



Perilous living conditions spell disaster for Vancouver Seniors, women in particular

Vancouver, March 8, 2018—Today, as Vancouver and the rest of BC and the world celebrate **International Women’s Day** extolling the advancement of women in the last 100 years, Vancouver’s 411 Seniors Society is warning all levels of government that an increasing number of Vancouver’s older women are increasingly at risk due to the untenable basic costs of living in Canada’s 3rd largest city — shelter, food and health care.

A recent *Submission on Poverty Reduction* forwarded to the BC Government from 411 Seniors Society (attached), calls on the government to speed up improvements on the very basics that work against fair treatment of the most vulnerable people in Vancouver and throughout the province.

411’s submission speaks to the significant areas such as income supports: which are often inaccessible due to language and rules, housing: which report after report highlights as a major cause of poverty in BC and health, transportation, food insecurity, and more as major obstacles to the increasing difficulty of life in Metro Vancouver for many, many older women and men.

“At 411 an ever-increasing number of seniors asking for assistance include the precariously housed, the newly homeless and the episodically homeless.” according to the centre’s statistics and data included in the submission.

411 Seniors advocates – mostly volunteers—describe increasing numbers of women and men living in cars, suffering from renovations or using every penny of their meagre incomes to pay for overpriced and substandard housing. “This means,” says Marion Pollack, 411’s Chair of the 411 Seniors’ Issues Committee, “that hundreds even thousands of Metro Vancouver’s elderly do not have the funds to purchase the most basic food.”

“Structural Patriarchy” is a term used by SFU’s Andy Yan in examining the way in which senior women are increasingly failed by the system.

411's Poverty Reduction submission concurs with the description further highlighting the increasingly difficult situation for the elderly, both women and men, and for the non-profit organizations created to provide support to them.

"Organizations like 411 depend primarily on 1-year grant funding from Government and donations from individuals and the private sector to keep the doors open and "food on the table" for the hundreds of people coming in search of basic supports" says Pollack.

Every year 411 sees more than 5000 people for services from Information & Referral, the Centre's free tax clinic for low income seniors and people with disabilities, food security programs and special events.

Please find attached a copy of the *Submission on Poverty Reduction* presented to the Province of British Columbia in late February.

Information: Marion Pollack, author of the 411 Report is available for interviews.

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411 Seniors : 411seniors.bc.ca