



United Way helping seniors
remain independent.

**United Way British Columbia's Healthy Aging Program
Community Consultation & Stakeholder Meeting**

Southern Cariboo:

*100 Mile House, 127 Mile House, 108 Mile House, 70 Mile House, Lac La Hache,
Chasm, Watch Lake, Green Lake Area, Canim Lake, and Forest Grove.*

Held: November 23rd, 2021 at 10:00 AM

Presented for Review March 21, 2022

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Overview:

“Better at Home is a program that helps seniors with simple day-to-day tasks so that they can continue to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities. The program is funded by the Government of British Columbia and managed by the United Way British Columbia (UWBC), with services delivered by a local non-profit organization. UWBC is collaboratively working with communities in BC’s Interior, Lower Mainland and Central & Interior Vancouver Island.”

The **Southern Cariboo** region has been identified as potential **Better at Home** site. The United Way British Columbia assessed community readiness, identified seniors’ assets, needs and priorities in regard to the potential delivery of the **Better at Home** program.

The Southern Cariboo region includes the communities of: **100 Mile House, 127 Mile House, 108 Mile House, 70 Mile House, Lac La Hache, Chasm, Watch Lake, Green Lake Area, Canim Lake, and Forest Grove.**

This report reflects the community input and stakeholder meeting held on **November 23rd, 2021 (via Zoom)** and will be shared with invited guests and used by the lead organization to design an appropriate local **Better at Home** program that meets community needs. This report focuses on the **November 23rd, 2021** meeting where participants shared their interest in having a Better at Home in their community. Further individual conversations were held from early December until March to assist in the selection process and recommendations were submitted for approval in mid March.

The meeting attendees included members of the public and representatives from key stakeholders from the entire region. Invitations were sent to stakeholders including the local First Nations Bands and key members of each location in preparation for the community meeting. Attendees were community members and representatives from various local organizations and businesses from the Southern Cariboo and surrounding region and included key stakeholders, the health authority and local government.

United Way British Columbia would like humbly acknowledge that we live, work and play as a guest on the beautiful, traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Indigenous Peoples of this place we now call British Columbia. We honour the Elders for their stewardship of this place and peoples of these nations.

Facilitators:

Jessica Kleissen, Regional Community Developer (RCD), Interior British Columbia, United Way British Columbia

Cathy Holmes, Provincial Community Planner, Better at Home, United Way British Columbia

Jessica Kleissen acknowledged territorial lands of the First Nations Communities and our use of their land for this meeting. After a bit of housekeeping, we welcomed participants.

Introduction to United Way British Columbia's Healthy Aging program

To better support older adults to be socially connected, live healthy lifestyles, and maintain independence, United Way British Columbia's (UWBC) Healthy Aging program's strategy aims to help British Columbia's seniors stay at home and in their communities longer. Working towards a vision of a healthy, caring, inclusive community for all members. UWBC's Healthy Aging program embraces a holistic setting where older adults have unrestricted access to community programs and services so that they can age in place. Together with community agencies, local, provincial, and federal governments, and a diverse set of vested partners and donors, the Healthy Aging Team delivers programs including **Better at Home**, *Active Aging*, *Social Prescribing*, *Therapeutic Activation Programs for Seniors*, *Family Friends and Caregivers Support*, *Men Shed's*, *Safe Seniors*, *Strong Communities* and *Community and Sector Development* initiatives, such as *Healthy Aging CORE* and *Project Impact*.

This work is based on three **Healthy Aging Pillars** – priorities that were identified through extensive research, community consultations and recommendations, and learnings uncovered through 12 Better at Home Communities of Practice (COPs) facilitated across the province:

Increase physical activity: Physical immobility and lack of leisure activity are related to social isolation and loneliness. One of the Healthy Aging program's Strategic goals is to increase physicality to help older adults remain socially connected and active as they age.

Reduce social isolation: The UWBC's Healthy Aging Strategy aims to keep seniors mentally engaged in their communities, therefore reducing feelings of social isolation and social frailty.

Maintain and enhance independence: Through provincial investments that maintain and enhance seniors' independence, the UWBC's Healthy Aging Strategy strengthens United Way's commitment to providing home and community services that encourage self-determination.

Raising the Profile Project (RPP)

The RPP was launched in 2016, and was created to increase support and recognition of the role of community-based seniors' services in promoting health and fostering resilience in seniors in BC.

A significant component of the RPP was the development of a provincial network, the goal of which is to understand and build on the capacity of community-based seniors' services to meet the growing needs of an aging population. The network consists of executive directors and managers from municipal and non-profit organizations around BC, seniors who are volunteer leaders in the community-based senior services sector, as well as provincial organizations and others that support the work of the sector.

While **Better at Home** was not created from the RPP project the overall needs of individuals staying in their homes for longer periods of time revealed that complex needs arise as older adults age in place. In noting these changes, **Better at Home** has been able to support, educate and even influence many strategies in the sector.

Healthy Aging CORE

Healthy Aging Collaborative On-line Resources and Education is a platform to connect community-based senior services organizations and allied agencies and individuals in British Columbia. CORE is designed to provide up-to-date information, resources, and training opportunities and to make it easier to

communicate, coordinate, and collaborate in order to help build capacity, strengthen the network, and develop a collective and cohesive voice among volunteers, staff, and others who support healthy aging initiatives.

Healthy Aging Core Canada was launched in the Spring of 2021 and Programs and Initiatives profiled on *Healthy Aging CORE* provide examples of the important work being done by local, provincial, and national organizations and the value of these programs and initiatives in promoting health and well-being and fostering resilience for seniors.

The knowledge hub was created for **Community Based Seniors' Services** (CBSS) organizations and allied agencies and individuals in British Columbia. This portal features training, resources such as tool kits, guides, highlighted community programs, and CBSS Leadership Council's Provincial Working Groups discussion groups. **Better at Home** continues to be an integral part of the steering of the sector.

