

Community Age-Friendly Priorities, Actions, and Challenges

Age-Friendly Photography Study: Summary of Discussion Group
Carman, Manitoba

The following is a summary of one of several discussion groups held with seniors in Manitoba as part of a larger program of research on age-friendliness. In March of 2008, seniors from Carman were invited to be part of a research study about age-friendly communities through the Centre on Aging at the University of Manitoba. As



part of the project, seniors took photographs within their community to show age-friendly features and barriers to age-friendliness. In June of 2008 the group of seniors came together to talk about age-friendly priorities, actions, and challenges within their community. The following is a summary of the priorities, actions and challenges identified by the group of seniors.

Priority 1 Expand options for seniors' housing in Carman with special emphasis on affordability/low cost and communal features (i.e. common rooms for socializing and visiting with family members, activity areas, etc.)

Potential Actions:

- Research/assess local housing needs (e.g. local survey of needs, both short and long-term)
- Assess wait lists for local facilities
- Research other available housing options elsewhere
- Investigate private options



Identified Challenges:

- Financing for new housing and/or renovations

Priority 2 Address waiting lists for local nursing home beds



Potential Actions:

- Stress importance of having beds within the community itself (i.e. not transferring long-term residents to facilities elsewhere in the region)
- Convince Regional Health Authority of above need/priority
- Seniors lobby at the legislature for improvements regarding wait lists
- Increase publicity regarding the issue

Identified Challenges:

- Need to know how evaluation is done for nursing home placement throughout the RHA in order to influence the decisions

Priority 3 Reduce wait times for surgery

Potential Actions:

- Facilitate people to access procedures and tests elsewhere within the Province with lesser wait times
- Recognize and factor in the negative impact on health incurred by seniors waiting for surgery and the resultant increased health costs/resources
- Increase doctors and specialists
- Increase efficiencies in health care provision

Identified Challenges:

- Admittedly a larger societal issue
- Human resources and personnel are limited
- Health care budgets are limited



Priority 4 Address social isolation and quality-of-life of Carman seniors



Potential Actions:

- Increase suitable housing with communal features that encourages socialization
- Increase awareness of options for socialization
- Match volunteers with seniors with similar interests
- Increase intergenerational activities within the community
- Bring school children to perform at congregate meal programs

Identified Challenges:

- Some seniors may not want to participate or access services
- Seniors reluctant to bother others, and want to feel independent rather than dependent

Priority 5 Identification and provision of services and resources for seniors with emphases on resources that provide advice, refer seniors to required services, or play an advocacy role related to issues facing seniors

Potential Actions:

- Increase awareness/educate seniors and their families around issues of security (e.g. fraud, rights of seniors, etc.)
- Make legal and financial advice available to seniors
- Provide information about a range of available resources
- Provide/develop a referral service



Identified Challenges:

- How to identify just what information and services are most needed
- How to develop and implement improvements in access to needed services in the local context

Priority 6 Expand transportation options for seniors with special needs (e.g. seniors in wheelchairs, those needing regular dialysis treatments outside the community, etc.)



Potential Actions:

- Contact other communities to see how they have addressed the issue

Identified Challenges:

- Not enough demand to justify a program/purchase of vehicle etc.
- Cost of transportation options and accessing resources

Priority 7 Town infrastructure and accessibility improvements within the community

Potential Actions:

- Communicate with Town Council about priority areas needing repair/improvement

Identified Challenges:

- Making Council aware of problems that are not readily apparent to them



Priority 8 Address issues of traffic and roadway safety



Potential Actions:

- Education of the public
- Enforcement of traffic rules

Identified Challenges:

- RCMP does not have time to enforce traffic rules/laws

Priority 9 Retaining services and businesses that currently exist within the community

Potential Actions:

- Encourage 'shopping at home' versus going elsewhere



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