



# 2020 Annual Report

*Creating Connections  
in Uncertain Times*



EDMONTON  
SENIORS  
COORDINATING  
COUNCIL



## **Messages from the Executive Director and ESCC Board**

With COVID-19, the year 2020 had been the source of deep anxiety and challenges that transformed nearly every aspect of our society. The shock waves are still being felt from the pandemic at an individual, community organization, and societal level. Despite these challenges, our journey to support our senior sector did not stop. To the credit of our member organizations, adaptations were made to programs and services. New partnerships formed and actions were orchestrated on many fronts. ESCC coordinated information through several channels, including collating service and program adaptations on our website, convening meetings of executive directors, programmers, outreach workers and task groups. It was a steep learning curve for us all. Our approach was person-centred—focusing on meeting the needs of older adults in our community. Older adults shared their time and talents for volunteer efforts, including outreach through friendly call programs and assisting with adapted programs for completing taxes. There have been countless stories of heartache and of how community efforts hit the mark. The work demonstrates the capacity of collective action and we are all the beneficiaries.

***Sheila Hallett***  
***Executive Director***

As the ESCC Board Co-Chairs, we would like to thank the members of the Board and the ESCC team for their focus and dedication. For the Board, it has been a year with learning curves and adaptation while keeping an eye on the future needs and trends for the sector. We marvelled as the team worked tirelessly to adapt to the needs of our members and the community at large while aligning work with the evolving provincial network. It has become apparent that we are stronger together united by our shared goals to promote healthy aging. Knowing that up to 80 per cent of the determinants for health are rooted in the community, our focus is clear. The gaps exacerbated by the pandemic have made our efforts to create a more coordinated network of vital importance to collaborate with all sectors seeking shared solutions. As ESCC moves forward — engaging further to facilitate the creation of a framework that gives voice to growing older in Edmonton — we seek to promote equity within our diverse community. The Board expresses gratitude toward organizations which serve older adults for their overall positivity and willingness to work together to promote healthy aging.

***Mary Whale and Dr. Anwar Haq***  
***ESCC Board Co-Chairs***

## ESCC Board as at Dec. 31, 2020:

### Executive Members of the ESCC Board

Mary Whale, Co-Chair  
 Dr. Anwar Haq, Co-Chair  
 Ratna Basappa, Vice-Chair / Secretary  
 Paul Cheung, Vice-Chair  
 Yasmin Kapadia, Treasurer

### Ex-Officio Members of the ESCC Board

Dr. Michael Alpern  
 Dr. Wendy Duggleby  
 Shelley Kwong

### Departed in 2020

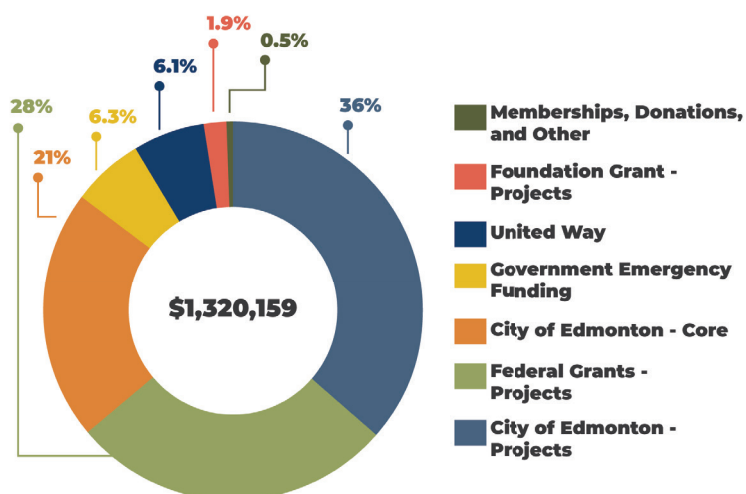
Cherryll de la Cruz  
 Todd Ketteringham