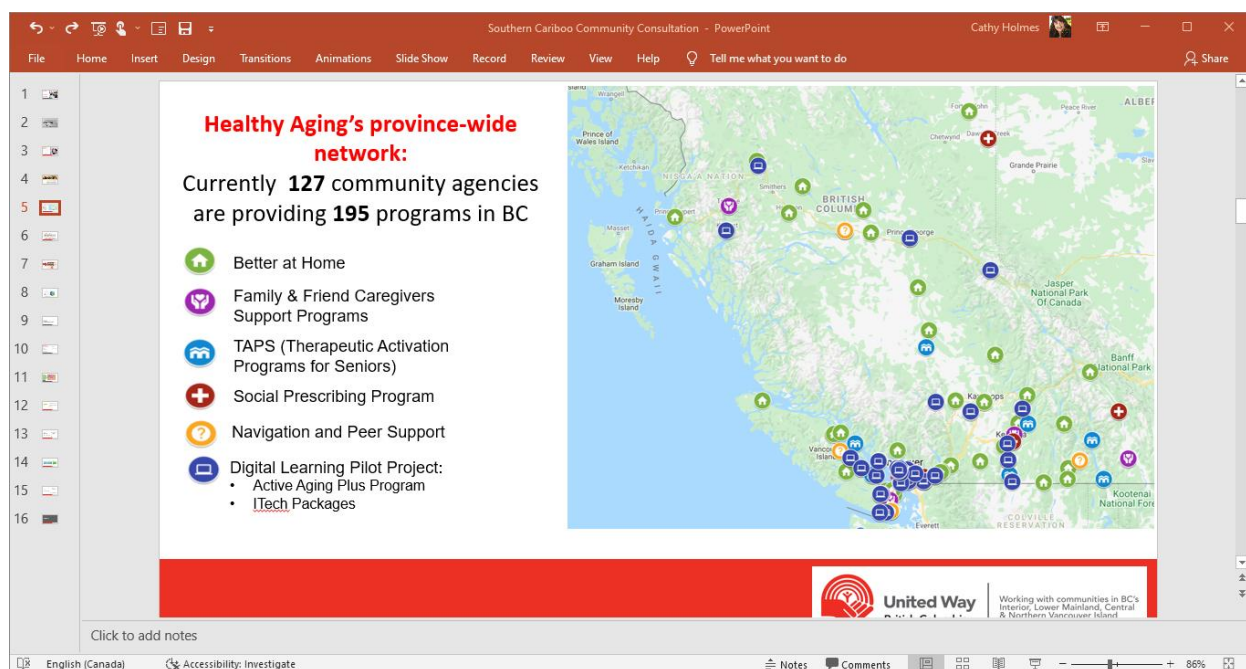
For more information visit and/or join Healthy Aging Core at www.healthagingCORE.ca

Community-Based Seniors Services sector (CBSS)

The key stakeholders of the province's broad and diverse CBSS sector, including seniors themselves, form an extensive network that is connected through Healthy Aging CORE (Collaborative Online Resources and Education). Besides this provincial knowledge hub, the sector shares information, knowledge, expertise, and experience through learning events, Provincial Working Groups, Regional and Provincial Consultations, Communities of Practice, and the Biannual Provincial Summit on Aging. Between September 2020 and May 2021, eight virtual Regional Consultations and one Provincial Consultation were held.

These community engagement mechanisms are guided by the CBSS Leadership Council, and play an important role in informing their work, as well as keeping the CBSS sector informed about new resources, programs, and research relevant to the sector.

Community based organizations provide seniors with access to a range of low-barrier programs in seven core areas: 1) nutritional supports, 2) health and wellness programs, 3) physical activity, 4) education, recreation, and creative arts, 5) information, referral, and personal advocacy, 6) transportation, 7) affordable housing.



Better at Home Expansion Sites

Over the past few years, there has been considerable interest in expanding the **Better at Home (BH)** program to more communities in BC. Based on a reviews of community population, data and needs assessments of prospective communities, from to 2021-2023, BH will expand to serve between 21 and 25 new program accessibility points for British Columbians. **Southern Cariboo** was identified as a potential **Better at Home** host site.

Southern Cariboo is a significant geographical region and includes the communities of 100 Mile House, 127 Mile House, 108 Mile House, 70 Mile House, Lac La Hache, Chasm, Watch Lake, Green Lake Area, Canim Lake, and Forest Grove. .

The meeting on **November 23rd, 2021** could not have happened without the dedication behind the scenes of the following people from:

Mayor Mitch Campsall

Nancy Kendall – Better at Home - Ashcroft Hosted at Interior Community Services

Southern Cariboo Community Consultation Attendees:

Mayor Mitch Campsall

Susann Collins Executive Director – Executive Director, Local office in 100 Mile House - Canadian Mental Health Association

Councilman Ralph Fossum – Representing Seniors through the Age Friendly Society /Southern Cariboo

Roy Scott – CAO District of 100 Mile House

Tracy Haddow – Executive Director - 100 Mile House Hospice Society

Nancy Kendall Better at Home in Ashcroft – Cache Creek/Clinton
Kahir Lalji – Provincial Director, Govt. Relations & Prog., Population Health
Jessica Kleissen– UWBC Regional Community Developer (RCD)
Cathy Holmes – Provincial Community Planner, Better at Home Expansion

NOTE: The Community Consultation Meeting was held during flooding in the Interior and many participants were unable to attend the meeting. Further individual conversations were held from January to March. A summary is included in this report.

All participants were thanked for their participation and support throughout the meeting.

The intent of the community meeting on November 23, 2021 was:

- Support isolated areas as soon as possible in order to help support seniors in Southern Interior;
- That all seniors who need supports have access to bc211 and COVID-19 emergency supports as well as **Better at Home** supports to community;
- Recommendation for **Better at Home** services in identified communities;
- Readiness in each community to pursue expansion in the region and determine community need and appetite which was confirmed by those in attendance.

The agenda for the meeting via Zoom was to come together as a community, through structured conversations, to identify senior's needs and priorities with regards to **Better at Home** services, as well as help identify a potential lead organization in the community best suited to deliver the Better at Home program.

Community Assets of Southern Cariboo:

A community asset is something that has value that is part of a community. Includes skills, networks, current initiatives, programs, policies, structures, or other resources that can be leveraged to improve the community's sustainability (*This is not an exhaustive list*):

Southern Cariboo Community included participants from the communities surrounding the 100 Mile House region. **Invitations were sent to the following:**

- 100 Mile Fire and Rescue – Roger Hollander /Fire Chief
- 100 Mile Hospice – Tracey Haddow
- 100 Mile House & District Women's Centre Society
- 100 Mile House Search and Rescue Society, South Cariboo – Mark Seilis
- 100 Mile Library
- 100 Mile Mental Health
- Deputy Corporate Officer, District of 100 Mile House - Sheena Elias
- 108 Coffee Time – Carol Wise
- 70 Mile Access Center
- Age Friendly Society of the Southern Cariboo - Lea Smirfitt
- BC CRN - Linda Martens

