



ACA News

Vol. 44 No. 1

Serving Alberta's Seniors since 1967

Feb.-March. 2011

Are we really ready for the Senior Boom?



Photo: Fred Speth

SENIOR FRIENDLY™ IN NOVA SCOTIA

Senior Friendly™ volunteer Muriel Hubley, Bridgewater Police Seniors' Safety Co-ordinator Beth George; and Senior Friendly™ volunteer Grace Speth at their Christmas party in Bridgewater, N.S. Seniors in that town have a lot to celebrate, thanks to these women and a community will to accommodate the needs of its older residents. Page 9.

**IT'S TIME AGAIN TO RENEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP: P. 15**

ACA News

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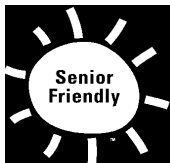
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February-March 2011

Baby Boomers welcome here

Welcome to the first edition of the New Year, 2011! Now settled in our new office, we look forward to the year ahead, which promises to be another exciting and challenging one. In this issue of *ACA News*, we are pleased to present several commentaries representing government and community viewpoints.

We especially want to extend our great appreciation to the Honourable Mary Anne Jablonski, Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, for her personal contribution addressing Alberta's Aging Population Policy Framework, which embraces many components of the United Nations' age-friendly vision. (It appears on page 10).

We believe the development of the Alberta Aging Population Policy Framework is an important first step and look forward to working together on developing strategies to implement it.

In preparing this issue, we remain mindful of the 2007 United Nations initiative for age-friendly cities worldwide, with significant support from Canada.

The objective of the initiative was to prepare member states for the upcoming surge of citizens reaching age 65 (the Baby Boomers). That time has arrived. As such, ACA is experiencing a growth in requests for the Senior Friendly™ Business and Community programs, one of which is highlighted on page 9 of this issue for their creative approach to building an age-friendly community.



• • •

In the next 10 years, the number of Albertans reaching the age of 65 is expected to grow significantly. This demographic shift is expected to have profound social and economic impact. Presently, health care matters continue to dominate the news, and our Policy Advisory Committee continues their efforts to address Alberta's continuum of care performance related to senior services in Alberta. Accordingly, the time is ideal for Alberta's aging population to embrace the United Nations initiative and become active with ACA Chapters to prepare for this imminent future.

• • •

Lastly, we believe the essence of this issue reflects not only the challenges we are experiencing, but also the proactive measures being taken through education, grass-roots efforts and community involvement. To get involved, please contact our head office in Edmonton or your Regional ACA Office.

We welcome your participation!

'Thank you, ACA!'

"Thank you for the paper! I appreciate it because it keeps me informed especially about health care. I am afraid of what will happen to public health care. I feel you are working for me to keep it available for me in my later years, when I will need more care."

— Clara Rubletz

Visit the Alberta Council on Aging online at www.acaging.ca

Message from the minister

Our province is aging—in 20 years, the number of Seniors will more than double, and by 2031 it's estimated there will be more than 920,000 Seniors in Alberta.

This population shift is going to present opportunities and challenges for the entire province, and we need to be prepared to respond in effective and sustainable ways.

That is why, in November, I released the Aging Population Policy Framework. The framework outlines these challenges and opportunities, and it lays out the roles, principles and key directions government will be taking to meet the needs of our aging population. It will also help the many areas of government improve co-ordinated decision-making regarding policies, programs and supports for an aging population.

The framework recognizes the important roles other sectors play in meeting the needs of an aging population and the many partners that serve and support Seniors.

The framework was developed with input and feedback collected through the Demographic Planning Commission process, which included stakeholder and public input, as well as cross-ministry input and research.

The needs of current and future seniors are a priority for the government and the Aging Population Policy Framework will help us continue to meet these needs. The Framework and additional information are available on the Alberta Seniors and Community Supports website at www.seniors.alberta.ca.

Honourable Mary Anne Jablonski
Minister of Seniors and Community Supports
February 2011



Hon. Mary Anne
Jablonski

New policy addresses challenges of an older Alberta

Alberta Aging Population Policy Framework
Executive Summary reprinted with permission

Alberta's population is steadily increasing in age, as are the populations of other Canadian provinces and developed nations around the world.

This is due to a combination of factors, including longer life expectancies, decreasing fertility rates, and the advancing age of the Baby Boom generation — those born between 1946 and 1965.

