



**B.C. Coalition to Eliminate abuse of Seniors**

# A Shared Concern

Newsletter of the B.C. Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors

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## SENIORS' HEALTH: A TWELVE STEP PROGRAM

Written by Gillean Chase, checked for accuracy by Dr. Gutman

Presented by Dr. Gloria M. Gutman, educator, author and consultant. Dr. Gutman developed the Gerontology Research Centre at Simon Fraser University and has been its director since its establishment in 1982. She also developed the SFU Gerontology Program and was its director from 1983 to September 2003. This program is one of only three in Canada that offers a Masters Degree in Gerontology. It is unique nationally and internationally in offering specialization in aging and the built environment and in population health/health promotion and aging.



On September 13, 2003, BC CEAS was privileged to have Dr. Gloria Gutman present her research on B.C.'s elderly population as part of a panel on "Challenges to Seniors: The Different Levels of Care Available to Seniors" at their Conference. Dr. Gutman is President of the International Association of Gerontology (IAG) and had just returned from Chile and Peru. She is the author of 18 books and over 100 scholarly articles, reports and papers. She has served on a number of federal-provincial task forces, including one which established guidelines for comprehensive services for the psychiatrically impaired elderly, and one which developed design guidelines for housing and care facilities for the elderly.

### Gender and Aging

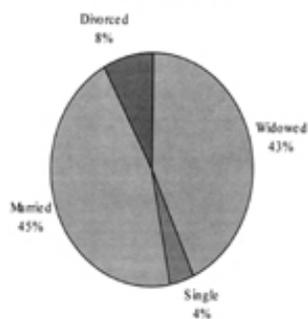
In 2011, said Dr Gutman, the leading edge of the Baby Boom generation will turn 65. According to Statistics Canada, in 2001 (the latest census year), 13% of Canadians were 65 plus. In B.C., the figure was higher – it stood at 13.6%. There were slightly more women than men aged 65 to 69 (50.3% of women to 49.3% of men). As the sexes age, significantly more women than men are represented. In B.C. by the time seniors reach 85-89, 64.8%

are women. This obviously presents economic problems for women who out-survive their mates or may not have had full-time employment or work-force experience.

## Marital Status and Living Arrangements

According to Dr. Gutman, in 1996 the marital status of women 65 and over was: 8% divorced; 43% widowed; 45% married and 4% single. This breakdown leaves 55% of older women in B.C. living on their own or unmarried. What kind of living arrangements are represented in the elderly population of B.C. by age? For 65 year olds, private households made up 94.4% of the mix; the remaining 5.6% live in “collective dwellings” which include nursing homes and other kinds of institutions, hotels, motels, etc. Among those living in private households about two-thirds (63.9%) lived in family households (husband, wife and/or adult child), 2.0% lived with relatives, 1.5% with non-relatives and 27% lived alone. By the time people reached 85 and over, 72.2% were living in private households and 27.8% were in collective dwellings. Still, of those seniors in private households, over one-third (35.6%) lived alone. Although up to age 90, the majority of men are married, there are increasing proportions of women living alone – many by choice; not because their kids don’t want them. They may feel that after raising children and losing a spouse to death or divorce, it is their turn, to put their own needs first, Gutman said.

Figure 2B Marital Status of Women Aged 65+:  
British Columbia 1996



Age Structure of Population Aged 65+,  
British Columbia, 2001, 2011, 2021\*

Age	2001		2011*		2021*	
	N (000)	% of Pop. Aged 65+	N (000)	% of Pop. Aged 65+	N (000)	% of Pop. Aged 65+
65-69	150.8	28.3	207.8	30.3	316.5	32.0
70-74	135.9	25.5	155.6	22.7	260.6	26.3
75-79	112.2	21.0	122.3	17.8	171.2	17.3
80-84	74.1	13.9	94.6	13.8	111.4	11.3
85-89	41.4	7.8	62.6	9.1	70.4	7.1
90+	18.6	3.5	43.6	6.3	59.8	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>533.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>686.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>989.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Gender, Marital Status and Poverty are Linked

There has been a major reduction in the percentage of poor women and men from 1980 to 1998. In large part, this is a result of maturation of the contributory Canada Pension Plan and the availability of Old Age Supplements and other social assistance programs for seniors. However, while poverty rates for 1998 were low for married couples aged 65 and over (only 7.6% were poor), over onethird of unattached older women (38.4%) and over one-quarter (26.9%) of unattached men were at, or below, the poverty line. The same trend is with us today. Things have not improved a lot for unattached seniors, says Gutman.

