

## BC Poverty Reduction Report - Youth for Chinese Seniors

### Introduction:

<b>Date</b>	Friday, March 9, 2018
<b>Community</b>	Low income Chinese seniors
<b># of Participants</b>	32
<b># of Organizations</b>	1

### About the Participants:

Tell us a bit about your group (i.e. general social and demographic profile – i.e. seniors, youth, single mothers, people who are homeless etc....)

Our group is made up of low income, non-English speaking Chinese seniors, many of whom are on fixed incomes (OAS/GIS and CPP). Almost everyone in the group rents in the Downtown Eastside and Chinatown in subsidized senior housing. The age range is 75 to 85 years old.

### About the Findings:

Tell us about the types of insights and feedback received to the following questions:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you or others out of poverty?

Issues: [Provide the results of your discussion of the issues – it should be transcribed from your flip chart notes]

- Rent is too high. Although rent for some are set at 30% of income in certain subsidized housing, that is not true for everyone. Some people are paying more than 30% of income if they are in the private rental market. Some social and non-profit housing landlords are raising rents which cause people to pay more than 30% of their income on rent, because they are on fixed incomes.
- Prescription and non-prescription medicine is too expensive. It is unfair for people who are sick to pay more for their medical needs. For some, prescription medicine costs are covered after paying a certain amount on prescription medicine a year. People cannot afford to pay that amount in the first place. This also does not include non-prescription medicine costs like general pain, cold, flu, and other over-the-counter medicines, which are unaffordable as they add up.
- Lots of marijuana use and traffic in some participants' buildings, causing disruption to them and their neighbours
- OAS/GIS incomes not high enough - low income seniors are increasingly challenged by living costs in Vancouver, especially rent, food, and medical costs. Many people are struggling with the current amounts, especially if they are sick or don't live in social or

non-profit housing. Seniors living with their spouses receive less OAS/GIS than single seniors, which is causing financial strain.

- Eliminate MSPs. Even after the 50% cut, it is still too costly and it is unfair that BC residents have to pay for health care when other provinces do not need to. Doesn't apply to seniors that have the lowest incomes and gets all of their premiums subsidized.
- Dental care is crucial but unaffordable. There is no public dental care coverage. It is expensive when you need to have teeth pulled out, when you need dentures, or even for basic primary care. Dental care costs cause a lot of stress because common procedures can cost several thousands of dollars.
- It is impossible to find senior home support for low income seniors. The local Better at Home program is at maximum capacity with an extensive waitlist and cannot accept new seniors who need home support services. Even for those who are able to find home support, the services don't offer meal making or housekeeping, which is in high demand.

### Possible Solutions

[Provide the results of your discussion of possible solutions– it should be transcribed from your flip chart notes]

- All rents to be set at 30% of income in public, subsidized, and private housing for all seniors
- Provide supplement for cost of electricity and gas bills
- Increase supplement for cost of prescription and non-prescription medicine
- Raise OAS and GIS rates and change the rates for married seniors so that each individual receives an equal OAS/GIS rate as compared to single seniors
- BC Government to increase healthcare coverage to include basic dental care and to supplement cost of other necessary dental procedures
- Model after Alberta's healthcare system re: no MSPs, and dental care coverage
- Eliminate MSP cost for BC residents - the Province should cover this cost
- Reinstate senior home support services through the health authorities - especially to include housekeeping, grocery shopping, meal prep, and proper baths

### Solutions and Actions That Can Make a Difference

(a) Looking at the list of issues and solutions generated, what types of solutions did the individuals who participated in your meeting identify as most important to them? [Each participant should received four (4) sticky dots to put on the solutions that from their perspective are most important]. Your summary report should include any of the solutions that received a dot from those that received the most dots to those receiving only one dot.

1. Reinstate senior home support services through the health authorities - especially to include housekeeping, grocery shopping, meal prep, and proper baths
2. BC Government to increase healthcare coverage to include basic dental care and to supplement cost of other necessary dental procedures
3. Increase supplement for costs of prescription and non-prescription medicine
4. Model after Alberta's healthcare system re: no MSPs, and dental care coverage
5. Eliminate MSP cost for BC residents - the Province should cover this cost

6. All rents to be set at 30% of income in public, subsidized, and private housing for all seniors
7. Provide supplement for cost of electricity and gas bills
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(b)What emerged as the top 3 solutions or ideas based on the conversations and the individual priority setting?

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