

# Aging Population Policy Framework

November 2010



## Executive Summary

Government of Alberta ■





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background and Context

Alberta's population is steadily increasing in age, as are the populations of other Canadian provinces and developed nations across the world. This is due to a combination of factors, including longer life expectancies, decreasing fertility rates, and the advancing age of the “baby boom” generation — those born between 1946 and 1965.

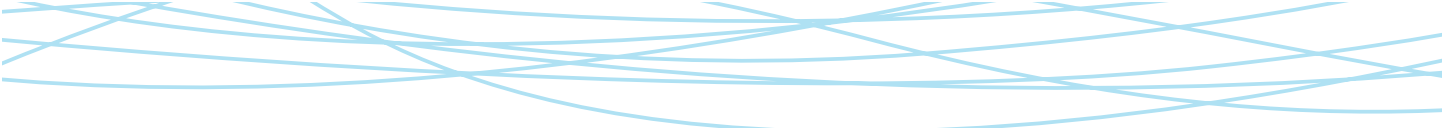
Between 2011 and 2021, the percentage of Albertans aged 65 and older will increase from approximately 11 per cent to 15 per cent of the total population. By 2031, when the last member of the baby boomers reaches 65 years of age, it is projected that about one in five Albertans will be a senior. Alberta's future seniors are expected to be more diverse than ever before, with varying skills, abilities, support systems, living arrangements, levels of education, health and wealth — all influenced by their diverse experiences and differing circumstances.

This demographic reality will have profound and lasting economic and social implications for our province, leading to opportunities and challenges across a wide range of policy areas. Responding to these opportunities and challenges will necessitate the involvement of a variety of partners in areas such as finance, transportation, housing, health, infrastructure, municipal affairs, community services, public safety and others. It will require action on the part of governments, the private and non-profit sectors, communities, families and individuals.

The *Aging Population Policy Framework* defines and articulates the Government of Alberta's roles and responsibilities in responding to the needs of an aging population. It is intended to provide clarity to other governments, sectors, stakeholders and all Albertans about how the Government of Alberta intends to act in a number of key areas.

The purpose of the Framework is to:

- Identify the Government of Alberta's role in meeting the needs of Alberta's aging population so that Albertans have the information and support they require to plan for their senior years.
- Communicate the Alberta government's key policy directions in preparing for Alberta's aging population, and its desired objectives in those areas.

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- Provide an overall context for the coordinated development of policies, programs and services to meet the needs of Alberta's aging population.
  - Provide a framework to inform the allocation of resources so that programs and services are affordable to taxpayers on a sustained basis.
  - Foster collaboration and integration among Alberta government ministries, the federal government, municipal governments and other community partners so that programs and services for the aging population are efficiently and effectively delivered to Albertans.


The development of the Framework has been informed by the input of Albertans through the work of the Demographic Planning Commission, which solicited Albertans' views on the major issues facing Alberta's aging population. In its Findings Report, the Commission identified a number of policy areas that should be addressed in developing the Framework.

The Framework has also been informed by other quantitative and qualitative sources, including Census data, additional statistical information, and trend analysis regarding Alberta's aging population. In addition, a cross-ministerial approach has been employed in developing the Framework to reflect the perspectives, plans and collaborative efforts of Alberta government ministries that have responsibility for issues relating to the aging population.

## Roles and Responsibilities

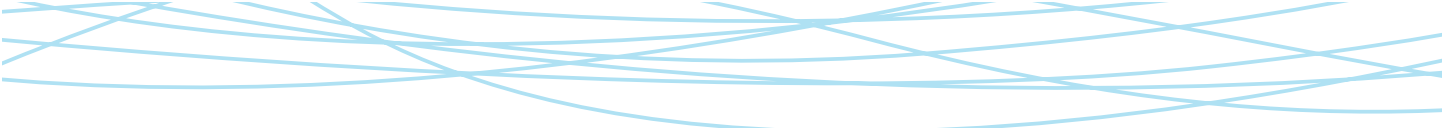
In the context of an aging population, the Government of Alberta has a role in three key areas:

- **Setting province-wide policy directions concerning seniors and an aging population.** The Alberta government articulates how the province will position itself to prepare for a growing aging population, and develops forward-looking, adaptive and evidence-informed policy on key issues relating to aging.
- **Facilitating collaboration among individuals, communities and governments to meet the needs of seniors.** The Alberta government works with the private sector, the non-profit and voluntary sector, municipal governments and other community partners in new and existing partnerships to identify and respond to the changing needs and priorities of Albertans as they age.