Between 2011 and 2021, the percentage of Albertans aged 65 and older will increase from approximately 11 per cent to 15 per cent of the population.

By 2031, when the last Baby Boomers reach 65 years of age, it is projected that about one in five Albertans will be a Senior. Alberta's future Seniors are expected to be more diverse than ever before, with varying skills, abilities, support systems, living arrangements, levels of education, health and wealth — all influenced by their diverse experiences and differing circumstances.

Aging has profound implications

This demographic reality will have profound and lasting economic and social implications for our province, leading to opportunities and challenges across a wide range of policy areas.

Responding to these opportunities and challenges will necessitate the involvement of a variety of partners in areas such as finance, transportation, housing, health, infrastructure, municipal affairs, community services, public safety and others.

It will require action on the part of governments, the private and non-profit sectors, communities, families and individuals.

Roles and responsibilities

The Aging Population Policy Framework defines and articulates the Government of Alberta's roles and responsibilities in responding to the needs of an aging population.

It is intended to provide clarity to other governments, sectors, stakeholders and all Albertans about how the Government of Alberta intends to act in a number of key areas.

The purpose of the Framework is to:

- Identify the Government of Alberta's role in meeting the needs of Alberta's aging population so that Albertans have the information and support they require to plan for their Senior years.
- Communicate the Alberta government's key policy directions in preparing for Alberta's aging population, and its desired objectives in those areas.
- Provide an overall context for the co-ordinated development of policies, programs and services to meet the needs of Alberta's aging population.
- Provide a framework to inform the allocation of resources so that programs and services are affordable to taxpayers on a sustained basis.
- Foster collaboration and integration among Alberta government ministries, the federal government, municipal governments and other community partners so that programs and services for the aging population are efficiently and effectively delivered to Albertans.

How the report was prepared

The development of the Framework has been informed by the input of Albertans through the work of the Demographic Planning Commission, which solicited Albertans' views on the major issues facing Alberta's aging population. In its Findings Report, the Commission identified a number of policy areas that should be addressed in developing the Framework.

The Framework has also been informed by other quantitative and qualitative sources, including census data, additional statistical information, and trend analysis regarding Alberta's aging population. In addition, a cross-ministerial approach has been employed in developing the Framework to reflect the perspectives, plans and collaborative efforts of Alberta government ministries that have responsibility for issues relating to the aging population.

A link to the full report can be found at www.seniors.alberta.ca

Two new websites confront elder abuse in Alberta

On behalf of the Alberta Council on Aging, I attended a New Horizons for Seniors workshop on elder abuse. This workshop included members from the federal department sponsoring elder abuse awareness activities and included representation from 31 groups working on various programs across Canada.

Along with ACA's PEATE (Preventing Elder Abuse Through Education), there were two other Alberta groups represented. The AJEFA (*Association des jurists d'expression française de l'Alberta*) produced a program "*Prevenir l'abus, c'est mon but!*" The Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association worked on a project entitled Chinese Community Response to Family Violence.

I invite our readers to visit their websites to learn about these important programs:

- The Chinese Canadian Elderly Citizens Association is at www.cceca.ca (English) or www.ccrfv.ca (Chinese).

- *L'Association des jurists d'expression française de l'Alberta* is at www.ajefa.ca

Gary Pool, ACA President

Your Views

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REPORTS FROM REGIONS 2, 5 & 9

Region 2

Here we are halfway through the winter, and we can only hope that Groundhog Day told the truth!

We hope everyone is having fun with winter activities. Some Seniors in Region 2 are going to St. Albert to take part in the 55 Plus Winter Games. We wish them good luck in their competitions.

By the time this goes to print, Region 2 will have had its February executive meeting and planning will start for the spring, Annual General Meeting. If any Seniors' group in Region 2 would like to host the AGM, please get in touch with the executive.

Respectfully submitted
by Diane Walker

Region 2 held a meeting at the Golden Years' Society in Fort McMurray on Oct. 15. Ed Gordon advised me that the last ACA meeting was held there in 1982. It is great that Ed is still an active member after all of these years.