### Directors of the ESCC Board

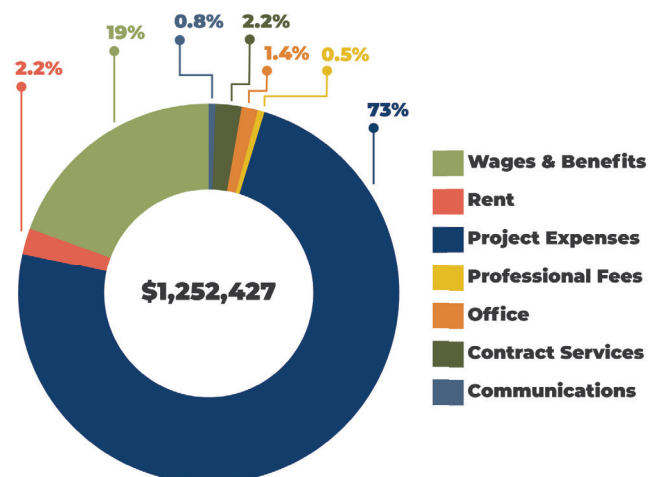
Carleen Brenneis  
 Christopher Chilibeck  
 Hugh Newell  
 Wendy King  
 Dr. Sheree Kwong See  
 Sushila Samy  
 Eric Storey  
 Elvis Wong

## ESCC 2020 Financials

### Revenue



### Expenses



Additional expenses include advertising (0.04%), amortization (0.2%), insurance (0.3%), meetings/events (0.01%), travel (0.02%), interest/bank charges (0.04%), and training (0.01%).



## Collaborative Initiatives

### Age Friendly Edmonton

Throughout 2020, more than 100 volunteers contributed over 4,000 hours of their time to ESCC Board work and Age Friendly Edmonton (AFE) projects and initiatives.

#### Among the major pieces of work:

Collaboration with the City of Edmonton on a refreshed Edmonton Seniors Declaration and accompanying 'The Gift of Age' statement. To further show appreciation for older Edmontonians, AFE coordinated a video to reflect the 'The Gift of Age' statement – recognizing and celebrating the diversity, perspectives, and lifelong contributions of older adults.

Coordination of the story-gathering campaign #GrowOlderWithMe during Seniors' Week 2020. This campaign sparked conversations about the joys of aging and asked respondents to share what healthy aging looks like to them. In fall 2020, the campaign was extended to gather more stories showcasing the diversity of aging experiences in Edmonton.

Development of an anti-ageism infographic by AFE's Ageism Hub team members. The infographic was shared on social media and in newsletters.

*Volunteers dedicated over  
**4,000 hours**  
for ESCC Board work and  
Age Friendly Edmonton  
projects and initiatives*



*The Shared Mic launched  
two seasons featuring  
**16 episodes** of  
discussions between people  
from diverse backgrounds*



The Shared Mic podcast released two seasons with 16 total episodes focusing on intergenerational connections. By creating space for intergenerational discussions, AFE hopes to build a city that values, respects, and actively supports citizens from all walks of life. A podcast listening guide was also produced to help older adults access podcasts.

Partnered with GEF Seniors Housing to offer trishaw rides to older adults, while adhering to COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines.

Regular communications activities to inform and engage audiences, centered around a monthly newsletter and social media platforms.

**Pictured:** Residents from GEF Seniors Housing had the opportunity to take a spin around the neighbourhood on trishaws, motorized tricycles equipped with passenger compartments and piloted by volunteer cyclists.





## Stewardship Round Table

In 2020, the Connecting Edmonton Seniors Stewardship Round Table (SRT) continued to build momentum as a cross-sector, multi-stakeholder forum for strategic discussions about the needs and opportunities for better serving older adults in our communities.