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- **Providing supports and services to Alberta's seniors.** The Alberta government supports the provision of effective, efficient and affordable programs and services that have a meaningful impact in improving outcomes for Albertans as they age. This includes supporting seniors who cannot meet their basic needs, and collaborating with community partners to provide coordinated and integrated supports and services for seniors who need them. This also involves supporting programs and services that are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of an aging population, including seniors of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and those with disabilities.

Individuals and families, the private and non-profit sectors, municipal governments, and other governments also play key roles.

- **Individuals and families.** Individuals have primary responsibility for preparing for their senior years. This includes meeting their own basic needs, and securing the resources they will require for the lifestyle they choose as they age. Individuals, their families and support networks also play important roles in supporting wellness and well-being, such as encouraging healthy lifestyles and accessing medical care when necessary.
- **Private and non-profit sectors.** The private sector responds to the ever-changing demands of the marketplace, and is a key source of innovation, addressing evolving market demands with new and different services. Private sector organizations in Alberta communities offer a wide range of products and services in a variety of areas, including housing, finance, transportation and recreation. Local employers also play an important role, providing a range of opportunities where older Albertans can continue to build and contribute skills and experience, mentor younger workers, maintain social linkages and earn income. Alberta's non-profit sector offers many community-based services to aging Albertans based on identified needs at the grassroots level, and delivers these services with the support of other community partners. The non-profit sector will continue to play a crucial part in helping the Alberta government identify and respond to aging Albertans in need.
- **Municipal governments.** Municipal governments are responsible for providing leadership and direction on civic and community issues. As such, they are in a unique position to facilitate collaboration in their communities to identify and respond to the changing needs of aging Albertans. This includes developing age-friendly environments through choices in municipal land-use, public spaces, infrastructure, housing and transportation.

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- **Other governments.** The federal government provides the primary source of income support for low-income seniors, through programs like Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and manages and administers the Canada Pension Plan. The Alberta government collaborates with the federal government and other provincial and territorial governments to address issues of significance for seniors.

## Principles For Government Decision-Making

The Framework is designed to foster a coordinated and aligned approach across the Government of Alberta in developing policies, programs and services that meet the changing needs of Alberta's aging population. In fulfilling its role in meeting the needs and priorities of an aging population, the Government of Alberta will act consistently with the principles outlined below.

Alberta government policies, programs and services will be:

- Fair and equitable to future generations.
- Aimed at encouraging the independence of Albertans.
- Proactive and flexible to changing circumstances.
- Aligned towards achieving outcomes.
- Affordable to taxpayers.
- Effective and efficient at achieving intended objectives.
- Structured to assist Albertans most in need.
- Informed by evidence and input.
- Collaborative with communities.
- Respectful of individual choice.



## Outcomes

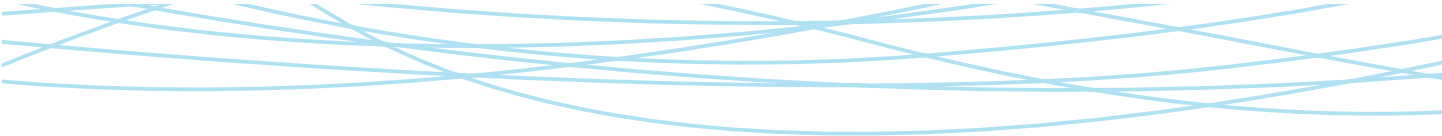
The Framework establishes eight outcomes that reflect the broad goals Alberta will pursue in preparing to meet the needs of an aging population. All sectors, along with individual Albertans, have a role in achieving the following outcomes:

- Albertans have access to adequate financial resources to meet their needs in their senior years.
- Alberta seniors are able to reside in the place that is appropriate for their circumstances.
- Alberta seniors have access to a range of continuing care services that enable them to reside in an environment that is appropriate for their circumstances.
- Alberta seniors are supported in maintaining optimum health as they age.
- Albertans have access to safe, affordable, appropriate and accessible transportation options during their senior years.
- Alberta seniors are supported in maintaining optimum independence in making decisions about their lives and are free from abuse.
- Alberta seniors are engaged as full and welcome participants in their communities.
- Alberta seniors are able to easily access Alberta government programs, services and supports.

