

Current Issues for B.C. Seniors

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BC Seniors Advocate



OFFICE OF THE
SENIORS ADVOCATE



About the Office of the Seniors Advocate



Mandate

To address **systemic** issues related to seniors aged 65+ and make recommendations to government and service providers for change



Main activities

- Outreach and engagement
- Monitoring seniors' services
- Reviewing and reporting on systemic issues
- Providing information and referral services

Areas of focus



Health Care



Community Supports



Housing



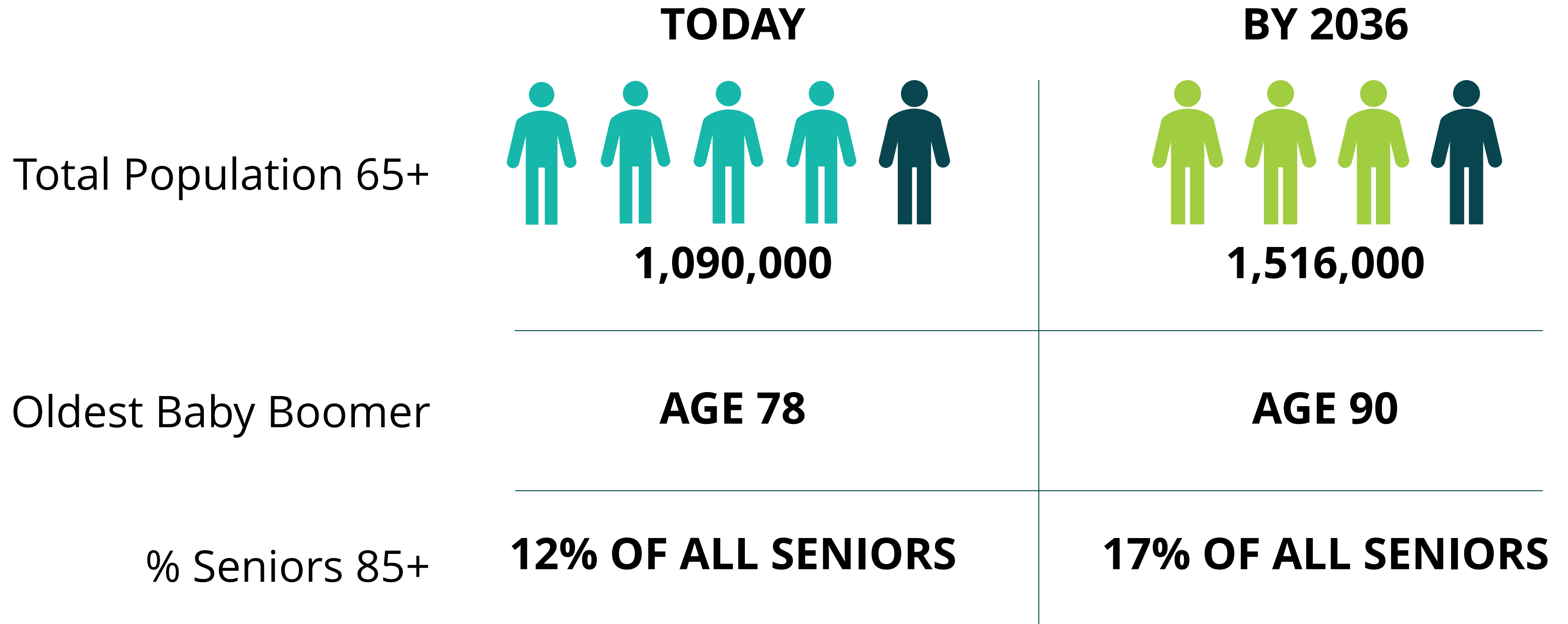
Transportation



Income



Snapshot of B.C. Seniors



Snapshot of B.C. Seniors



95% aged 65+ live independently

- **77%** aged 85+



14% are employed



9% aged 85+ live in assisted living
13% aged 85+ live in long-term care



80% have a driver's license



80% are homeowners



5% diagnosed with dementia

- The BC Seniors Supplement does not help low-income seniors with the cost of living (ranked the fourth lowest seniors' subsidy in Canada)
- The SAFER rent subsidy changes will make little difference for low-income seniors
 - Changes fall short
 - Not keeping pace with rising rents
- 1 in 4 seniors live on incomes **less than \$23,000**
- Half of B.C. seniors live on **less than \$34,000** a year
 - by comparison, the prime working age population makes nearly **\$60,000**



Seniors Population Growth

- We are not doing enough to meet the needs of seniors today or in the future
- Construction of affordable housing, subsidized long-term care and assisted living not keeping pace with growth
- Waitlists continue to grow
- We need a plan to better coordinate seniors' services



Ageing in Place

- Home support and help at home (cleaning, cooking, laundry) is expensive, insufficient and not available in many communities or long waitlists
- Not enough long-term care, assisted living or affordable housing for seniors to downsize and remain in the community
- Community resources are often not coordinated or there are gaps/duplication
- No coverage for shingles vaccine



Report Recommendations

- 1 Provide immediate financial relief for low-income senior renters
- 2 Increase the amount of BC Senior's Supplement (BCSS) and index the supplement to inflation
- 3 Eliminate the daily charge for home support
- 4 Implement a publicly funded shingles vaccine program
- 5 Develop and implement a cross-ministry strategy and action plan for seniors



Tenancy Protections for Seniors

Tenancy Protections in Independent Living Retirement Homes

- OSA issued a report in July - 'Forgotten Rights: Seniors Not Afforded Equal Rent Protection'
- Province is not enforcing Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) in seniors independent living residences
- Residents are vulnerable to unreasonable cost increases, illegal eviction, inconsistent rental agreements
- Calls to OSA about this issue have more than doubled in the last year
- Service charges (meals, housekeeping) that residents cannot opt out of should be part of a tenancy agreement and subject to cost protections of RTA



Tenancy Protections for Seniors

Follow-up from the Province

- Government provided written confirmation that:
 - Seniors independent living units are subject to RTA
 - BOTH rent and mandatory service fees are subject to annual limits on rent increases
 - They will work with arbitrators to redress power imbalances between tenant and landlords
- My expectation is that landlords in seniors independent living who did not comply with the Act will now do so



Next Steps

- Report on long-term care access, supply and demand
- Report on ageism





QUESTION

ANSWER

Contact

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