



HEALTH OFFICERS COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Resolution 163-#

Name of Resolution: Eliminating Seniors Poverty and Accelerating Investments in the Social Determinants of Health for Younger Canadians

Moved: Mark Lysyshyn

Seconded: Curtis May

Whereas: Income is an important determinant of health for seniors and younger Canadians; and

Whereas: Old Age Security (OAS) is Canada's largest income security program, with annual expenditures soon projected to exceed \$100 billion; and

Whereas: Old Age Security provides approximately \$18,000 annually to retired couples, with benefits only beginning to phase out at household incomes above approximately \$185,000; and

Whereas: approximately 400,000 seniors in Canada continue to live below the official poverty measure; and

Whereas: other federal income-tested benefits, such as the Canada Child Benefit, begin to phase out at much lower household income levels (around \$81,000); and

Whereas: reducing poverty is expected to be associated with significant health improvements, but as individual income increases, the marginal health benefit of additional income diminishes; and

Whereas: governments are increasingly challenged to fund investments in key determinants that influence health across the life course, including housing, childcare, post-secondary education, poverty reduction and others;

Therefore be it resolved that the Health Officers Council be of the position that:

The federal government should restructure OAS to ensure that it is optimized to improve population health outcomes.

and be it further resolved that:

The federal government considers phasing out OAS benefits at a threshold similar to other federal income tested benefits to better align funding distribution with population health benefit.

and be it further resolved that:

A portion of the savings from this restructuring be used to significantly reduce seniors' poverty by increasing incomes for seniors below the official poverty measure;

and be it further resolved that:

The remaining savings be invested to improve the social determinants of health for younger generations, including through enhanced supports for housing, childcare, postsecondary education, and poverty reduction.