



MEDIA RELEASE: *Concordia-based research group urges Canadian seniors to participate in current CRTC inquiry around telecom companies' misleading and aggressive sales tactics.*

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Montreal, QC - In mid-July, Federal Minister Navdeep Bains asked the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to launch a public inquiry into the misleading and aggressive selling practices of telecommunications service providers. [The Minister's request](#) occurred in the wake of several months of media investigations into the unsavoury sales tactics of Canadian telecom companies and after the CRTC initially declined to investigate the issue, despite pressure from [consumer advocacy groups](#).

[The public inquiry](#) is open to all Canadians until August 30, but a Montreal-based research group from Concordia University (Ageing + Communication + Technologies or ACT) is concerned that seniors may not participate to the extent they should.

Dr. Kim Sawchuk, ACT's Director, and her team have been working with seniors and technology for close to a decade. Over the past eight months, they have been interviewing seniors about this issue. Sawchuk is discouraged by the number of stories of abuse they've heard, "it's appalling to see companies taking advantage of older adults. In fact, many seniors have been loyal to these companies for several decades and they trust that they are being given the best price. We know that this is untrue and, worse, seniors feel that companies are taking advantage of this sense of loyalty. They're being sold services they don't need at prices they can't afford or being pressured into contracts."

Sawchuk is concerned that few Canadians know this investigation is underway, as so many are on holidays. She also thinks the CRTC's approach to engaging with older adults is insufficient. She explains: "The CRTC's online interface for public consultation has not been designed in a user friendly way. It requires multiple, difficult-to-find click-throughs to get to the submission page. We know, from our research, that seniors who are less tech savvy are not necessarily going to be able to navigate a website that requires three to four click throughs."

ACT is reaching out to organizations across the country with the hope that more seniors will have a chance to participate in the inquiry. "It's important that we use this inquiry as an opportunity to speak up and share our stories. The CRTC has the power to create better regulations to protect consumers, and they should," says Sawchuk.

Canadians have until August 30, 2018 to submit their stories online, by fax, or by mail.

More information about the CRTC's inquiry can be found here: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/telsp.htm>

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More information on ACT: <http://actproject.ca/act/older-adults-canadian-telcom-practices/>