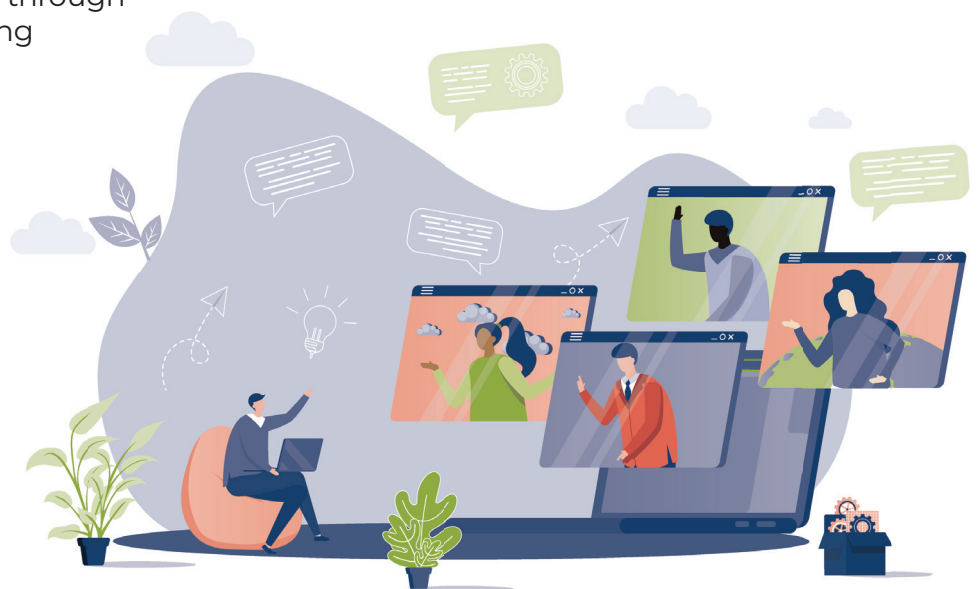
Since SRT's emergence in 2019 with the extension of the Pan-Edmonton Group Addressing Social Isolation of Seniors (P·E·G·A·S·I·S) initiative, stakeholders have been working to connect interrelated communities, organizations, and initiatives that support the health and well-being of people of all ages. This includes Age Friendly Edmonton, Community-Based Seniors Sector initiative, AHS Enhanced Care in the Community, Mental Health Action Plan, and projects addressing isolation and loneliness in diverse communities. The longer-term goal of the SRT has been to sustain a broad network of people and organizations working intentionally together to improve quality of life for older Edmontonians.

**over 200 participants  
from 92 organizations  
stayed connected on the  
Stewardship Round Table in 2020**



Initial work to identify barriers to healthy aging gave way to emergency supports as the effects of COVID-19 were felt early in 2020. Stakeholders identified multiple challenges – systemic, social, organizational and sectoral – that need to be addressed with more holistic approaches. This work, combined with lessons from the coordinated pandemic response and the lessons from P·E·G·A·S·I·S, have contributed to build the foundation for the Framework.

Stakeholders met continuously through 2020 on a monthly basis, keeping over 200 people representing 92 different organizations and government departments and offices connected and involved to varying degrees in discussions to support healthy aging.





## SENIORS HOME SUPPORTS PROGRAM



**96% client  
satisfaction rate**



**211 Alberta**



**Contacts up 38%**

**21% of contacts  
related to COVID-19**

## Seniors Home Supports Program

2020 was the fifth year of operation for the Seniors Home Supports Program (SHSP). Since its inception, the program has provided services to 6,525 people. In 2020, SHSP reported:

- 1,466 clients served (compared to 1,940 in 2019)
- Comparable intake numbers across the six SHSP service districts (ranging from 15% to 18%)
- Clients continue to report high satisfaction with program (96% said they were satisfied)
- Coordinators provided increased emotional support during calls with older adults, the demographic most impacted by the pandemic
- Coordinators spent an increased amount of time contacting service providers, following up regularly to ensure providers were open, following safety recommendations, and maintaining advertised prices

## Seniors Information Phone Line (211)

Throughout 2020, ESCC and 211 staff worked closely to enable the Seniors Information Phone Line to serve as a key referral point during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### A few highlights from the latest annual report:

- Contacts were up 38% compared to 2019
- More than 21% of contacts are considered directly related to COVID-19. It's believed that number is much higher — further into the pandemic, fewer clients indicated it as their reason for calling, given that the immediate COVID-19 response had waned

### Year-over-year referral sources increased:

- Word of mouth (family or friend)
- Health system, media (including initiatives and promotion by provincial and federal governments)

### Two marketing campaigns by:

- 211 Alberta
- United Way Centraide Canada (targetting vulnerable populations, including seniors)

## Supporting our Members

ESCC surveys its member organizations and participants in collaborative initiatives annually to gauge its impact as a capacity-building organization.

