

Seniors Abuse and Neglect in B.C.

Trends and Challenges

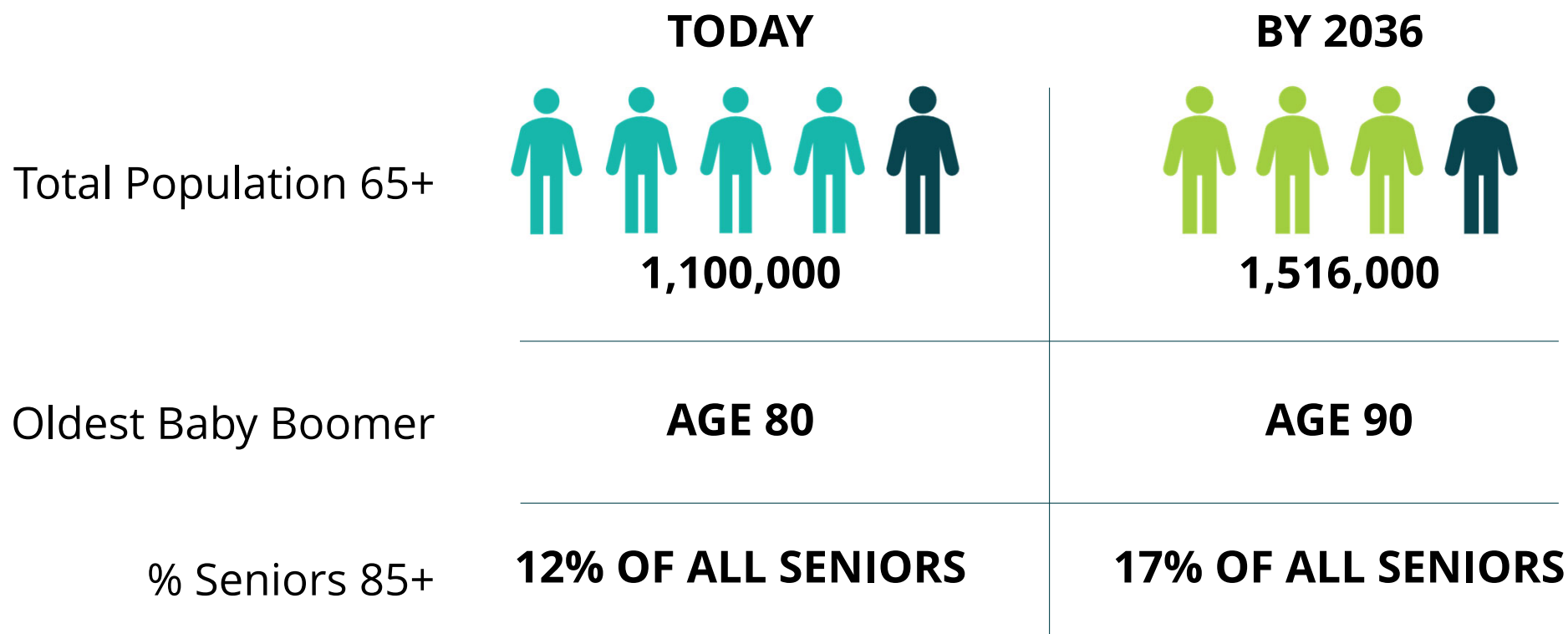
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Snapshot of B.C. Seniors



Financial Strain

1 in 4

seniors live on less than
\$23,000 per year

Half

live on less than
\$37,000

Impact:

- Fixed incomes leave no ability to manage unexpected expenses
- Low income increases risk of financial abuse and scams



Housing Instability

59% increase

in applications for seniors
subsidized housing over
the past 5 years
(from 8,700 to 13,900)

Only 6%

of applicants received a
unit last year
(884)

Impact:

- Limited affordable options reduce choice and autonomy
- Fear of eviction increases reliance on others and can prevent reporting



Home Support Shortfalls

Over the past 5 years:

11% increase

in people receiving
publicly-funded home
support

7% decrease

in client rate per 1,000
pop. 75+

Impact:

- One person may control medications, appointments and communication, limiting outside visibility
- Families navigate systems without support



Long-Term Care Delayed

Over the past 10 years:

200% increase

in people on publicly funded
long-term care waitlists
(from 2,300 to 7,200 people)

98% increase

in provincial average
wait time
(from 146 to 290 days)

Impact:

- Families stretched beyond capacity
- Seniors may be living in unsafe or inappropriate conditions



Caregiver Burnout



63 hours per week
Nearly 9 hours every day

Average hours provided by family caregivers while supporting a loved one waiting for long-term care

Impact:

- Exhaustion, stress and crisis decision-making
- Greater risk of unintentional neglect or harm