## The Five “A’s” of Housing Seniors Dr Gutman indicated that there are five key considerations for

housing seniors: shelter must be available, accessible (and more than just mobility impairment needs to be considered), appropriate, affordable and acceptable. Appropriate housing includes such considerations as prosthetic design features and other things which maximize a person’s fit with the environment.

She noted that assisted living is not a panacea, and that aging-in-place is less common in this type of housing than most people realize. Of those elders who go into assisted living, the average stay ranges from 2.4 years to 1.5 years, depending upon whether or not one is looking at Chapin & Dobbs-Kepper’s 2001 study or the statistics of the American Seniors’ Housing Association in 1999.

## 12 Determinants of Health Twelve factors impact upon the health of seniors overall:

1. Biological and Genetic Endowment
2. Healthy Child Development
3. Gender
4. Education
5. Physical Environment
6. Social Environment
7. Social Support Networks
8. Culture
9. Employment and Working Conditions
10. Income and Social Status
11. Life Style; and
12. Health Care

Some of these factors are self-explanatory in that our genetic endowment may expose us to increased or reduced risks of cancer, heart or stroke problems, or other mental or physical predispositions. There is no substitute for good nutrition, comfortable income and social privilege as well as access to good education and health care. Stress in the physical environment, in employment and working conditions, or problems having to do with cultural integration and differences, life trauma or an absence of a social support network, will obviously have a negative impact upon good health. Isolation, poverty and discrimination all impact upon health, just as do loneliness, relationship breakdown or violence, and a series of traumatic emotional or psychological events.

Males and Females Aged 65+  
and Sex Ratios\*:BC,2001

Age	Males	%	Females	%	Sex Ratio
65-69	74,860	49.6	75,925	50.3	99
70-74	64,675	47.6	71,250	52.4	91
75-79	48,500	43.2	63,705	56.8	76
80-84	28,825	38.9	45,315	61.1	64
85-89	14,590	35.2	26,820	64.8	54
90+	5,225	28.1	13,400	71.9	39
Total BC	236,675	44.3	296,415	55.6	80

## Dementia in Older Seniors at 50%

Dr Gutman indicated that among those aged 80+, 40% will be diagnosed with dementia. There will be an additional 10% with measurable cognitive impairment who will progress over time to become demented; but that leaves about half whose cognitive abilities are about the same as in middle age.

## Living Alone – A Risky Business

Living alone can present health risks or increase the potential for victimization, whether this victimization is by relatives or strangers. Among the almost 40% of unattached women living at or below the poverty level, the absence of financial comfort will impact upon their longevity, their physical safety and mental health. Whether housing will be available to seniors, men and women, at a rate they can afford to pay, or accessible if they have mobility or sensory or other impairments, the accommodation must be appropriate for their special needs and safety concerns. What they can afford for assisted living arrangements will also be impacted by financial considerations.



Certainly the reduction in fertility rates over the last few decades will have implications upon the kinds of social support and amount of financial assistance elderly parents can expect from their children. There will be fewer children to provide support for parents, as people today start families later and have smaller families – if they chose to have children and all – and more are making the choice not to be parents. Dr. Gutman's work in the area of environmental design regarding shelter needs for seniors will no doubt have some bearing on the options available to all of us as we age.

