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Liberals applaud Aging In Place initiative

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MONCTON – The Opposition Liberals are congratulating the New Brunswick Coalition for Seniors and Nursing Home Residents' Rights on the launch of its Blue Paper, *A Vision For Change: Aging In Place*.

Liberal Leader Brian Gallant and Opposition Social Development Critic Bill Fraser attended the launch of the Blue Paper today in Moncton and applauded the coalition's ongoing efforts to improve the lives of seniors. The Blue Paper offers recommendations for keeping seniors in their own homes for as long as is practical.

"We applaud all efforts to keep seniors in their communities where they will have the moral, physical and practical support of family and friends," Gallant said.

Fraser, the MLA for Miramichi-Bay du Vin, agreed, noting the Blue Paper offers plenty of food for thought as he prepares for the upcoming Legislative session, which opens on Tuesday, November 27.

"I will be referring to the Blue Paper often as I pose questions to the Minister of Social Development in the Legislature," he said. "There are a number of action items in this report that will require the government's immediate attention, and I will make sure they don't escape the government's attention."

In particular, Fraser said, he will be asking Social Development Minister Madeleine Dubé about her government's campaign promises to grant the Ombudsman with sufficient authority and resources to be responsible for issues involving seniors and long-term care facilities, and also to establish a 1-800-SENIORS toll-free hotline to provide seniors with information on government programs and services.

"The Coalition has included these campaign commitments as action items in their recommendations, and I will strongly advocate for them to be implemented when the Legislature returns next week," Fraser commented.

Seniors' issues have traditionally been a major point of focus for the New Brunswick Liberal Party. In 2006, just after taking office, the Liberal government immediately reversed the Lord government's policy of considering the value of assets in calculating seniors' nursing home costs. The Liberal government also appointed the first Minister Responsible for Seniors, a position which the current Conservative government has eliminated.

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Media Contact: Jennifer Gillespie, Office of the Official Opposition, 506-453-2548, jennifer.gillespie@gnb.ca