## Strategic Policy Directions

A number of Alberta government ministries currently work in collaboration to meet the needs of seniors through the development and delivery of policy, programs and services for seniors. The Framework aligns these efforts under an integrated set of strategic policy directions in eight key areas of significance for Alberta's aging population.

These strategic policy directions provide guidance on the overall approaches the Government of Alberta will pursue in responding to the needs of future seniors. The directions build on existing initiatives and partnerships within the government. They are designed to improve the cohesion of policies, programs and services in achieving common outcomes to prepare for and meet the needs of an aging population.



## I. Financial Security and Income

**Outcome**  
Albertans have access to adequate financial resources to meet their needs in their senior years.

- Policy Directions**
- Assist Albertans in planning for their financial needs as seniors.
  - Support Albertans who choose to remain engaged in the workforce in their senior years.
  - Enable appropriate and effective allocation of government-funded financial supports for seniors who lack the financial resources to meet their basic needs.

- Related Linkages**
- *Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce*
  - *Mature Workers in Alberta and British Columbia: Understanding the Issues and Opportunities*
  - *Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta's Next Generation*

## II. Housing and Aging in the Right Place

**Outcome**  
Alberta seniors are able to reside in the place that is appropriate for their circumstances.

- Policy Directions**
- Support and foster the development of sufficient affordable housing units for those seniors most in need.
  - Encourage market innovation and greater market choice in housing options, especially in rural and remote areas of the province.
  - Facilitate efficient provision of reasonable government-funded home support services to those seniors who need them.

- Related Linkages**
- *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years*
  - *Continuing Care Strategy — Aging in the Right Place*
  - *The Alberta Injury Control Strategy*
  - *Barrier-Free Design Guide*





### III. Continuing Care

#### **Outcome**

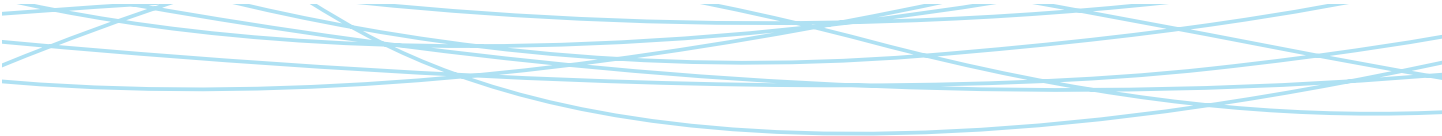
Alberta seniors have access to a range of continuing care services that enable them to reside in an environment that is appropriate for their circumstances.

#### **Policy Directions**

- Foster the development of an increased, diverse supply of affordable living options to enable Albertans to age in the right place.
- Increase the supply and range of home care and community care services to assist Albertans to receive services in the community.
- Monitor the provision of health care and accommodation services provided in long-term care facilities, supportive living units and through home care to ensure that safe and quality services are provided.
- Provide support for an appropriate level of services to facilitate aging-in-place among seniors who are in home living settings.

#### **Related Linkages**

- *Continuing Care Strategy — Aging in the Right Place*
- *Vision 2020: The Future of Health Care in Alberta*
- *A Foundation for Alberta's Health System — Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Health*
- *Putting People First: Part One, Recommendations for an Alberta Health Act*



#### IV. Healthy Aging and Health Care

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| <b>Outcome</b><br>Alberta seniors are supported in maintaining optimum health as they age.  |   |
| <b>Policy Directions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Facilitate community and individual efforts to engage in healthy living practices that will help achieve healthy aging.</li><li>Support the provision of timely access to efficiently delivered, high-quality health care services that meet the needs of seniors.</li><li>Match Alberta’s health workforce supply to demand for services.</li></ul> | <b>Related Linkages</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Vision 20/20: The Future of Health Care in Alberta</i></li><li><i>Continuing Care Strategy — Aging in the Right Place</i></li><li><i>Building and Educating Tomorrow’s Workforce</i></li><li><i>Health Workforce Action Plan</i></li><li><i>Alberta Injury Control Strategy</i></li><li><i>Framework for a Healthy Alberta</i></li><li><i>Active Alberta: A Recreation, Active Living and Sport Policy (draft)</i></li></ul> |