Our meeting featured a presentation by Iris Kirchner, Chair of Health Advisory Council #4. We were also joined by MLA Guy Boutilier, who gave a presentation on the history of the promised long-term care centre that was later cancelled. Diana Anderson, representative for north eastern Alberta, outlined the role of the Seniors' Advisory Council of Alberta and some of their concerns and accomplishments. The major part of the meeting was spent on discussing the Government's Continuing Care Strategy: Aging in the Right Place. Fort McMurray will soon be getting a partnership Assisted Living Facility. Other than a lodge, there is no care available to Seniors there except for a few who reside in part of the hospital that is no longer being used for acute care.

Our next meeting was on Nov. 24 in Cold Lake, attended by 75 Seniors from seven communities. We were also pleased to have municipal councillors in attendance. Doug Mills and Stephanie Miller of Connecting Care Inc. gave a presentation on existing Points West Living Facilities. One of these facilities will soon be built in



Cold Lake and Seniors were anxious to know more about the facility, the costs, and the services that it will provide. Diana Anderson attended in her role as the Chair of Lakeland Communities Health Advisory Council. Seniors can contact her about health concerns so that they can be addressed when the council holds its public meetings. We were also pleased to have Mary Jane Tkachyk, Senior Benefits Officer with Alberta Seniors and Community Support.

If anyone in Region 2 wishes to contact me, please give me a call at 780-645-7757 or email me at edithread@hotmail.com.
Respectfully submitted by
Edith Read

Region 5

Central Alberta Council on Aging

This promises to be another busy year for the Central Region Council on Aging (CACA). Beginning in February, and despite the frigid temperature, the general meeting saw about 90 brave folks attend a presentation on income tax as it applies to Seniors.

Catherine Louie, a community outreach co-ordinator with the Canada Revenue Agency, explained the different types of income, the importance of reporting on the proper lines in one's return and about income splitting. Details about deductions — especially medical and disability provisions — were explained at length. As one indicator of the interest on the topic, there were many questions that extended well into the post-presentation question-and-answer period, until Catherine was forced to start her return drive to Calgary.

This is a 'sure hit topic' for other regions!

As always, the CACA Program Committee under the leadership of Shirley Thomas continues to do a fine job.

In other news, the CACA Board is interested in how home-care services are delivered. While home care



Members of the Central Alberta Council on Aging listen to a presentation at their February meeting.

seems to have had, as part of its original philosophy, a single point of entry, it now seems to be somewhat confusing in how prospective clients, are screened, assessed and serviced.

To this end, an ad hoc group has been struck to examine home care and to report back to the board and to the membership. This promises to be an interesting exercise. Stay tuned!

Finally, CACA (Region 5) is pleased to have been selected as the possible region for the ACA's Annual General Meeting. We hope to have an interesting program. Please mark your calendar for May 31 in Red Deer.

Submitted by Doug Janssen

Region 9

Two Chapters were active within our area:

1) A mid-term general meeting was held in Vegreville on Oct. 28. About 30 people were present from the immediate area and as far as Dewberry and Gwyne. A lovely lunch was served.

An interesting program included Bev Homeniuk, Seniors Advisory Council (Willingdon), two bank reps and our treasurer, Hjordis Armitage, and the 911 emergency response reps from Wainwright.

Forgotten funds

Hjordis told of "losing" some of her bank accounts and her efforts to regain them. CIBC and Bank of Montreal

courteously educated the gathering about their policies about dormant accounts. To avoid dormancy, activity needs to occur in an account within six months — even a small transaction shows activity. Some banks are allowed to deduct a fee for overseeing a dormant account. A letter is sent and after 10 years of inactivity the funds are collected in Calgary and sent to the Bank of Canada in Ottawa. (More information and a search form are available online at bankofcanada.ca.)

When you dial 911

The 911 presentation by Ken and Monique from the Wainwright dispatch was brisk, factual and cordial. Some of the points they covered:

- It takes 90 seconds from call-in to dispatch.
- Questions you will be asked by the operator include: What's your address? Telephone number? Tell me exactly what's happening now.
- Stay calm. Speak slowly.
- When should you hang up? When dispatch says so!
- If you dial 911 by mistake, stay on the line to let them know it was a mistake. If there is no answer to their call-back, 911 will call the police.
- Switch on your outside lights.
- Have patient's list of medications on hand.

2) The North Central Chapter met Nov. 17 in Two Hills, where we were greeted by Walter Kulak, Two Hills Senior Centre President.