### A few highlights from the 2020 data:

- Most respondents say working with ESCC has impacted their organization either “a lot” or “moderate” in the following areas:
  - » Program Planning & Implementation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
  - » Organization Promotions
  - » Governance
  - » Leadership Evaluation Organization Policy
- Most respondents indicated they “agree” with the following statements:
  - » I have developed better working relationships with staff at other organizations (79%)
  - » I have used information to take effective action (74%)
  - » The resources of the network have strengthened my work (70%)
  - » As a result of working together, we are more effective than each organization could be on its own (86%)
  - » As a result of working together, we have made more of a positive impact on social issues in our community (84%)
- 79% of respondents say they have improved their knowledge/skills either “a lot” or “moderate” as a result of the work of ESCC.
- Most respondents indicate their organization’s participation (or their own) in at least one collaborative initiative. Highest participation rates were reported in: Stewardship Round Table (53%); Age Friendly Edmonton (33%); and Coordinated Pandemic Response (26%).

## What our members are saying:

*“Our organizational capacity has been strengthened by being with other organizations with similar struggles and need to make visible such struggles. It has given us more confidence and courage to advocate.”*

*“A lot of helpful information and resources come out of ESCC around various topics.”*

*“The ability to meet and share best practices with other senior serving organization has increased our capacity to respond quickly to evolving situations.”*

*“By working together, we are able to better serve seniors by getting the proper information and referrals to them, therefore helping them stay in their home longer.”*



## Coordinated Pandemic Response

Prior to the first case of COVID-19 being reported in Alberta, the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC), City of Edmonton, and SAGE Seniors Association began meeting to strategize an approach that would outline pathways to support to meet the needs of older Edmontonians throughout the pandemic. The approach would become known as the Coordinated Pandemic Response.

The guiding priorities for the Coordinated Pandemic Response model included:

- no Edmonton seniors are isolated
- seniors have their basic needs met
- seniors have access to health care
- seniors have access to the information and resources needed to keep themselves safe

With many organizations working together to coordinate services in the areas of outreach (including friendly check-in calls), virtual programming (psycho/social programming) and food/transportation, the coordinated model provided the infrastructure to efficiently and effectively pool resources for meaningful impact. Ongoing connections to all senior-serving organizations ensured information flow/sharing via online meetings and correspondence.

The pandemic impacted organizations which support older adults in many ways. The most immediate impacts were felt in the ability to provide programming as public health restrictions were put in place. Several supports and services moved online, with some organizations saying they may continue to offer some degree of virtual programming after the pandemic is over.

As part of a reflection-style report released in December 2020, the Coordinated Pandemic Response steering committee noted this quick adaptation by organizations and programs, as well as the level of collaboration and the partnerships formed among various seniors serving organizations in response to the pandemic.

The experiences of several organizations also highlighted areas for improvement in the Coordinated Pandemic Response model, including increasing the diversity of participating organizations, clarifying the referral processes, and identifying more services and supports surrounding mental health and emotional well-being.



**Pictured left:** Volunteers from Sage and Drive Happiness played a key role in delivering essentials to local older adults.

## Coordinated Pandemic Response Model

The below model outlines the different task groups that formed the Coordinated Pandemic Response. The model takes a holistic approach to address all the needs of older Edmontonians.

You can see a timeline of the Coordinated Pandemic Response Group's work on the next page (p.9) of this report. View the full Coordinated Pandemic Response report at [seniorscouncil.net](https://seniorscouncil.net)



# COVID-19 Pandemic Timeline

## MARCH

### Early March

- Information about COVID-19 spreads around the world
- Discussions begin to coordinate a community wide response
- Steering committee forms for Coordinated Pandemic Response

### March 5

- Alberta identifies first presumptive case of COVID-19

### March 11

- WHO officially declares COVID-19 pandemic
- Edmonton seniors serving organizations adapt programs and services (ESCC continually updates its website and online recreation and wellness directory with adaptations and/or closures)

### Late March

- Restrictions implemented



## NOVEMBER

### Late November

- ESCC secures additional funding from the United Way through the Federal Emergency Community Support Fund to continue kit assembly and distribution

## OCTOBER

- Data collection from Seniors Information Phone Line and the intake phone line managed by Sage Seniors Association
- Coordinated Pandemic Response steering committee interviews key stakeholders as part of reflection-style report
- Evaluation of Coordinated Pandemic Response model, including task group interviews and surveys of organizations



## DECEMBER

### Early December

- Coordinated Pandemic Response steering committee releases reflection-style report

### December 15

- Long-term care residents receive the first doses of COVID-19 vaccine in Alberta