Ageism and Isolation

Ageism

- Concerns dismissed as “just ageing”
- Seniors less likely to be believed
- Lower expectations for safety and dignity

Isolation

- Fewer people to notice warning signs
- Less access to trusted supports
- Greater dependence on a small circle

Impact:

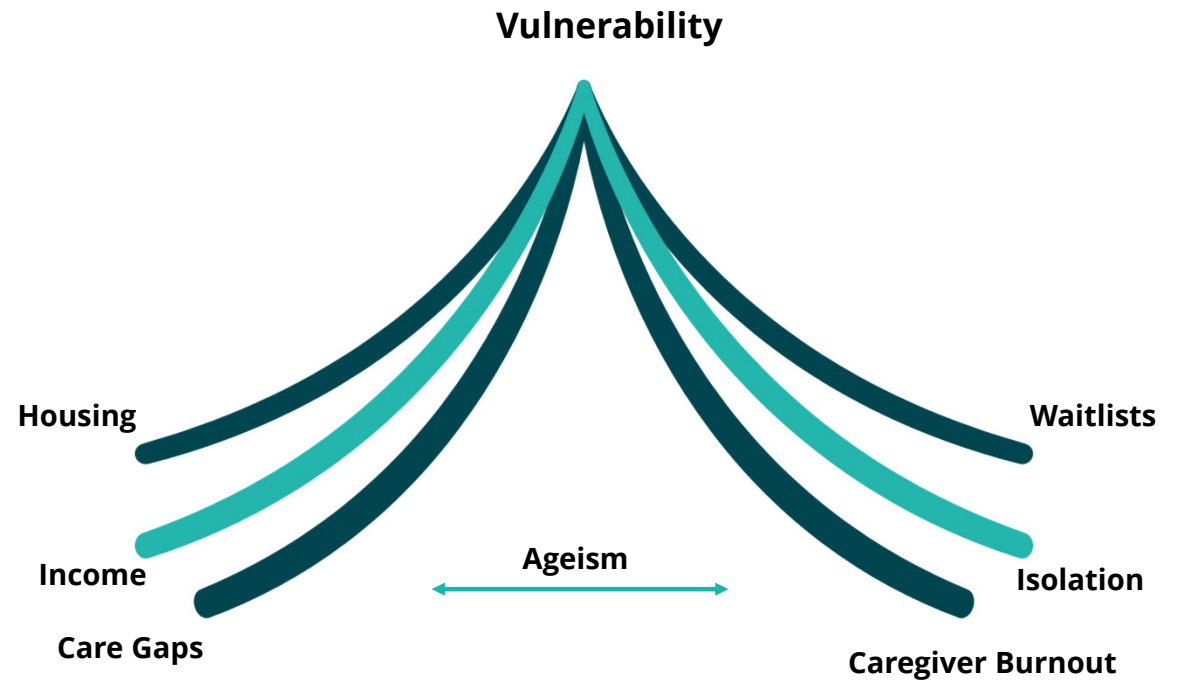
- Harm goes unseen
- Reporting can be delayed



Converging Pressures

Risk of abuse and neglect increases when systems are stretched.

- Housing insecurity limits autonomy
- Fixed incomes leave no cushion
- Care gaps shift responsibility to families
- Long-term care shortages delay safe care
- Ageism and isolation hide abuse and neglect
- Broader economic pressure can increase risk of financial abuse
 - Rising cost of living and housing insecurity affecting all generations
 - Financial stress increasing in families and communities



Seniors Abuse and Neglect on the Rise

Trends over 5 years:

- **18% increase** in victims of violent offences 65+ reported to RCMP
 - **88% increase** in reported cases of extortion
 - **36% increase** in reported cases of harassment
- **67% increase** in financial abuse reported to VPD

In Canada:

- **49% increase** in rate of family violence against seniors since 2018
- **36%** of senior victims of family violence were most often victimized by their child



OSA Report on Seniors' Abuse and Neglect (2021)

Findings:

- Lack of public awareness
- Fragmented reporting and response system
- Lack of training for people working in seniors' safety in the community.

Recommendations:

- Establish provincial standards of practice, policies and front-line training to respond to seniors' abuse and neglect
- Create province-wide public awareness initiatives and training on seniors' abuse and neglect
- Develop a central, single point of contact to report calls of concern of seniors' abuse and neglect
- Ensure consistent data collection, methods, and definitions to record, track and monitor abuse and neglect cases



Connection is Prevention

Seniors' safety is a collective responsibility and requires a connected response

- Cross-sector collaboration
- Information sharing
- Community-based supports
- Trusted touchpoints
(banks, health providers, government, community organizations, families)





Contact

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