Mary Jane Tkachuk, Seniors Program Advisor out of

Continued on page 14



Daniela Hildebrand

New administrative assistant Nadia Willegar (left) and board member Norm Bezanson welcome new ACA member Audrey Fodchuk.

Open House

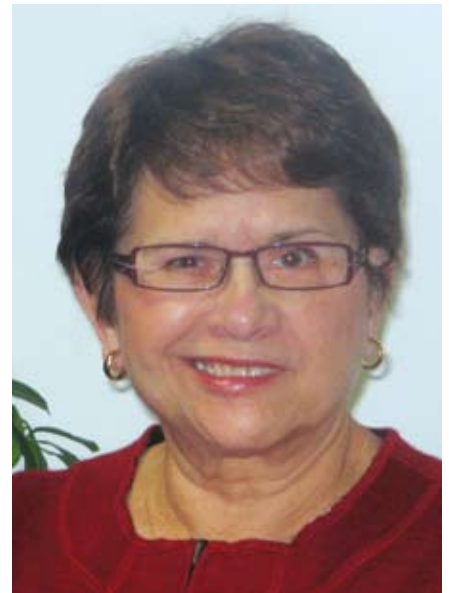
The Alberta Council on Aging, which moved to new offices in November, held an open house Jan. 11 and 12 to show off our new digs

to members and guests from the community. Visitors had a chance to meet with ACA staff and volunteers and to see first-hand the workings of our office. Pamphlets describing the ACA programs were distributed.



Daniela Hildebrand

Guests browsed multimedia information products, including the ACA News.



Daniela Hildebrand

Nadia Willegar, a retired teacher, joined the ACA staff in December.

Say hello to Nadia

Please join us in welcoming Nadia Willigar, who joined the Alberta Council on Aging in December as our administrative assistant.

Nadia, who recently retired as an elementary school teacher, will provide support in telephone reception and data entry for ACA.

Nadia is “pleased to be offered a position with an association that promotes a worthwhile cause, and appreciates the focus on helping Seniors maintain their independence and quality of life.

“The daily phone contact with members and the development of new skills are the rewarding aspects of this new career.”

So give Nadia a call!

We are very pleased that she has joined our team and look forward to working with her on ACA endeavours. We extend our warmest welcome and best wishes to Nadia.

SENIOR FRIENDLY™

Small town in Nova Scotia becomes a leader for Seniors

Over the past year, the *ACA News* has closely followed the progress of Bridgewater, a town of 8,000 people in Nova Scotia, which is becoming one of Canada's most age-friendly communities.

Part of their plan included implementing the Senior Friendly™ Community program under which 60 per cent of their businesses would become designated as Senior Friendly™. For Bridgewater, that means at least 31 businesses would need to take on the Senior Friendly™ challenge!

To achieve this extraordinary level of commitment takes co-ordination and the involvement of community leaders, Seniors from the community, Senior-serving agencies, local police and RCMP, and businesses sector. Once there is a commitment to become age-friendly, Senior Friendly™ training is provided to at least 60 per cent of staff in each participating business.

Bridgewater started its Age Friendly Communities initiative in 2009 by setting up a coalition of 18 Seniors and business leaders. Beth George, the Senior Safety Co-ordinator with the Bridgewater Police Service, became a certified Senior Friendly™ trainer in 2009 and worked closely with the committee to develop an action plan. The program was officially launched in April 2010.

Beth and her team (whose pictures appear on the cover of this *ACA News*) provide training to Seniors to do Check Ups and to work with participating businesses to identify how they can become more accessible to older citizens. The team, which includes a Senior, a falls prevention co-ordinator and a Senior housing representative, provides training to at least 60 per cent of the staff of each committed business.

Training includes recognition of the contributions of the Senior population and addresses the myths of aging

with emphasis on healthy aging and well-being. The training also looks at the challenges that some Seniors face with various health conditions and how service and environments can be adapted to meet the needs of individuals with these conditions. The team supplements the Senior Friendly™ training by providing education in falls prevention and elder abuse.

To date, seven businesses are designated as Senior Friendly. These are:

- Lighthouse Publishing, Ltd.
- Bridgewater Public Library
- Lighthouse Motel
- Dave's Vacuum Clinic
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 24
- Nova Scotia Community College
- DesBrisay Museum.