- Canadian Mental Health Association – Susann Collins
- Canim Lake Band Office - Lesley Paul
- Cariboo Family Enrichment Center 100 Mile House - Stephanie Kappei Board Chair
- Cariboo Family Food Bank -
- Cariboo Literacy - Lori
- Cariboo Regional District/South Cariboo Recreation Center – Margo Wagner
- Cariboo Spinners, Weavers Linda Peterson, Deborah Staehle
- Cedar Crest for Community Living
- Cedar Crest Society for Community Living - T.R. Guthrie
- Chamber of Commerce – Christine Gallagher
- Community Garden – Donna Lace
- District of Community Services – Todd Conway
- Friendship Center
- Home and Community Care – Dr. Doug Cochrane, Tammy Tugnum
- Mayor Mitch Campsall
- MLA Cariboo-Chilcotin – Donna Barnett
- Natural Resources Referrals Coordinator, Melvin Paul
- Northern Development
- Royal Canadian Legion
- South Cariboo Food Security Committee - Lisa De Paoli, Chair
- South Cariboo Chamber of Commerce – Manager
- South Cariboo Health Foundation - Chris Nickless
- SSS - Senior Services Society - Pioneer Haven
- United Way British Columbia – Kristi Rintoul (Interior BC)

Additional Invitations:

- Laura Dewar
- Chris Pettman
- Emily Colombo - Regional Economic Operations Branch – Regional Manager, Cariboo Region
Rural Development, Lands and Innovation Division/Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations and Rural Development

First Nations Communities including: First Nations traditional territory are the Tsq’escenemc “***The People of Broken Rock***” The People of the Canim Lake Band, or the Tsq’escenemc as known in their native language, Secwepemcstin or Shuswap language, are members of the Shuswap Nation. The Shuswap Nation is part of the Interior Salish People.

Note: These communities are not included in the below population demographics as they were not available in the most recent census (2016)

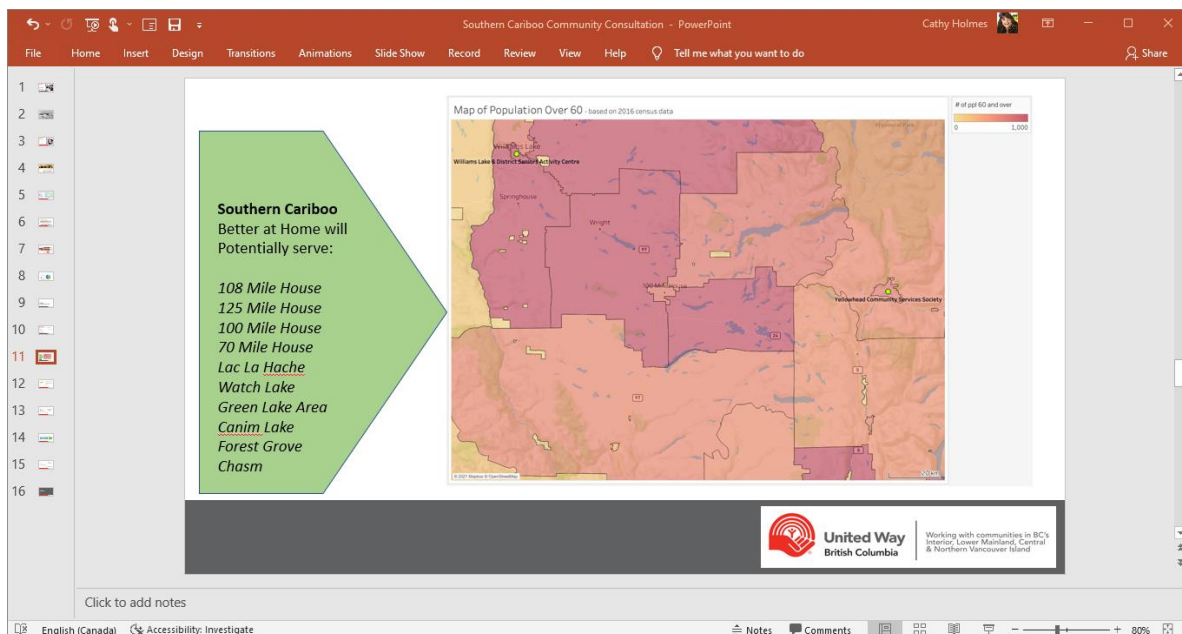
Community Demographics Southern Cariboo

According to the **2021 Census**, the population of the Southern Cariboo (100 Mile, 108 Mile, 70 Mile, Lac La Hache and Thompson Nicola E, is **4650** (Note First Nations Communities are not included)

In 2016 the statistics showed:

- **575** persons are 65 years and older
- **45** over the age of 85
- **7.98%** lived independently in their own homes
- **38.3%** lived below the poverty line in the region

The average rent in Southern Cariboo and includes Lac La Hache, 108 Mile House, 100 Mile House, and Thompson Nicola East. On average the cost for a one-bedroom apartment was approximately **\$1,200** per month, and without utilities. Utility costs, at the time of writing, are inline with the national average; however, transportation is very limited in this region.



What does Better at Home do?

The Better at Home program helps seniors live in their own homes by providing nonmedical support services delivered by local lead organizations, which may be a non-profit organization; using a mix of paid workers, private contractors and volunteers. **Better at Home** programs are guided by local Advisory Committees and each program will have a paid Program Coordinator. In our 9th year of service delivery, we are thrilled to continue supporting existing programs, and welcome new ones, as they ensure that seniors live well, remain independent, and are active contributors to their communities.

The **Better at Home** program is designed to address the specific needs of local regions, allowing communities to choose from the following basket of services:

- friendly visiting
- transportation to appointments
- snow shoveling
- light yard work
- simple home repairs
- grocery shopping
- light housekeeping

Presentation and Reflections

Southern Cariboo has a tightly knit group of community advocates who look after each other and particularly during COVID the focus was to pull together resources. Many found that during the heat dome, floods and the pandemic, volunteers were a bit more difficult to come by, but they continued to support the community as best as possible under the circumstances. In their desire to stay engaged in community, they work together in partnership with various agencies to ensure that the seniors who live in their region are a priority.

Feedback & Questions from Meeting Participants

After a bit of housekeeping, the meeting began with an overview of Better at Home and the United Way British Columbia's Healthy Aging program's contributions to the Interior.

Community Conversations

Nancy Kendall – Described the Better at Home Program in Ashcroft, Clinton. She mainly discussed their housekeeping service, noting that they also provide some snow shoveling and lawn care. She said that they at one time did transportation but one of the community groups provides this service and they work collaboratively. They also work closely with the local foodbank, particularly during COVID. This small community works very closely with the services in partnerships leveraging these supports. She elaborated that they, "*fill in the holes*" and in addition to being a program coordinator, works part-time with Interior Health. Together they offer supports to help bridge the gaps in their area.

Cathy Holmes and Jessica Kleissen reminded the participants that while Ashcroft supports community one way, each community is different and that it is important to create programs that are relevant to the community.

