



PRESS RELEASE



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Launch of National Seniors' Housing Survey

OTTAWA, Ontario, June 22, 2009 — Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) launched its new National Seniors' Housing Survey today. The survey, conducted in all provinces, collected information on vacancy rates and rents in seniors' residences with services not offered in traditional rental structures.

"Vacancy rates and rent levels in the seniors' housing market reflect a different market makeup than the traditional rental market," said Bob Dugan, Chief Economist for CMHC. "The demand for seniors' housing is expected to increase as the baby boom generation ages. The anticipation of this eventual increase in demand, has spurred the construction of seniors' units ahead of actual demand. This, in turn, has led to an average vacancy rate of 9.2 percent in seniors' residences that tends to be higher than in the traditional rental market."

The national vacancy rate applies to standard spaces, which are defined as:

- private units such as a bachelor, one-bedroom or two-bedroom apartment occupied by a single individual or a couple; one unit is considered as one standard space;
- semi-private units; one unit is considered as two standard spaces;
- ward units; one unit is considered as three standard spaces or more;

The vacancy rate is calculated for all standard spaces regardless of whether the occupant participates in a meal plan or requires medical services. The vacancy rate covers only spaces that accommodate residents who receive less than 1.5 hours of care per day.

Vacancy rates varied considerably across the country, from a low of 3.4 per cent in Saskatchewan to a high of 18.9 per cent in Newfoundland and Labrador. The vacancy rate in Ontario (13.3 per cent) was above the national figure, while the rates in British Columbia (7.5 per cent) and Quebec (7.9 per cent) were below average.

Average monthly rents in the seniors' market are higher than traditional market rents, reflecting the additional services and amenities that residents of these structures receive. The average rent for bachelor/private units where meals are included was \$1,774 per month. Average rents ranged from a high of \$2,519 per month in Ontario to a low of \$1,271 in Quebec. Differences in average rents reflect, in part, the varying prevalence of services and amenities in each province.

As Canada's national housing agency, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) draws on more than 60 years of experience to help Canadians access a variety of quality, environmentally sustainable, and affordable homes — homes that will continue to create vibrant and healthy communities and cities across the country.

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Backgrounder

- CMHC conducted its first National Seniors' Housing Survey in February and March 2009. Previously, CMHC had regional seniors' reports in B.C., Ontario and Quebec, which were published annually.
- The new national survey was conducted in all 10 provinces and in all centres regardless of size, which had a residence meeting the eligibility criteria.
- The survey targeted private and non-profit residences where the majority of residents were 65 years of age or older and had access to additional services not offered in traditional rental structures. To be eligible for the survey, a residence must provide an on-site meal plan or on-site medical services. Virtually all residences surveyed provided an on-site meal plan. Other amenities and services that were popular in some of the residences included on-site medical services (57.8 per cent), transportation services (44.2 per cent) and 24 hour call-bell service (92.0 per cent). Note that the survey excluded nursing homes and long-term care facilities.
- Across Canada, some 43 per cent of standard spaces in the seniors' housing market rented for less than \$1,500 and 22.0 per cent of spaces rented for \$2,500 or more per month.
- Some 176,845 seniors lived in the 2,464 residences surveyed, capturing 8.2 per cent of the Canadian population at, or above, the age of 75.