

Exclusive

Do you find it patronizing, or have you come to accept it? Is there a better word to describe people over the age of 60?

Send us your thoughts via email at

would not experience further victimization," the toolkit noted.

"There is significant evidence that demonstrates that the needs of LGBT seniors are not well-served within the mainstream health-care system and certainly is not being addressed within the long-term care sector itself."

The lack of inclusive services isn't unique to Toronto.

A 2010 report by the City of Vancouver's social policy division found LGBT seniors face issues not experienced by their heterosexual counterparts, making it more difficult for them to navigate the long-term care system.

"Some seniors have been closeted their entire lives and fear coming out, some have been rejected by their families and some are experiencing discrimination and homophobia in various settings, including within the home support and residential care systems," the report found.

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There were relatively few programs in Vancouver geared specifically to this aging group of the population, according to the report. While many non-profit community groups in the city have programs in place to welcome culturally diverse seniors, government services "have not developed the same degree of cultural competence."

The private sector is trying to fill the gap.

Plum Living, a Vancouver-based company, is looking to build the city's first residential complex with home health-care services catering to the LGBT community.

The plan was announced in 2008. Five years later, the company is still collecting deposits from community members.

Meanwhile, the City of Halifax is reviewing a proposal to rebuild a church into an inclusive apartment complex that welcomes senior LGBT residents.

Dubbed Spirit Place, the proposed development would add independent living facilities to St. John's United Church. It was originally designed to include seven storeys and 65 apartment units, but it was later reduced to 59 units to satisfy concerns about the size of the building.