Jessica Kleissen shared some of the interior programs highlights explaining that program coordinators work in collaboration with a broad range of community agencies including the RCMP, Victim Services, Home and Community Care and many others who can be involved in the communications that support seniors aging in place. She explained that each Better at Home is different, but they are relative and responsive to each area and this component is really important for all communities to reflect upon while building their programs. She shared information about the *Williams Lake Activity Centre* and where the Better at Home office is located. She talked about the program, stating that their focus is housekeeping and friendly phone calls due to Covid. She discussed the intake process, the program coordinator role, and the registration interview, and having the important conversations with each senior.

Councilman Ralph Fossum asked if there was a Better at Home in 100 Mile House? He explained that he wanted to highlight the challenges of the area noting that it was a combination of rural and urban communities. He highlighted the many areas of the region including 108, Lac La Hache, Canum Lake and others, sharing that transportation was very challenging in the area. He calls them *“pocket communities”* and stated that he gets many *“calls from people regarding Housekeeping for example, and that they would love someone be a housekeeper for them but a typical example would be first of all that that person may live 20 KLM’s away, 20 klm’s away and so a return trip in 40 klm’s plus. Not only does that take gas, it takes a lot of a caregiver’s time just in travel, and so what I get is a call; ‘I can’t get anybody to come out here – we’re too far away – I can’t afford it. People want to be paid to come this far. It cost 15 dollars in gas just to come here. I can’t afford \$25 an hour plus, plus, plus!’ so I’m not aware of any Better at Home program in the 100 Mile House area and if I get a call right now, I have nobody that I can refer them too. So, can you help me out?”*

Cathy Holmes summarized that the purpose for the meeting was to bring BH to their region and thanked him for his remarks about the area.

Councilman Ralph Fossum ‘s response was: *“Okay – first and foremost, I want to say you need a presence here in 100 Mile House, not in Kamloops, not in Williams Lake, but in 100 Mile House because if we don’t have a presence here, we’re making a long-distance call to someone who we don’t know, and hardly ever see.”*

Councilman Ralph Fossum continues: *“I would like to invite you to come and visit 100 mile and I will sit you down with ½ dozen people, not just me, who can share with you some of the dynamics of what we’re talking about.”*

Cathy Holmes responded with gratitude, noting that, when possible, an in person gathering would be appreciated, but due to the restrictions of COVID, incumbent weather, floods, travel restrictions, etc., it wouldn’t be possible for some time to come. She explained that this inquiry is a beginning and it relies on people in community to attend these conversations to help identify possible lead agencies and to determine the needs of each community. She also discussed that many people were unable to attend this

meeting but that their voices also needed to be part of the dialogue. Communities drive the conversation for Better at Home.

Jessica Kleissen noted that there are **two local agencies** in the Zoom meeting and they may also have an indication of the agencies in the South Cariboo region that could help facilitate the local contexts of 100 Mile House and the area and the region. She let the participants know, that this is not a grant call but rather by invitation. She also expressed that this program funding is only available to non-profit agencies with charitable Status. She explained that it has to do with how we receive our dollars from the ministry. UWBC looks at capacity, interest, and if an agency is a champion to seniors who wish to age in place. She further commented on the responsibilities and the expectations of grant holders and the importance of ensuring that the program sits with the agency best suited due to capacity, availability, reach and interest in providing services for seniors. We invite agencies to consider the program and to apply, but it is a formal process by invitation only. *"We imagine the non-profit will come out of 100 Mile House, but we want to hear from community to determine if another agency, in a community close by has the desire or capacity to host."*

Tracy Haddow of 100 Mile Hospice Society, *"I'm just kinda' curious, so, so I know in running the Hospice program, I know how involved that is and how much work it actually takes to coordinate, to connect and to do all the pieces that we have and because of our graphics, and all the rest of that, I'm just kinda' wondering, like typically is it a full-time position involved in that? The logistics of it? How currently it is set up and running would be interesting?"*

Cathy Holmes responded first, and explained it was different for every agency, and that there are part time and full-time coordinators and this choice is dependent upon the organization and the region.

Jessica Kleissen agreed, adding that there is an expectation that there is a paid coordinator position who is responsible for the *"programming"* piece and is responsible for connecting volunteers, contractors and the administrative duties and the seniors of the program. She went on to say, there are reporting responsibilities. She talked about the provincially funded program, service intake, budgeting and supports citing the North, and described our Quesnel program, whose program coordinator is a full-time position and elaborated on how some agencies often combine duties for service provision where the majority is funded by the Better at Home dollars. She went on to share a few other examples of the reporting responsibilities and the overall administration of the program including those used in Logan Lake and Ashcroft. She reminded the participants in the meeting that much of the development is dependent upon how many seniors are participating in the program, how many services and most importantly that much of this is navigated over time as programs develop. She invited, Nancy Kendall to speak and to share her experiences as a long-time program coordinator with Better at Home.

Nancy Kendall expressed her point of view saying: *"I've been doing this; I think this is my 7th year. I was very fortunate when I started because much of it was already in place and I just tweaked some of it. Things change every year. I pull services sometimes, and add others. I'm really lucky, my host organization is in Kamloops, so we use their office, their accounting, which is very nice for me. They look after the money, the budgets, and have a great supervisor. I can propose ideas and implement them. Some things work really well and some things don't so we kinda' pull it again. You're sourcing out housekeepers, all sorts of issues come out with that but its important to talk about things and work them out. It's amazing because*

the housekeepers and clients become friends and it's very important to keep that. Better at Home is not responsible for doing bathing, things like that. you have to remind people, what we are here for and how we are doing it. To me, that is one of the biggest roles for the program coordinator. "

A short discussion of boundaries ensued. A discussion of pivoting and how the program is growing. The United Way works towards adapting and working together to help support community in support, automation, and the importance of working with your RCD Regional Community Planner.

Tracy Haddow asked a clarifying question regarding having "mandatory volunteers" and the necessity to use volunteers exclusively to perform the duties of service provision.

Cathy Holmes explained that many services are performed by volunteers, including friendly visiting, but that many programs hire contractors or employees to perform some of the higher cost services including housekeeping since some of the needs are not always suitable for volunteers. A further reminder that each program is different and based on community and capacity, services from the basket are chosen to support the local environment. She continued discussing how because of the pandemic, things have changed, explaining that UWBC works with community as best as possible. Contracting service deliverables in the region for persons who are living close by is a way to manage the geography. Examples, were shared to shed light on "out of the box" solutions including the *Safe Seniors*, *Strong Communities* initiatives and *bc211*. A discussion around capacity and the grant available, also helps to shape what services can be offered and how they are created to serve the needs of the region. A reminder that Better at Home cannot fully serve the need, but it is a complement to other services in community to help seniors age in place.