Several local businesses and organizations currently are going through the Senior Friendly™ Business designation program:

- Bridgewater Police Service
- Buck's Home Building
- Lahave Credit Union
- M&M Meat Shops
- Bridgewater Visitor's Information Centre
- MODL
- Lawton's
- Bridgewater Town Hall
- Lunenburg Town Hall
- Lunenburg Public Library.

The Alberta Council on Aging recognizes the great efforts the people of Bridgewater have undertaken. Their creative approach to helping Seniors not only addresses the architectural guidelines and design of a community that is age-friendly, but more importantly, it recognizes the critical role of social relations such as respect and the enhancement of quality of life of older people.

Congratulations to Bridgewater for endorsing the concept of age-friendly, to Beth and her training team for their creative approach to training, and to the businesses that have embraced the Senior Friendly™ vision.



POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

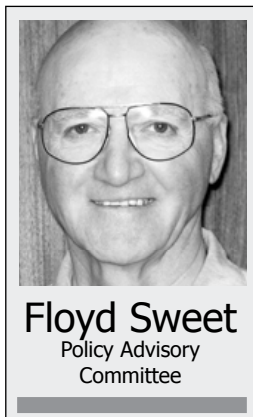
Thinking inside the box won't mean better care for 'Grandma'

A spirited discussion focused on our strategy to be most beneficial to Alberta's Seniors as we considered alternatives such as the proposed Health Act, income security, long-term care, home care and others.

A variety of issues around home care led us to consider hospitals, auxiliary hospitals, nursing homes, home care and palliative care as a group under the title of Continuum of Care.

Here are some points raised in the debate:

- Confusion exists over the availability of emergency hospital beds, and the lack of new nursing home beds. Seniors face uncertainty in their retirement years.
- Levels of needs of Seniors could make many unable to live on their own.
- How are scarce finances defined for each level (expected costs, government subsidies required and client contributions)?
- Will services be delivered by the lowest-cost staff necessary for defined services?
- Facilities are built for defined "levels" of clients, with least-cost staff, and funded by government at defined rates for defined levels of clients. This led the Alberta government to create a new bureaucracy to deal with these levels.
- Diagnosing and "pigeon-holing" of Alberta Seniors requires a bureaucracy to designate where the needs will be met and at what rate of subsidy.



• But the mythical "Grandma Moses" is not static like the system with its defined levels, defined subsidy rates, defined staffing requirements — her health factors are fluid.

Looking ahead

Let's refocus from systems that are made up of levels to a system that views citizens on a continuum of life: from independence to needing assistance to dependence.

The key issue is independence: Grandma Moses currently lives in her own home and has access to community services — transportation, communication, health and social services. But Grandma is not static and life deals its own hand of experience: legs become unreliable, the mind plays tricks because Grandma doesn't eat well. Grandma needs assistance to stay at home, or she might be better off in a facility accommodating her needs, perhaps a lodge or even a nursing home.

The lodge/nursing home sequence was functional, effective and efficient for Seniors and the handicapped. The simple formula was to congregate people of varied needs with staff that was trained to meet their needs. How did this communal system lose favour? Who benefitted from the change of process?

The current state of Seniors' services began with the creation of the Department of Seniors and Community Supports. Seniors' facility needs were lumped together with libraries, cemeteries, playgrounds, the developmentally disabled and other community services.

Alberta Health and Wellness had previously managed Seniors' facilities from regulations governing eligibility to standards for employees, and ultimately, management of the long-standing hospitals, auxiliary hospitals, nurs-

ing homes and lodges.

Grandma Moses at age 60 could look forward with confidence and certainty to a system that would respond appropriately to her needs.

More government changes

But our government had a brain wave: to create a “facilities” branch in a “catch-all” department. Alberta Health and Wellness is still in charge of the criteria for eligibility which are carried out by Alberta Health Services (Home Care), a patient’s doctor including family members, and Grandma herself.

As well, the government of Alberta announced a moratorium on any further building of lodges or nursing homes. The limit exists at 14,500 beds.

The continuum of services was broken.

Hundreds of Senior Albertans occupy active treatment hospital beds. Emergency room response times have become dangerous for lack of hospital beds and appropriate care. There are no new nursing home beds. Building continues by private contractors under P3 agreements (public-private partnerships), but mainly for the Seniors who require limited assistance for daily living.

