



**Seniors' Advisory Committee  
Notice of Motion**

**1. Reduction of Funding by United Way for Programs Geared to Socially Isolated Seniors**

MOVER: Eddy Elmer  
SECONDER: Eva Wadolna

**WHEREAS**

1. Social isolation and loneliness are major risk factors for physical and mental health problems, as well as early death—risk factors on par with, or greater than, other risk factors (Cacioppo, 2014, *Social Relationships and Health: The Toxic Effects of Perceived Social Isolation*, *Social & Personality Psychology Compass*, 8, 58-72);
2. Health problems attributed to loneliness are an additional burden to the healthcare system (British Columbia Ministry of Health, 2004, *Social Isolation Among Seniors: An Emerging Issue*);
3. 20% of older adults describe themselves as lonely (Statistics Canada, 2012, *Social Participation and the Health and Well-being of Canadian Seniors*);
4. A study by the Vancouver Foundation noted high levels of loneliness in Vancouver, including among older adults (Vancouver Foundation, 2012, *Connections and Engagement*);
5. The Mayor's Engaged City Task Force recommended that steps be taken to improve social connectedness in Vancouver;
6. The City of Vancouver passed a motion on October 2, 2013 pledging to seek formal recognition as an Age-Friendly Community by the Province of British Columbia and a Global Age-Friendly City by the World Health Organization;
7. Encouraging social participation and addressing isolation are key steps in the process towards becoming an age-friendly city (World Health Organization, 2007, *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide*);
8. The Government of Canada, through the National Seniors Council, has identified social isolation and loneliness as one of the top public health issues affecting seniors (Employment and Social Development Canada, March 5, 2014, *National Seniors Council exploring adverse effects of social isolation*);
9. Evidence supports the efficacy of various programs to prevent and ameliorate social isolation and loneliness (C. M. Masi et al., 2011, A meta-analysis of

interventions to reduce loneliness, *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15, 219-266);

10. The United Way of the Lower Mainland recently announced a \$1.65 million reduction in funding to 31 seniors' groups, many of whom rely on these funds to administer programs to prevent and ameliorate social isolation and loneliness;
11. These organizations may be unable to find alternate sources of funding for these programs, both now and in the future;
12. This situation underscores the patchwork and unstable nature of the current state of funding for seniors' preventative programs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1. The City of Vancouver ask the Province of British Columbia to cover the United Way's funding shortfall so that critical programs to prevent and combat isolation and loneliness are not eliminated;
2. The City of Vancouver ask the Province of British Columbia to create a more systematic and longer-term plan for funding seniors' preventative and intervention programs.