

## Summit feedback drives action plan to improve life for NB seniors

(Fredericton, February 4, 2013)—The building of age-friendly communities and a positive public image of aging are key elements of an action plan to secure a good quality of life for New Brunswick seniors. The plan calls for involvement not only by organizations and government, but also communities and individuals across the province.

“Too often, good ideas fall by the wayside as time passes. We wanted to ensure this did not happen to the momentum and innovative thinking we saw at the November (2012) Summit for Healthy Aging and Care: Innovating Together,” said Jodi Hall, Chair of the organizing committee. More than 300 seniors, health care workers, policy makers and other stakeholders spent two days at the Fredericton summit examining the challenges and opportunities for enhancing the care and lifestyle of seniors in New Brunswick.

The summit was planned and hosted by a number of organizations related to services for seniors. The event produced a large volume of valuable input and ended with a high expectation among participants for further action. The organizing committee saw this as a grassroots mandate to continue the work begun by the summit by compiling and analyzing all of the input from participants, then developing an action plan.

“We now have a plan, and we’ll be presenting it to the summit participants for feedback,” said Hall. “Our core group will ask for a mandate from participants to launch the action plan.” A special tool for large-group conference calls will be used for presenting and discussing the plan in April, at a date to be announced.

Social Development Minister Madeleine Dube spoke at the November summit about the need for strong and broad collaboration if New Brunswick is to meet the challenges of its aging population. The province has the second oldest population in Canada, with adults over the age of 65 making up 16 percent of the population—projected to reach 25 percent over the next two decades.

“This summit reflected our goal of rebuilding New Brunswick together as we had long recognized that organizations serving seniors have operated too much in isolation of each other,” said Dube. “The summit was the first step in changing how we do things, and we now have a collaborative environment that has taken root and produced this action plan. Government looks forward to working closely with this group and the organizations it represents.”

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