



Advocacy Across Decades:

COSCO BC's Leadership in Advancing Health Policy for Older People

Summary of Long-Term Care Highlights

1. Chronic Underfunding & Systemic Gaps in long-term care

The report repeatedly emphasizes that **long-term care in B.C. has suffered from chronic underfunding, inconsistent standards, and insufficient support for seniors.**

Key structural problems noted include:

- Ongoing **understaffing and poor quality of care** in long-term care homes.
- **Insufficient home support**, forcing seniors prematurely into long-term care.
- Post-COVID deterioration: many seniors and stakeholders reported that **conditions “have gotten worse since COVID,” rather than improved.**

2. COSCO's Advocacy Focus on long-term care reform

Across several decades, COSCO has consistently positioned **long-term care reform** as a central policy priority.

Major long-term care themes include:

- Defending publicly funded long-term care and requiring greater accountability over partnership and privatization.
- Advocating for **stronger standards, oversight, and equitable access.**
- Calling for better **integration of long-term care with home care and primary care.**

3. Evidence-Based Advocacy: Keeping Seniors at Home Longer

One of COSCO's strongest long-term care contributions is its **data-driven push to invest in home care** so seniors don't enter long-term care unnecessarily.

COSCO highlighted research (including Dan Levitt's figures) showing:



“12.5% of seniors admitted to long-term care homes could have stayed at home if supported.”

This critical data was used in high-level consultations and became part of the rationale for major funding changes.

4. Direct Policy Impact: Major New Funding for Home Care

COSCO's sustained pressure contributed to a **significant increase in B.C.'s home care budget**, which directly affects long-term care capacity and flow.

The 2025–26 provincial budget included:

- Increase from **\$45M** → **\$146M** in 2025–26
- Increase to **\$163M** in 2026–27
- Plus **\$733M federal Aging with Dignity funding**

This is presented as one of COSCO's **most concrete policy wins**, directly addressing long-term care overcrowding and hospital-to-long-term care pathways.

5. Opposition to Policy Threats Affecting long-term care

Historical records show COSCO successfully opposed policy proposals that would have:

- Increased **co-payments or eligibility barriers** for long-term care
- Reduced access to publicly funded long-term care or related supports

Example: COSCO's resistance to **Recommendation #23** in the mid-1990s—perceived as a threat to long-term care affordability—which was ultimately **withdrawn** after strong advocacy.



6. long-term care Embedded in Cross-Sector Advocacy

COSCO connects long-term care to wider social determinants:

- **Housing insecurity** pushes seniors into long-term care sooner.
- **Dental & pharmacare gaps** create preventable health issues that accelerate long-term care placement.
- **Ageism** influences long-term care policy decisions and public indifference toward reforms.

COSCO's broader advocacy—income stability, transportation, housing—feeds into **preventing premature long-term care entry**.

7. “Plan With Seniors, Not For Them” — long-term care Lens

A foundational COSCO principle, repeatedly cited, is essential to long-term care reform:

“Don’t plan for seniors. Plan with seniors.”

This approach shapes COSCO's long-term care advocacy:

- Seniors' lived experience must guide standards and funding decisions.
 - long-term care reform requires **consultation with seniors**, which COSCO notes has “not happened yet” at federal levels.
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8. Long-term care in Future Directions

Future priorities for COSCO explicitly include:

- Continued **push for long-term care reform and home care expansion**
- Addressing inequities affecting marginalized seniors in long-term care
- Strengthening the organization's ability to advocate for:
 - Culturally safe long-term care



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- Equitable access across regions
- Higher staffing levels and safety standards

Condensed Takeaway: long-term care Highlights

COSCO's long-term care priorities—past, present, and future—can be summarized as:

- ✓ **Chronic long-term care underfunding must be addressed.**
- ✓ **Home care investment is essential to reduce long-term care admissions.**
- ✓ **Seniors must be consulted in long-term care design and reform.**
- ✓ **Long-term care affordability and access must be protected from policy threats.**
- ✓ **Systemic ageism worsens long-term care conditions and must be confronted.**
- ✓ **COSCO has already influenced major provincial budget decisions, improving long-term care pathways**