A further discussion around the sliding scale, fee for services, and low-income seniors ensued and highlighted how Better at Home can serve seniors based upon their income levels. There are still many seniors that can pay a portion for the services and all of those dollars go back into the program. We work with the agency to support each senior based upon their specific needs.

Tracy Haddow reminded the meeting that 100 Mile House Hospice Society must fundraise for everything and that *"the program compliments Hospice at this time."*

Susann Collins shared that the gaps are in 100 Mile House and in the surround region, especially around the transportation piece. *"The vast geographical size is far to the west to the Fraser and there are many remote areas. There is very little for bus transport and no taxi services. How would there be within the budget funding to cover that much travel? I remember the last stats quoted that 100 Mile had the largest number of seniors? There are a lot of seniors. Some things that compound things, then how do they get their basic necessities. Isolation as well. Gas cards are helpful, but they really are band-aid solutions and it doesn't really fix the problem. We can't ask a group of volunteers to do these services. A part time position can hardly help the actual need?"*

Cathy Holmes *"You are so right. There are lots of issues with the need. It is very phenomenal the real need is there and we know it can't possibly fix the need. Part of it is getting expectations in order and sometimes that means we have to pivot and find alternative solutions. This is how we come together. Out of curiosity, how have you coped so far, Counsellor Fossum? We know the need is so great in your area? "*

Counsellor Fossum responded: *"I wrote down a few key phrases: By invitation – by community and paid co-ordinator – we need one – I'm a volunteer and have only so much time – we have the largest senior's population in the lower mainland in this area, and we need a coordinator. I only have so much time, I'm probably the only volunteer here right now – and we get so many calls. That amount is increasing in size because we are getting more and more young retirees getting out of the rat race in lower mainland and Okanagan and in ten years it will be worse. I'm communicating problems, so far. And by invitation, I want to extend and invitation, we need a not for profit, I can't identify one, because our host organization, probably our Age Friendly organization, have no money for wages. We don't qualify for grants to pay for an employee. So, we are doing it all by volunteer and we only go so far and our phone calls and our meetings, and so on. We have over 300 people, seniors on our email communication list. Email has become one of the best ways to communicate but that is just information for you. Susann Collins mentioned our transportation. We don't have taxi's and we barely have a bus service and we've got a long way to go. So, this thing continually breaks down and we are very aware of the problems. This delusion – and I want to be positive about this – is the solution I'm looking for so, I want to invite, somebody from Better at Home to come to 100 Mile House. If you want it more formal than that, I'll put it in writing. But I want you to come here and have a two-hour conversation with people that know the area that represent most of the service groups in town, that represent seniors that represent interior health, that represent our politicians and so on. We do have a tremendous volunteer grouping but without someone in position to coordinate, and that is a paid position I'm talking about, this will not go very far."*

Cathy Holmes thanked Counsellor Fossum for the invitation and thanked all the volunteers for all the work they have been doing in their communities. She continued: *"We know that 100 Mile House is in need of the program and that the region has been on waiting list for a number of years and we know that we are looking for an agency to host it."* She thanked Counsellor Fossum for his contribution.

It was then turned back to the potential host agencies in the Southern interior. We discussed the capacity of programs knowing that we can't fully support the demand. Transportation may only be a small portion of the work; and many may find community connections is a part of the community's task and finding some solutions for some of the seniors. It is very integral in the success of the program as the needs will often outweigh the demand.

Susann Collins asked if it *"was possible to send out a sample budget so that we have a clearer idea of what we are looking at? Not saying what we have here, but sort of a general how much funding it would be and what we could support?"*

Jessica Kleissen responded: *"I would love to do that for you Susann, but we can have a much more pointed conversation of how organizations elect to navigate their funding across the different line items available, but it is really unique to every host organization. We have very general criteria; there's no more than 12% administration purposes, usually the bulk of the dollars goes towards a program staff, including a program coordinator, volunteer coordination, or even housekeeping staff. So, the bulk goes to program staffing, and then an amount goes to program supplies, the rest is sort of flexible depending on the organization and the type of services from the basket that they elect to offer. Those are some of the main expenses in programming. Some offer volunteer driving as a service, and often their travel or volunteer honorariums, volunteer gas cards, that finds the budget at times a bit inflated just because that is the service that they are electing to do. If they are doing snow removal, or snow shovelling, as opposed to removal, again it*

depends on the program but that becomes a budget line item for contractors. It depends how an organization and it is really dependent on the agency and how it elects to do its programming.”

Jessica Kleissen continues by drawing attention to the South Cariboo Better at Home region. She says: *“The South Cariboo Better at Home has quite a large catchment area and as a result there are different sizes of communities in the interior. What they have done is create the Host Community – in this case it would be 100 Mile, because it may have access to more services and as they stretch out in distance, there are less services offered out of the basket, and what comes to mind is the regional Shuswap program, so they, at this point serve 23 distinct communities across the entire Shuswap area, from Maliqua to Celesta in the North Shuswap and Salmon Arm and Sorrento, Enderby, and so they have this massive geographic catchment area. In the North Shuswap, it is mostly friendly visiting – that is the most that is offered at this time and short transportation services to Chase. From Celesta to Scotch Creek, to Chase that is the option for seniors in that area. There is a very part time coordinator that supports and sometimes will even do that grocery shop in Chase for the few seniors that are opting for that service. For the seniors in the North Shuswap, it is very limited in the services provided although the program itself offers the entire basket. It is really dependent upon the host organization and how they envision the program serving the seniors who are living in the region.”*

Susann Collins *“Is there a requirement that Volunteers are involved in this? Nancy, do you have volunteers?”*

Nancy Kendall *“When we first started, we had a lot of volunteers and volunteer burnout is so fast; in the blink of an eye, everybody was gone and then with Covid. I have four housekeepers in my program, that are absolutely fabulous, and each housekeeper is actually a volunteer. So, my housekeeper, if they are going to someone’s house, and the senior had already discussed with them, they might need cream for their coffee or some butter or a loaf of bread, my housekeeper will stop on the way, pick those items up, and bring them in so we kind of double up and for me, when I am interviewing a housekeeper it’s kind of like if you can’t provide that, maybe I won’t pick that person for this position? I’ll pick someone who maybe doesn’t have that issue and there are ways to work around that? I also use another organization that has some volunteers, so I’ll phone them up and just go “hey, we need help and they do” and then sometimes there just is no help and we have nothing to offer and when I disappeared from the screen there, and I just noticed the phone was ringing and it was Victoria B.C. and it was somebody from the Seniors Advocate. We’ve got a gentleman in Cache Creek that needs to go into Kamloops three times a week for a visit; it’s a dialysis patient, and so I have absolutely no volunteer that wants to go an hour each way, sit there for four to five hours and come back. We’re trying to work on this but the solution might be that he has to stay in a hotel or something, sometimes there is no solution to things.”*

The conversation continues around volunteers. An emphasis that each community will decide what is really important and relevant to them and what’s possible. A reminder that the Advisory Council can help to inform a new program and together they can determine what services are offered in each community.