#### V. Transportation and Mobility

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| <b>Outcome</b><br>Albertans have access to safe, affordable, appropriate and accessible transportation options during their senior years.   |  |
| <b>Policy Directions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support the ability of Albertans aged 65 and older to continue driving safely.</li><li>Support the development of affordable, accessible and appropriate transportation options for seniors who are unable to or do not wish to drive.</li></ul> | <b>Related Linkages</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Alberta Traffic Safety Plan</i></li><li><i>20-Year Capital Plan</i></li><li><i>Land-use Framework</i></li></ul> |



## VI. Safety and Security

### Outcome

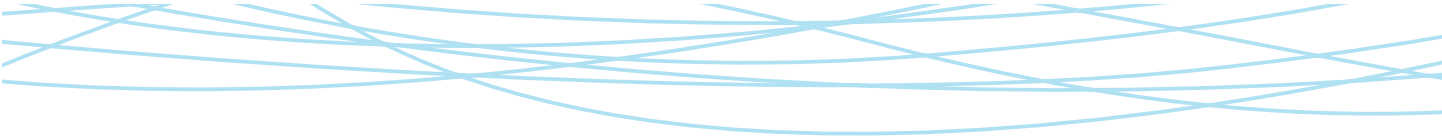
Alberta seniors are supported in maintaining optimum independence in making decisions about their lives and are free from abuse.

### Policy Directions

- Increase awareness about elder abuse and neglect and how to prevent and respond to it.
- Enhance the capacity of Alberta communities to respond to situations of elder abuse.
- Encourage advance planning with respect to financial and personal decisions.
- Facilitate the maintenance of personal autonomy with respect to personal and financial decision-making.
- Provide family and community caregivers with access to supports in their communities, which reflect and address the challenges of caring for an aging population with changing circumstances.

### Related Linkages

- *Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying*
- *Continuing Care Strategy — Aging in the Right Place*
- *Safe Communities Initiative*



## VII. Supportive Communities

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| <b>Outcome</b><br>Alberta seniors are engaged as full and welcome participants in their communities.   |   |
| <b>Policy Directions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Encourage and support Alberta communities in becoming age-friendly.</li><li>■ Support and encourage the recognition of seniors' contributions to Alberta communities.</li><li>■ Work with non-profit and voluntary sector organizations in developing and providing services and supports to seniors that reflect community needs and values.</li></ul> | <b>Related Linkages</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <i>Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors — Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide</i></li><li>■ <i>Alberta Nonprofit/Voluntary Sector Initiative</i></li></ul> |

## VIII. Access to Government

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| <b>Outcome</b><br>Alberta seniors are able to easily access Alberta government programs, services and supports.   |   |
| <b>Policy Directions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Examine opportunities to align Alberta government programs and services to make them more accessible to seniors who are in need.</li><li>■ Explore ways of improving the connection between Alberta government-funded programs and services and those seniors in need.</li></ul> | <b>Related Linkages</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <i>Service Alberta, Citizen Services Initiative</i></li></ul> |



## Implementation

The Framework sets out the Government of Alberta's overall strategic directions and desired long-term policy outcomes regarding current and future seniors. Pursuing these directions and outcomes will require ongoing collaborative work among Alberta government ministries. It will also require enhanced cooperation, partnership and effort on the part of all sectors and individual Albertans.

Alberta Seniors and Community Supports (ASCS) is responsible for encouraging and supporting the independence, well-being and inclusion of seniors through cross-ministerial collaboration on policies, programs, services, and supports. Reflecting this responsibility, ASCS will facilitate the implementation of the Framework and the coordinated development of policies, programs and supports consistent with the Framework.

Through collaboration among appropriate Alberta government ministries, municipalities, and community partners, implementation of the Framework will help Alberta respond to the changing needs of the aging population, and achieve shared, lasting, positive outcomes for Alberta's current and future seniors.