The right kind of services are not being developed for frail Seniors. How does our Grandma Moses feel? At 65, if she can afford \$2,500 to \$3,500 per month, she may be happy with the new facilities coming available in Red Deer, Medicine Hat or Calgary. But in Grandma’s hometown there has been minimal expansion, beyond the few community-based associations that have accessed government of Alberta grants, accumulated capital debt and built modest-sized facilities.

A few of these facilities in rural Alberta are well built, staffed appropriately and serve real needs for aging Seniors. If Grandma is a rural resident, she may be contented with the prospects for her needs as she ages ... as long as she could stay in her home community.

It appears that the current state of affairs for Seniors housing and the requisite services indicate a shortfall in philosophy.

What lies ahead?

The moratorium on building by the government of Alberta, choosing to create pressures on Seniors and emergency room patients, allowing building under P3 of facilities for levels 1, 2 and some 3... all of this can’t just be bungling by our government!

Certainly, the departments are not at fault: their overall leader is an MLA designated by the premier as the

minister. The voices of specialists such as deputy ministers often carry less weight than those of the caucus.

If Seniors’ programming is not bungling, is it deliberate? The logic suggests that the current state of Seniors Services is due to a philosophical problem.

Future concerns

The number of baby boomers reaching 65 is expected to increase to 25 per cent of Alberta’s population within the next decade.

Reacting to the cost of pharmaceuticals for Seniors, former health minister Ron Liepert suggested a policy for Seniors to pay upfront via a government of Alberta-sponsored insurance. (Actually, not insurance, but an assurance that GOA bottom line would be palatable!) He forgot to investigate the costs of increased hospital care for Seniors not able to manage the insurance/assurance costs. This was another piecemeal proposal.

The minister and caucus have limited vision for an integrated policy for Seniors. Rather, they see the policies in pieces — segments of service such as housing, staffing, and services, each with an attendant cost figure.

All of the above are important, but unless considered in a philosophy of CONTINUUM OF CARE, cracks are created everywhere and Seniors fall through.

It is probably not the intention, but it shows an oversight.

Conclusion

Against this background of current experience, the Alberta Council on Aging Committee for Policy Advisory, is undertaking to pull together relevant research on Continuum of Care related to Seniors’ services in Alberta.

The basis for this activity is our consideration that Seniors’ need to know over the long term what services will be available to support their lives.

Policy Advisory Committee members will be actively involved in gathering information with specific recommendations to the ACA Board for policy-development and appropriate follow-up (education of GOA, of Seniors and professionals — nurses, doctors, therapists, pharmacists, etc.)

It’s ambitious, but the current horizon is unclear and inhospitable for Seniors.

The focus of the Alberta Council on Aging is to make a difference.

Respectfully,
Floyd Sweet,
PAC Chair

How waiting for a placement takes a toll on Seniors, too

Commentary on Research by Dr. Donna Wilson and colleagues addressing The Lived Experience of Older Persons who are Waiting in Hospital for Placement in a Nursing Home.

Health care matters in Alberta are often in the news and one matter that continues to be addressed is the expensive use of often scarce hospital beds for individuals waiting placement in a nursing home.

Not so often addressed, however, are the feelings of these individuals who are waiting in hospital, often for a long time.

In considering the impact that these waits have on older patients, Dr. Donna Wilson, a professor in the University of Alberta Faculty of Nursing, and her colleagues recently conducted a timely study to explore the lived experiences of older patients who were waiting in a hospital for placement in a nursing home.

The results of this study suggest that, "Waiting in hospital for placement in a nursing home is a major transition for older persons, as this wait is difficult and boring, such that social isolation appears prevalent. As acute care hospitals are not designed for waiting placement patients, efforts must be made to develop specific in-house waiting placement programs and services, and to advocate for home care to permit home-based waits and more accessible nursing home beds."

Dr. Wilson and her colleagues conclude that,

"Although this study should be replicated, it is hoped that the findings will alert health-care professionals, managers, researchers, and others to the many possible negative impacts of this wait, and with remedies to address waiting placement care deficits subsequently planned and implemented; such as in-hospital services designed for waiting placement patients, improved access to nursing homes, and increased home care services so that some patients may return home and wait in this familiar environment instead."