A further suggestion regarding finding further information on Better at Home Programs and Healthy Aging CORE was shared.

We were joined by Kahir Lalji Provincial Director, Govt. Relations & Prog., Population Health. He was introduced to the meeting and welcomed.

Kahir Lalji *"Hi, good morning, everyone. I just thought I'd pop in and say hi, and I know Cathy and Jessica are the experts and supporting to roll this out. Nancy, it's good to see you as well, thank you for all that you've done, especially over this last 18 months. Look, just like any other charitable or publicly funded program, there's always going to be more demand than resources available to support, right, and you know, we just do the best that we can and to make an impact where we can and the people, we are able to do. You know, we hear challenges across the province, we hear incredible stories of impact across the province, including how Better at Home programs have shifted to adjust to respond to fires and heat domes, floods, and it's just you know, I'm biased, we're biased, because this is such an incredible program in community and over the last 9 years, we've been working with government to try and expand the roll out of this particular program and three years ago we received funding, to roll out to 21 to 25 new communities. Your community, or communities in this case, were identified as a priority area to move into. So, we're not going to sugar coat this, as with any other charitable sector or non profit organisation you know this, there is unfortunately only so many social issues, that we're not going to work ourselves out of a job, but if we can focus on what our sphere of influence is and focus on the impact we have and can make in the lives of the people we can support, I think we might find this to be a really valuable initiative for older people and their family, friends and caregivers, in your communities. I'm going to stop there, I think you guys know everything else that I would probably have to say, but we really look forward to working with your communities. Thanks."*

Cathy Holmes *"Thanks Kahir, appreciate you popping in today, to say such important words. The meeting returned to begin the conversation of next steps."* A discussion around time, plans, and next steps ensued and the focus of finding a lead community that could best host the program which included information around the grant cycle. The conversation also summarized plans for the next fiscal and how UWBC can best support a new program. A brief reminder about the supports available including preparing host agencies by having templates and that UWBC was fully prepared to provide resources and support. An invitation to belong to the Community of Practice, (COP) once the program will be extended moving forward. A reminder that an Advisory Committee would be required for any new program and that members of the community meeting could potentially be good candidates to participate.

Jessica Kleissen was invited to talk about the Community of Practice (COP) and that together we work through solutions that we can build together.

UBBC invited participants to continue the conversation. As they do, they were asked to consider: What services would be of most benefit to the community? An invitation to talk further with Susann and Tracey to consider hosting the program. Cathy requested that if either of the two agencies were interested in potentially hosting, we would appreciate it if they would send an email with an expression of interest and that UWBC would follow up and continue those conversations.

The participants were thanked by Jessica Kleissen and Cathy Holmes, and the meeting was adjourned.

Following the Meeting:

After the meeting, and over several conversations between December and February, Jessica Kleissen and Cathy Holmes determined that a further community meeting was not necessary as one of the two agencies who attended stepped forward and expressed interest in hosting the program. The organization has the experience and the qualifications to host Better at Home. In Jessica and Cathy's discussions, they reviewed the capacity of the community, and viable options in surrounding communities. What was noticed was that many of the communities have potential agencies, but either they had no capacity, or they did not have charitable status. They reviewed the landscape and saw that within the area, many communities were still in crisis after severe flooding and fire damage of 2021.

Jessica Kleissen and Cathy Holmes decided to pursue the two agencies that were at the meeting. Due to the conversation with the stakeholders in the meeting, it was heard clearly that the presence of Better at Home in community would be most advantageous for participants in this region if it were located in the community of 100 Mile House because it could support the communities in this large catchment area better than if it were located in Kamloops or other more distant communities.

In December of 2021, Cathy Holmes contacted by telephone and spoke to Tracy Haddow, 100 Mile House Hospice Society who had expressed some interest in potentially hosting, but required more information about the structure and further details about the process of delivering Better at Home. During the conversation, Tracy shared her thoughts about the community conversation. She expressed that she would like to take the concept to the Board of Directors of 100 Mile House Hospice Society to see if they would be interested in hosting the program.

After a combination of telephone calls, and emails to clarify information about the program, over a few months, (as the Board meets monthly) 100 Mile Hospice Society discussed the viability with their potential of hosting the Better at Home Program.

The board came back with several questions and in particular were curious how other *Hospice* organizations, if there were any, managed to maintain the mission of Hospice whilst supporting a senior's program or initiative outside of their mandate. She requested feedback and was put in touch with a program that shared the Hospice mission and focus. The President of the Board had a conversation with this contact, and returned to the board to continue the conversation.

In addition, Cathy Holmes via email, asked the local **United Way British Columbia – Kristi Rintoul** (Interior BC) of her working relationships with 100 Mile House Hospice Society. She noted that they were familiar with the organization and would support the application from them. While UWBC in the interior are currently not funding this agency, they have been a "*trusted partner*" in the past.

Shortly after, the Executive Director and the President of the Board informed Cathy Holmes of their decision to pursue the application process both by telephone and via email.

Susann Collins, Canadian Mental Health Association is located in the Southern Cariboo and did not approach UWBC as a potential lead agency.

Due to the capacity of the area, the population and the location, **100 Mile House Hospice Society** is in a position to serve this community and the surrounding communities overall.

What are some important criteria for a lead organization in community?

- Connection to service groups throughout communities in the Southern Cariboo
- Track Record for managing grants and sourcing alternative funding to support programs
- The ability to distribute resources
- Able to manage the demands and expectations of the clients
- Ability to gather *In Kind* supports
- Have people “on the ground” in the region
- Possess long term sustainability
- Have the capacity and foresight for growth
- Promote Success
- Long standing in the community
- Cooperative and Collaborative
- Evolve and fluid

Prevention oriented: Better at Home programs are built on the primary assumption that preservation of independence, dignity and health, and the delay of functional decline are worthwhile investments.

Seniors planning for and with seniors. Seniors are engaged in the planning and governance of the local programs.

Senior centered. The local programs are designed to respond to the needs, priorities and changing circumstances of seniors.

Community driven: Within the Better at Home framework, local programs are built by the community for the community and will involve coordination of services from various organizations and partners.

Evidence informed: Local programs are built on the learning and evidence developed through the CASI evaluation, through ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning, and on the desire to seek continuous improvements through additional learning and research.

Independence focused: Better at Home fosters self-sufficiency and independence by: offering services that assist clients to live independently; helping to promote health literacy and support self-care; promoting social inclusion, and; enabling community connectedness.

