



COSCO Highlights

**Happy New Year to all our members and friends.
Here is a list of 2022 goals and aspirations:**

Here is a list of some objectives for COSCO in 2022. Some of them are long range, others more imminent, but all are focused on protecting and improving the well-being of older adults in British Columbia and beyond. There is no particular order in the list. As you probably know COSCO always has many irons in the fire and we take advantage of every possible opportunity to further our goals. For each issue I will list the COSCO committee charged with recommending actions to the Executive.

- Long-term care standards are not yet in place nationally and not really coordinated in British Columbia. Are there more unannounced visits by inspectors? How are visitation rights being handled? Will there be a triage where the seniors who look the closest to death are denied treatment? We have many other questions to ask, HEALTH COMMITTEE, Recent meeting with Parliamentary Secretary.
- Province-wide transportation services. TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE. Guest speaker for January delegate meeting.
- New workshop launched with New Horizons grant money. The name of the topic is Passing the Torch and it deals with recruiting and retaining leaders in senior organizations, COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE.
- Mental health services. HEALTH COMMITTEE, Recent meeting with Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Malcolmson, where we were assured that more resources will be added.
- Tele-Health. The use of telephone calls to replace face to face medical appointments has taken over many patient/doctor discussions. Many seniors have let us know they don't like the change. HEALTH COMMITTEE, Recent meeting with the President of Doctors of British Columbia and also Parliamentary Secretary Elmore.

- Housing for all who require it. HOUSE COMMITTEE. Meeting with Minister of Housing.
- Income altered because of federal government grants has changed tax obligations for many seniors. INCOME SECURITY COMMITTEE , Frequent contact to Ministry for Seniors and Minister of Finance.
- UN Convention of Older Adults to protect Human Rights. It has been many years since work began on such a Covenant. We want to convince the UN to adopt one. We know this is a long term goal. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, Canada has a newly appointed UN President. I have written to her and she has replied. I will call next, asking for a meeting.
- Our STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICIES COMMITTEE is responsible for both internal and external planning, reporting to the Executive and Delegates meetings as all our committees do. At present the committee is working on transition among Executive positions and also working on the policy handbook to make it more organized.
- MEMBERSHIP AND FUND RAISING COMMITTEE is particularly working on broadening COSCO's affiliate and associate membership to include more ethnic groups.
- Senior Driver Assessment. Earlier in 2012 we renewed our Stay on the Road senior driver assessment workshop , partnering with ICBC. Very large audiences responded. We will present several workshops in 2022, COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE.

COSCO has been appointed to several provincial government committees and boards. We are strictly non-partisan. At our recent conference, which was wonderfully attended, we were addressed by a wide variety of speakers. We have been hosting conferences every fourth year and we can honestly say that our audience is growing. You may have been at this one.

Please get in touch if you want to talk to COSCO about anything. We are more than happy to hear from you.

Sheila Pither, Soon to be Past President.



COSCO 2021

The following is a brief summary of the activities COSCO has been involved in 2021.

COSCO is an organization of seniors and we work to make things better for all seniors in the province. Please see our website **coscobc.org** to learn more about our organization. We invite you to join COSCO. As well we'd like to tell you a bit about the work our volunteer organization has done in 2021.

The **pandemic** posed all the problems you are familiar with but it also brought some new opportunities. We quickly discovered how to use Zoom and the internet to connect with each other. We have been quite

successful in holding meetings, workshops and the conference. Indeed, the technology has enabled us to connect with more seniors in all parts of BC than we ever have before.

Sheila Pither, the COSCO President, has continued to provide the leadership of our organization and has done it with great wisdom and care. She has worked tirelessly, even as she celebrated her 89th birthday! She is determined to reach out to other like-minded organizations whether they be local, provincial, national or international.

This past year we continued to work in three key areas of health care, housing and related costs and income security including pensions.

Health Care: the focus has been on Long Term Care standards, the privatization of health care, quality in primary care, and a national Pharmacare program. This has inevitably brought us to the issues of human rights of seniors.

In health care, we have pushed hard on the need for **National Standards for Long-Term Care**. We have met with Ministers, BC MPs and MLAs to put forward our position that seniors should be in the best possible place for their remaining years. We have worked very closely with the National Pensioners Federation (NPF) on webinars to get the most updated information from those specializing in their areas of expertise.

We have been very concerned with the limitations of virtual visits to our doctors which have severely altered the delivery of health care in BC. We need a consultation with seniors. This hasn't happened yet.

As well, the move to **TeleHealth** is concerning as we see it as a move to more privatization of our health care. At the same time, we have continued to call for home care so that the majority of our seniors can remain in their homes while getting the necessary supports to do so. Studies have shown that 'staying at home' is the desire of nearly all seniors.

We also have continued to call for **National Pharmacare**. With that in mind we have been very concerned with the problems of the federal Patented Medicines Review Board that sets the prices for new drugs becoming available. We have submitted two briefs on the issue to government in the past year. We do this because it would impact on any national Pharmacare program offered. Not surprising, the large and not-so-large pharmaceutical companies are opposed to setting any limits that would affect their profits.

Because of the focus on the pandemic, we were taken by surprise by the number of deaths that took place because of the 'heat dome'. The majority of deaths were seniors. This is an area for further work as climate change is real and we anticipate more 'heat domes' in the future.

From the work of the Health Committee has come the need for human rights for seniors. We are working with the NPF to see that our federal government signs on to the **UN Convention on the Rights of Older Adults**. We partnered with NPF to offer 2 webinars that focused on Long Term Care and seniors' human rights. We were able to have a UN representative speak at this webinar.

Housing: We continue to call for housing for seniors and work to see that seniors in the lowest income bracket can live in affordable and accessible housing. Housing insurance has become an issue as the prices soared. Perhaps the call for BC to have a provincial insurance plan, much like ICBC, would help with these costs.

Income security: This is a huge issue for seniors. We made submissions to both the federal and provincial budgets. We continue to call for pension protection and we are working to see that workers/pensioners do not lose out during bankruptcies. We raised the issue of the 10% increase of OAS to seniors over 75 as poorly thought-out. Besides being a divisive tactic for seniors older and younger than 75, it misses the point that every low-income senior needs a boost in income.

In 2022 we hope to continue with a **Zoom-hybrid** when we are able to return to in-person meetings, so we don't lose the voices of our total membership. We have overhauled our **website (coscobc.org)** and it looks fresh and exciting. We continue to post on Facebook. And we have published issues of our newsletter every quarter.

For the **federal election** we were able to produce a special 'election issue' of the COSCO News. We were involved in presenting 2 all candidates' meetings.

We're re-ignited our **Stay on the Road: A Practical Guide for Senior Drivers** and ran 3 workshops with ICBC in the fall. We will offer another one in January.

We hope you will consider joining with us, as there is greater strength in greater numbers.

COSCO Executive - December 2021.