## APRIL

- Edmonton seniors serving organizations work together to identify existing services and resources and to identify gaps in assistance for older adults
- ESCC provided training on how to use Zoom and Google platforms for program delivery and agency meetings
- Many organizations begin offering virtual programming and adapt services, such as outreach, to be delivered over the phone

## MAY

- ESCC receives funding from the United Way through the New Horizons for Seniors Program. Funding goes towards pandemic kits for older adults requiring support (across all seniors serving organizations in Edmonton) to assist with food and groceries, personal protective equipment, activities, hygiene needs, and more
- Organizations work together to coordinate pandemic kit deliveries and essential trips for older adults

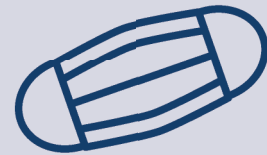


## SEPTEMBER

- More than 1,400 packages containing activity kits, hygiene products, and PPE packages distributed (March-September)
- 1,200 rides to provide support transporting packages (March-September)
- Approx. 80,000 masks to seniors serving organizations (March-September)

## JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

- Mask deliveries to seniors serving organizations for distribution to older adults
- Ongoing distribution of pandemic kits for older adults and support for essential trips



## Ramping Up Efforts to Coordinate a Community-Led Approach to Services

Throughout 2020, ESCC held conversations with stakeholders on the future of the sector. In some cases, these conversations were part of previously scheduled meetings, such as the Stewardship Round Table and the Age Friendly Edmonton Leadership Table.

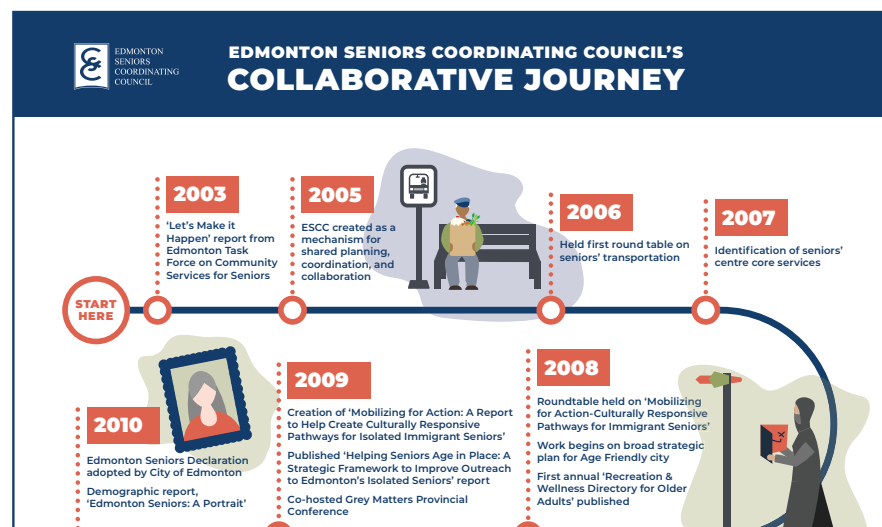
Additionally, in October 2020, ESCC invited its members to discuss the future of the sector, as well as how member organizations see their respective roles and that of ESCC in moving the sector forward. Three sessions were held in October — 21 Board and Staff members provided input on what they felt was needed for the sector to be transformative. Organizations were also encouraged to send us any thoughts they wished to convey using a feedback form they could circulate.

In early 2020, the City of Edmonton proposed the development of *Seniors Sector Framework*. While the pandemic interrupted stakeholder engagement efforts, the effectiveness of the Coordinated Pandemic Response model from seniors serving organizations led the City to decide to move forward with a community-led citywide coordinated approach to services.

It has tasked ESCC to provide leadership and serve as the backbone organization for this work.

Work on a framework to support coordination of services for Edmonton's older adults will continue throughout 2021. ESCC's responsibilities as the backbone organization will include developing a draft roadmap, which would provide a proposed timeline and some desired results, benchmarks/milestones, and indicators that could mark progress as a starting point.

ESCC will guide the overall vision and strategy by synthesizing ideas and concepts from research and community engagement. The network can then act collectively to steer and act.