Simple and understandable: Services incorporate clear and accessible information, ease of access, and the least amount of official procedure needed to maintain standards of safety, privacy and quality.

Based on need: Local programs respond to seniors’ needs for service and ability to contribute to the cost of providing those services.

Integrated: Local programs are developed in partnership with seniors and other key stakeholders and will be integrated where feasible and, by design, complementary to other services and supports.

A non-governmental program: Better at Home is managed by UWBC and identified as a non-profit sector program funded by government, which does not replace existing governmental programs or services.

Better at Home Program Highlights:

Better at Home is a program that helps seniors with simple day-to-day tasks so that they can continue to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities. The Government of British Columbia funds the program, United Way British Columbia manages it, and local non-profit organizations provide the services.

Its unique ‘seniors planning for seniors’ approach means older adults contribute to the design, operation and evaluation of their local program.

Older adults who receive Better at Home services may pay a fee based on their income. Some services may be free. These fees-for-service are fed back into the local program in order to serve more seniors. Although each program is unique and serves based on the community, there are also commonalities among 85 **Better at Home** programs:

- Service fees are established on an income-based sliding scale which ensures that services are free for low-income seniors, and market rate for seniors with an income above the BC average.
- All volunteers providing services directly to seniors must have a criminal record check.
 - Programs submit regular reports to the provincial office to monitor performance and progress.
 - Program Coordinators engage in a Community of Practice which includes sharing, learning activities, discussing best practices on an online portal, and meet annually for training opportunities and participation in collective dialogue. These activities help develop the capacity of each local program to best serve and support the older adults in BC. Better at Home across the province.

Better at Home Programs in Interior BC

Better at Home programs have been established in Interior BC since 2012 initially under the CASI project.

Currently, **Better at Home** can be found throughout the province; however, the following programs became HUB Agencies. They supported the efforts of Safe Seniors Strong Communities using a Hub and Spoke model to ensure that most communities in the Interior would be served during the pandemic.

South Okanagan Similkameen – OneSky Community Resources Society – Penticton

Okanagan & Shuswap – Seniors Outreach Services Society – Kelowna

Thomson Nicola Cariboo – Interior Community Services – Kamloops

West Kootenays & Boundary – Valley Community Services – Creston

East Kootenays & Columbia Valley – Interior Community Services - Invermere

Better at Home in the Interior can be found in: *Arrow Lakes, Ashcroft/Cache Creek, Boundary, Castlegar, Central Okanagan, Columbia Valley, Cranbrook, Creston Valley, Kamloops, Logan Lake, Lower Columbia, Thompson, Peachland, Penticton, Shuswap, Southern Okanagan, and Williams Lake, Revelstoke and Golden.*

While there are 22 formal **Better at Home** programs in the region, there are several smaller communities served in the Interior. Some follow a regional model and cover more than one community with communications and supports which work together to support seniors who may reside in remote areas that have few services. Throughout the Interior, several First Nations communities both on and off reserve receive services. Close relationships with First Nations Health Authorities have proven invaluable. The **Better at Home** programs listed will be of tremendous support moving forward and can provide advice on program development.

Learning, reflective practice, and knowledge-sharing are central to **Better at Home**, particularly to support program development and quality improvement. Together these programs participate in on two **Community of Practice (COP)** sessions who formally meet two to three times per year serving all Interior Programs in British Columbia; however, with COVID-19 they met more regularly as the needs of community changed and evolved. Host organizations also connect via the **Better at Home Working Group** (found on Healthy Aging CORE). Several times per year agencies come together for learning opportunities and to support each other's program growth or to consult on best practices as program challenges occasionally arise. **Better at Home** Programs are constantly evolving and pivoting to meet the needs of the community.

Regional models defined include:

Type 1:

- 1 Host Umbrella + formal agreements with 2 or more Community Based Senior Services (CBSS) agencies in different communities served.
- This may be determined by population size and distance factors, differences in services from basket desired by differing communities

Type 2:

- 1 Host, employs several coordinators in different communities.

Type 3:

- 1 Host Agency, 1 Coordinator responsible for a large geographic region with distinct communities with different local governments - We currently have many BH Programs of this type.

Because the program is established using a *community development approach* each program is unique to the communities it serves. **Each program must meet the basic grant criteria** and beyond that can offer some or all of the services from the basket using a mix of paid staff, contractors, and volunteers.

To get a feel for the scope of the work **Better at Home** Program Coordinators are invited to present a brief synopsis of how the program operates in their unique community and to highlight some of the wisdom learned through delivering services in their area.

Local Better at Home agencies can be of great value to new programs. It is encouraged to new programs reach out to the local representation and Regional Community Developer for guidance.

The Regional Community Developer (RCD) in the Interior is currently Camille J Hannah. She can be reached at CamilleH@uwbc.ca.

Emergency Response

During COVID-19, which at the time of writing, continues to be prevalent throughout communities in the province, Better at Home has been instrumental in supporting seniors during the pandemic through the Safe Seniors, Strong Communities (SSSC) COVID -19 Response. Highlights of the program are as follows:

Safe Seniors Strong Communities (SSSC) COVID-19 Response

Emergency COVID-19 Response Plan in partnership with United Way and bc211

Funded by the Ministry of Health

- Easy access to services through bc211, now province-wide
- Seniors connected to local community volunteers, friends, neighbors
- Added supports and expanded services specific to COVID-19 needs
- Expansion of United Way's Better at Home Services
- Funding of community agencies and programs through United Way

As of the time of writing, over a million services were delivered - SSSC services have been provided to seniors in British Columbia which may have included one or more of the following:

- Seniors (65+) No cost for Service Delivery
- Urgent non-medical needs resulting from COVID-19
- Living independently in community without publicly funded services and/or have no other way to get support services
- Wellness checks /Virtual Friendly Visits
- Grocery shopping/delivery
- Meal prep (pre-made drop-offs and support in home)
- Prescription pick-up/drop-off

Better at Home - Identifying a Lead Organization

We have designed a different approach to the selection of the Lead Organization for delivering the **Better at Home** program. Instead of a competitive process where the funder selects which agency will receive the grant, each community will go through a community engagement process. In this process, stakeholders – seniors in particular – have a chance to shape the program according to local needs and help select the Lead Organization that is the best fit with the program they envision.

This approach encourages partnerships and collaboration, results in better service delivery for the seniors, and empowers communities to make their own decisions.

In order to qualify to hold the **Better at Home** program, the lead organization must:

1. Be a non-profit, charitable organization,
2. Employ a program coordinator,

3. Complete a BH application form, including the following:
 - A. Governance structures, financial statements
 - B. A description of geographical boundaries for service delivery
 - C. A list of Better at Home services that your program will offer
4. Provide two (2) completed budgets;
 - UWBC Program Funds budget,
 - and a Total Program Funds budget.
5. Provide any other documentation considered key by the community or by UWBC to support approval of the implementation plan and application.