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## INTRODUCING JOYCE SCHMALZ, PRESIDENT OF BC CEAS

Joyce came from England, arriving in British Columbia in 1946 as a war bride. In 1982, while living on the North Shore, Joyce left employment to spend time with, and care for, her ailing husband. The need for "reaching out" led her to meet Pearl McKenzie, who was working as the Legal Information Counsellor at the North Shore Volunteer and Information Centre. Joyce volunteered to help Pearl with some seniors' issues and soon they put together "Legal Resources for Seniors". At a time that abuse of seniors was being acknowledged and talked about, the project was, in effect, the embryo of what became BC CEAS. Joyce will tell you it was her good fortune to meet and work with Pearl McKenzie. This connection was the beginning of a whole new education, coupled with her becoming a provincially-appointed Senior Citizens' Counsellor. Her interest in, and passion for, the legal issues surrounding abuse led her to write role-plays and to script videos for workshops to inform and educate the public about senior abuse issues. The process of reviewing Adult Guardianship legislation led to a long series of discussions and committee meetings in which Joyce served as an advocate for seniors. When the new legislation came into effect, Joyce added to her repertoire through public education about changes to Adult Guardianship laws. She formerly served as Chair of a non-profit Housing Society Board, was a member of a Hospital Auxiliary and of a Church Council. Joyce lectured for People's Law School and to this day, continues to assist seniors in filing their income tax returns. Since 1993, Joyce has resided in the White Rock/South Surrey area, where she serves as a volunteer Seniors' Counsellor, attending committees on behalf of seniors. She has resumed lecturing for People's Law School and is a member of the B.C. Foundation to Support Community Response to Adult Abuse and Neglect. She also presents free-lance lectures and writes material for workshops taking place throughout the province. Having served in the military police during WWII in HM Forces, she is, and has been for some years, Service Officer for the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch #240, in Crescent Beach, Surrey. The picture accompanying this article shows Joyce during her army days as a 21 year old.

### President's Message

At this time of year, we read and hear assorted predictions for the coming year. Some are indeed solemn, some fanciful, and some just "wishful thinking". Most never come true! Lacking a crystal ball, I can nevertheless make a sure prediction for BC CEAS. "The year 2004 will be exciting; there is much to accomplish and challenges to meet.

Success will come from the dedicated commitment of our staff, Board of Directors, membership and friends.” Have you noticed that many of the appeals for charitable donations say “You can make a difference”? If BC CEAS were to launch an appeal, it would have to say: “We *do* make a difference”! In closing, I thank you for your support and loyalty during the past year. Because of you, we *have* made a difference! I hope you had a joyous Christmas, with a peaceful, happy song in your heart to welcome the New Year.

*Joyce Schmalz,  
President, BC CEAS*

## ADVERTISING AND ABUSE OF SENIORS

Late in 2003, the B.C. Lottery Corporation played an advertisement for the Scratch and Win Lottery (on Global and CBC T.V.) which generated several complaints from seniors around the province who found the ad offensive, ageist and discriminatory. The ad shows a couple trying to decide what they should give away. After discarding various ideas, there is a sound of flatulence from outside the room, and an elderly woman appears in the doorway. The next scene shows her in Christmas wrap, standing on a neighbour’s door step. BC CEAS subsequently sent a letter to the Lottery Corporation and a copy to Advertising Standards Canada protesting the immature, insensitive and demeaning ad. Shortly thereafter, the ad was pulled and was no longer used to promote the sale of *Scratch and Win* tickets. If you become aware of advertising which demeans the dignity of seniors or encourages a lack of respect for those who are frail and aging, we encourage you to similarly register your opinion with Advertising Standards Canada and the advertiser. Ads which objectify seniors as disposable or expendable perpetuate abuse of the elderly.

*Carol Ward-Hall,  
Executive Director, BC CEAS*

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S DESK

Once again it is time to wish you all a Happy New Year and the Very Best for 2004! The coming year is going to be a busy one for our organization. Strategic Plan: Building on the Organizational Review that we completed last year, we will now be creating a Strategic Plan for the organization, funded by Health Canada. This will take place from January to the end of March and will establish a five year plan for us to follow. After ten years it is important to look at, and plan for, our future directions, and how we can become more financially independent and diversify our funding base. One of our objectives is how we can market our products more effectively, such as our video(s), educational materials and workshops. Community Mobilization: We have been successful in obtaining funding from Justice Canada’s Community Mobilization Program to undertake a new project entitled, *Community and the Justice System Working Together*. Abuse of seniors is a major societal issue and many of these abuses are criminal offences under the Criminal Code of Canada, such as theft, forgery, extortion, assault, intimidation, threats and failure to provide the necessities of life. The objectives for this project are:

- to decrease the fear and uncertainty abused older adults have in using the Criminal Justice System;
- to ensure that the Criminal Justice System’s response is meeting the needs of older abused adults; and
- to improve the Criminal Justice System’s response to the needs of older adults. We will be working with community partners to learn how well the existing policy guidelines (developed after proclamation of the Adult Guardianship Act) and relationships between police, designated agencies and people in communities are working to prevent abuse of seniors. We will examine how well coordinated responses are working and identify and address areas in need of further education and support; and review training manuals and recommendations for police training in British Columbia. Very few criminal offences against seniors are brought to the Criminal Justice

System. It is imperative that seniors understand what are the crimes under the Criminal Code of Canada that are committed against them, how they can use the justice system to lay charges, and what community supports they can receive when doing so. We are looking forward to undertaking this worthwhile project.