Pictured: Curious about ESCC's collaborative journey? Visit [www.seniorscouncil.net](http://www.seniorscouncil.net) to view our journey map

## Telling the Story of ESCC

In 2020, ESCC leveraged its own platforms to share information, including newsletters (Link Letter, ESCC Updates, Age Friendly Edmonton), websites (seniorscouncil.net, connectingedmontonseniors.ca, growolderwithme.net), and social media channels. Additionally, ESCC provided communications expertise to collaborative groups by employing individual campaigns and tactics. Some of these collaborative communications are outlined below.



## Pandemic Communications

In response to the pandemic, ESCC aggregated information from organizations across the seniors serving network and shared this information through our communications channels.

### Highlights included:

- Development of a central COVID-19 webpage to share information with older adults and their families. This COVID-19 page was the most accessed area of ESCC's website in 2020, with nearly 7,300 visits.
- An appearance on 630 CHED by ESCC Executive Director Sheila Hallett to discuss the Coordinated Pandemic Response, including ESCC's COVID-19 website
- Regular sharing of information via the Link Letter newsletter

## Grow Older With Me

For Seniors' Week, ESCC's Age Friendly Edmonton initiative ran a campaign encouraging Edmontonians to share positive stories of aging to combat ageist stereotypes. Stories were compiled and posted to the campaign landing page, GrowOlderWithMe.net.

### Highlights included:

- An ESCC social media campaign
- A media appearance on Global TV featuring Age Friendly Edmonton Co-Chair, Glenda Tarnowski
- Outreach to seniors' organizations and seniors' housing facilities in Edmonton to increase participation
- In fall 2020, the campaign was extended to gather more stories showcasing the diversity of aging experiences in Edmonton. AFE partnered with students from the University of Alberta's Community Service Learning program to start gathering these stories.





## Gift of Age & Updated Senior's Declaration Video

For the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Edmonton Seniors Declaration and Oct. 1, International Day of Older Persons, Former Edmonton Poet Laureate Alice Major re-wrote *The Gift of Age*, working with Age Friendly Edmonton team members. Additionally, the City of Edmonton updated the Seniors Declaration and their commitment to older Edmontonians.

- Highlights included:
- A refreshed *Gift of Age* video
- An updated *Senior's Declaration*
- Information circulated widely through both ESCC and City communications channels.

## Connecting Edmonton Seniors

A multimedia campaign ran in quarter one of 2020 to raise awareness about social isolation among older Edmontonians.

### Highlights included:

- A print feature in the Edmonton Journal and digital articles on the Edmonton Journal website
- An ESCC social media campaign featuring key information about isolation, learnings from the PEGASIS/Connecting Edmonton Seniors Project, as well as video stories of impacted seniors: Brian, Dawn, and Patricia
- Ad placements on the Health Unlimited Television (HUTV) network, displayed on health clinic TVs across Edmonton



Pictured [from top to bottom]: A cyclist from Rocky Mountain Seniors Ski Club rips up a River Valley Trail in "the Gift of Age" video. Former Edmonton Poet Laureate Alice Major narrates "The Gift of Age". The Connecting Edmonton Seniors initiative launches an Edmonton Journal feature to raise awareness about social isolation and the need for increased supports for Edmonton's older population.

## The Shared Mic Podcast

In 2020, the Age Friendly Edmonton initiative launched The Shared Mic: Conversations for the Ages. A new podcast celebrating intergenerational connections and diversity. The podcast brought together people of different ages and from diverse backgrounds for conversations to find commonalities. All participants found connection, regardless of where they were at in life and where they came from. ESCC communications assisted with the promotion of this initiative.

### Highlights included:

- A social media campaign
- Advertising on the Alberta Podcast Network
- The development of a podcast presentation series for organizations seeking rec options for their older adult members/clients (to launch in 2021)
- Sharing information via ESCC communications channels



Pictured: Participants from the Shared Mic podcast. **NOTE** these photos were captured prior to the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020. Top: Nisha Patel, Edmonton Poet Laureate and Michael Phair, Former Edmonton City Councillor. Bottom: Liz Reid, member of the GeriActors and Abhay Sharma, a grade 11 theatre student from Jasper Place High School



**Thank you to our funders!**



**United Way**  
Alberta Capital Region

**Canada** 

**Contact us**

 **Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council**  
#255 Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre  
8330 - 82 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T6C 4E3

 **780-423-5635**  **info@seniorscouncil.net**

 **www.seniorscouncil.net**

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