BH Program Must Meet the Following Grant Criteria

- Participants should be older residents, sometimes defined as 60 or 65 years of age or over
- Participants served must be residents of the identified service area
- A paid program coordinator
- The organization that receives and is accountable for the funds must be a non-profit and charitable organization.
- Provide in-kind support and seek additional funding as needed e.g., donated office space, equipment)
- The program must comply with evaluation requirements (data collection, reporting, participation in Community of Practice).
- That a *Better at Home Advisory Committee* be established to support, guide, and to help the integration of the program into community and be responsive to seniors for the first two years.
- Establish strategies to maximize reach / impact of the program, volunteers, and in-kind support.
- Undertake outreach, marketing and public awareness to reach older adults.
- Provide Volunteer training and support.

Better at Home Implementation Process



Suggested Timeline for Implementation of Proposed for Southern Cariboo

An ideal timeline was suggested for the **Southern Cariboo BH** program be:

- July 2021– March 2022– Work with the community to identify a *Lead Organization* for Southern Cariboo
- Mid March 2022 confirm the Lead Organization intent to apply to be the host of Better at Home in the region to fulfill and meet all application and grant criteria
- A signed Letter of Agreement for dispersal of funds be for April 2022
- A representative of the agency participates in the Provincial Better at Home Communities online COPs by April- May 2022
- At least one BH service be delivered to seniors no later July 2022

The UWBC Healthy Aging program team shared their experiences with the presenters and tried to affirm concerns by sharing the current dynamics of the program throughout the province reflecting the needs of community, particularly during COVID-19 and the current landscape of successful BH Programs.

Recommendations from Regional Community Developer & Provincial Community Planner, Better at Home

The meeting on November 23, 2021 was a small sampling of the community; however, due to the devastation of floods, wild fires, and heat domes the aftermath has left the community with many challenges around capacity. Volunteers, agencies, supplies and exhaustion have overtaken, while the community's resilience has remained strong.

It became very clear that the seniors of the Southern Cariboo community, Jessica Kleissen, Regional Community Developer (RCD), key stakeholders, and seniors have felt the challenges of COVID -19 and in these communities have relied on larger centers to provide essential services. Many of the communities in the Southern Cariboo already struggle with transportation issues including a lack of public transportation. Many older adults need options to get to medical appointments and find that there are few options to support them.

After considering the existing resources, it was determined that there were not many in the region that could support hosting the Better at Home program.

It was determined that the most suitable agency to host this program in Southern Cariboo is **100 Mile House Hospice Society**. Not only does the agency have capacity in all levels, it also has access to other Better at Home organizations that share their values and can mentor growth. This agency has already made connections, in their learning processes, to determine if they had the necessary understanding of the inner workings of a program so they could make an informed decision.

100 Mile House Hospice Society has a proven track record of building solid relationships with existing programs and working in collaboration with community.

- It is the recommendation of the Regional Community Developer and the Provincial Community Planner that the best fit for Better at Home in Southern Cariboo is **100 Mile House Hospice Society**

noting that relationships with agencies in Southern Cariboo and other stakeholders may form lasting partnerships as the program develops.

- It is also the recommendation to use the naming convention of **Southern Cariboo Better at Home**.
- **In the spirit of transparency**, the Provincial Community Planner recommends that a letter to the invitees that could not attend the meeting be sent requesting feedback to ensure their voices are heard. This letter, with a deadline, can be used to inform the community and allow for community to support or request further discussion. As environmental issues plagued the interior, due diligence would allow community to expand the discussion or contribute, support and work alongside for the betterment of all involved.
- **United Way British Columbia – Kristi Rintoul** (Interior BC) supported 100 Mile House Hospice Society and would support the application. While UWBC in the interior are currently not funding this agency, they have been a *“trusted partner”* in the past.
- It is also recommended, that after communications with the communities, the contract be awarded to **100 Mile Hospice Society in the amount of \$ 125,000 to Host the Southern Cariboo Better at Home Program**. The Letter of Agreement (LOA) would be used to support the communities of ***100 Mile House, 125 Mile House, 108 Mile House, 70 Mile House, Lac La Hache, Watch Lake, Green Lake Area, Canim Lake, and Forest Grove and Chasm***.

Why 100 Mile Hospice Society?

- Solid non-profit with strong ties to the community
- History of community engagement and consultation
- Committed Board Members with a wide range of relevant experience
- Membership reflects the region’s communities
- Extensive community engagement in defining regional requirements and solutions
- Providing significant input to evolving needs of seniors and close relationships with health authorities including First Nations Health Authority
- Committed to sustainable and secure operating policies
- History of accountability in reporting to funders
- Accomplished fundraisers and program developers
- Independent Board that represents the community
- Support from all corners of the region
- Strong and growing network of contacts locally and beyond
- Significant track record of service to the community

Next Steps

Findings of this report will be reviewed and discussed and an application will be sent to the successful host agency candidate.

The Provincial Community Planner and the Regional Community Developer (RCD) will work with the perspective agency to support the application process.

Once the LOA has been approved and is in place our team will work with the agency to train, support and facilitate a successful launch of the **Better at Home** program in the community.

Thank you!

The day would not have been possible without the support of everyone who assisted in putting the meeting together. From the Zoom meeting itself to the information gathering, this dialogue was created by the community of **Southern Cariboo** and we are grateful for the opportunity to bring the **Better at Home Program** in your region.

Thank you, **Kahir Lalji**, Provincial Director, Government Relations & Programs for your vision and encouragement to expand **Better at Home** to more communities in the Province of BC through meaningful initiatives for older adults in our communities.

Many thanks to **Jessica Kleissen**, RCD Interior BC, United Way British Columbia for her co-facilitation and insight into the region. Special thanks to the team of **UWBC's** Healthy Aging Program, including **Bobbi Symes**, Assistant Director, Population Health, **Jessamine Liu**, Administrative Assistant, Population Health, **Camille J Hannah**, Provincial Coordinator, Population Health, **Jean Rikhof**, Provincial Coordinator, Grants & Data, and everyone on the Healthy Aging team who assists in the facilitation of new programs in the Province of British Columbia.

Finally, thanks to each of you for participating during the entire community engagement process and particularly on November 23, 2021 with the desire to co-create a shared future that invests in older adults to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities. Thanks also for demonstrating humility, courage, grace and leadership to explore differences and uncover what could be the greatest asset and outcome of the session. In particular, trusting the facilitation process and being supportive of working with complex challenges presented in our communities.

We look forward to the next steps.

Further feedback, comments or questions can be directed to:

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