## BC CEAS Conference 2004

We are already hard at work on plans for this year's conference. The date is set for October 15-16, 2004 at the Hilton Vancouver, Metrotown, in Burnaby. The theme will encompass our new project and will look at both criminal and civil offences against seniors. Our aim is to highlight crimes against seniors and influence positive changes in both practice and policy. In future issues we will publicize the Conference and tell you more about the keynote speakers and workshops.

Congratulations to Jill Hightower Jill is our immediate past President and a member of our Board. She was recognized with the *Senior Leadership Award* presented by Gloria Gutman, the Director of the Gerontology Research Centre, Simon Fraser University. Jill was also invited to be a speaker at the Queen Sofia Centre for the Study of Violence in Spain last September, at an international meeting on the biology and sociology of violence regarding elder abuse. Further in this issue you will read Jill's article about this event.

Congratulations to Atira Women's Resource Society On January 5th they opened the doors of Ama House, a transition house for women age 55+ who are experiencing the impact of violence or abuse from an intimate partner or a close family member.

The District of White Rock has one of the highest ratios of seniors in the province. As with any transition house, a great deal of planning, effort and hard work went into the reality of actually establishing it. It will be a welcoming and a much needed home for the women who go there.

Grants to all Women's Centres Cut: Across the province of B.C., thirty-seven women's centres will see their provincial funding cut by 100% on March 31, 2004. B.C. has the highest rate of violence against women in Canada, at 59% (Stats Can). Women's Centres have known that the cuts were coming for two years and have been working hard to find other ways to make up for the financial loss. Unfortunately some may have to close their doors. Often it is to their local women's centre that senior women go first, especially in the rural areas of the province, when they are seeking information and services on abuse. One in every twelve senior women in British Columbia experiences abuse or mistreatment.

**Thank You Scotiabank!** Once again Scotiabank (B.C.) has agreed to fund our newsletter, *A Shared Concern*, for another year. We greatly appreciate their continued support for 2004. This allows us to continue to provide a quality newsletter to our members and organizations around the province. We also wish to thank Scotiabank (National) for agreeing to fund *Scotiabank's Fraud Awareness Program: ABCs of Fraud* for another year. This will be our seventh year as sponsor of this national program in the province of British Columbia. Our senior volunteers have now given presentations to over 12,000 seniors! A big "Thank You" to our senior volunteers for all their hard work and to our Coordinator for the program, Mary Martin Sharma.

**Seniors & the Law:** this program, funded by the Law Foundation of B.C, is now entering its final eight months of a three year period. Pat McDonald, lawyer for the project, is hard at work on an *Advocacy and Legal Training Manual for Persons Who Work with Seniors*. Pat McDonald and Kathy Doerksen, Coordinator, will be pilot testing the manual over the next several months. For organizations in the Lower Mainland who might be interested in taking the training, please see the Training Opportunity

We are seeking organizations in the Lower Mainland to pilot test BC CEAS's *Advocacy and Legal Training Manual for Persons Who Work with Seniors*. A minimum of 10 participants to a maximum of 15 will be needed. The organization must be prepared to commit to 35 hours of training; days and times are flexible. Please contact us if you are interested. For further information call (604) 437-1940 and ask for Pat McDonald or Kathy Doerksen

At the beginning of April, provincial recipients who have been receiving income assistance for two years will be cut

off. These numbers will include older adults between 60 and 64 years of age. BC CEAS has requested, under the *Freedom of Information Act*, the numbers of older adults who will be impacted by this change. Last year we received calls from older men and women concerned about how they will manage before they are eligible to receive CPP and/or OAS pensions. Thank you to all our members, organizations and funders for your support throughout 2003.

*Carol Ward-Hall,  
Executive Director, BC CEAS*

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