older Persons

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An Annual State of the Older Person's Report

- National in scope
- Defining and measuring the human rights of older person's in Canada
- Using the OHCHR's Structure-Process-Outcome (SPO) methodology for human rights indicator selection
- Drawing upon the experience of NB's State of the Child Report and the CIHR GlobalChild platform of Dr. Ziba Vaghri
- Proposal being developed for the Healthy Seniors Pilot Project funding – partnerships welcome.

THE LAST WORD

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“Instead of possibilities, I have realities in my past, not only the reality of work done and of love loved, but of sufferings bravely suffered. These sufferings are even the things of which I am most proud, though these are things which cannot inspire envy.”

Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning

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