Clearly what is currently happening is a no-win situation for both acute-care facilities and the public who need to access those facilities as well as for seniors who languish in an inappropriate placement.

Dr. Wilson makes three recommendations. Increased home care and increased long-term care beds are the most feasible. Adding programs and services to make the acute care wait more stimulating will not solve the problem for acute care facilities.

It would definitely help those Seniors who find themselves in acute care awaiting placement elsewhere, but would do nothing to solve the main problem in emergency rooms when there are no beds available for those who need them.

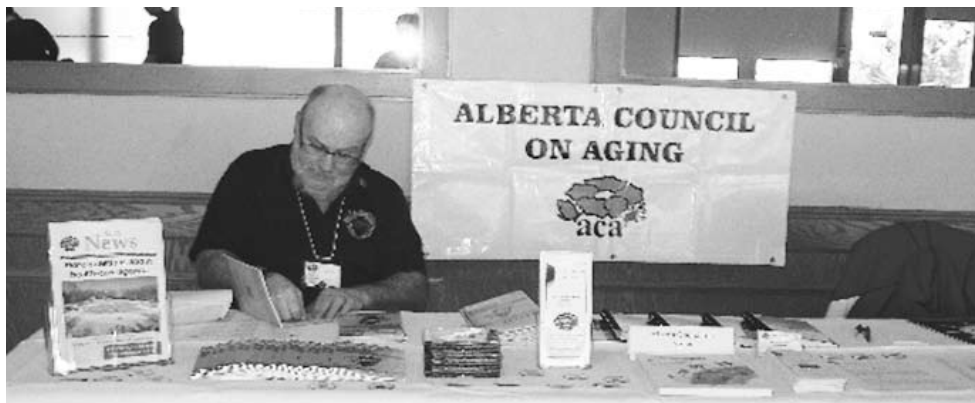
The current system is not working and alternative ways to care for our Seniors must be found.

Respectfully submitted
by Edith Read, Region 2

ACA participates in health fair

ACA participated in the Seniors' Health Fair in January at the Derrick Golf and Winter Club in Edmonton, where we joined more than 20 other exhibitors.

Our display included program brochures that were made available to attendees.



Daniela Hildebrand

Walter Hildebrand helps out at the ACA display table during the Seniors' Health Fair.

ACA thanks the following donors

ACA extends our deepest appreciation to the following people for their generous donations:

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NOTICE BOARD

ACA is looking for casino volunteers

Can you help us raise funds?

The Alberta Council on Aging needs volunteers who can help work at our scheduled Casino event at the Yellowhead Casino on Easter Monday, April 25, and Tuesday, April 26.

This is ACA's major fund-raising event and it will help cover about two years of program costs, including ACA News publication.

A shift lasts typically about six to eight hours, either day or night time. (Night shift will last until around 3 a.m.)

Taxi fare within the city to and from the casino will be reimbursed if a receipt is provided. Food and beverages are provided at the event.

If you are interested and would like to find out more, please call our office at 780-423-7781.

Without your support at our fund-raising events, ACA could not continue the important work we do in strengthening the ties between Seniors and the communities they live in.

Continued from page 7

St. Paul, covered a number of Seniors-related topics. Aids to Daily Living, AISH, public guardian, Seniors Services Division are all administered by the Seniors and Community Supports department of the Alberta government. Topics included Alberta Seniors Benefits Program, which is a variable supplement paid to Albertans over 65 who earn less than \$24,500 for a single or \$39,900 per couple. This supplement ensures that Alberta Seniors eligible for this subsidy have disposable income of \$265 per month.

Mary Jane also spoke about Special Needs Assistance covering many primary needs for Seniors whose incomes are less than \$20,100 (single) or \$31,700 (couple) — basics such as fridge, stove, furnace, and as of July 1, hearing aids could be subsidized. Dental and optical needs have been subsidized since 2005 for low- and moderate-income Seniors.

The local Two Hills Victim's Services operation was introduced and explained; it is always linked to an RCMP office. Victims have fewer rights than criminals, so Victim Services provides an opportunity to level the outcomes for victims. Victim Services is highly regarded in each community where it exists.

The Region 9 annual general meeting is planned for 10 a.m., March 16 at the Viking Senior Centre.

Respectfully, Floyd Sweet, Director

ACA thanks all its generous donors

Continued from previous page

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