



ACA News

Vol. 45 No. 1

Serving Alberta's Seniors since 1967

Spring 2012

'George and Betty' invite all ACA members to learn about Seniors' issues

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Ralph Nader to highlight conference

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Mount Robson

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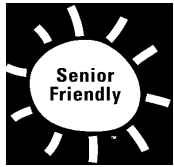
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ACA Mission: To empower and educate Seniors and government to support the quality of life for Seniors and encourage their full participation in all aspects of society.



ACA News

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Spring 2012

High-profile conferences on Seniors' issues planned

Upgrade to website will make communication easier

The ACA continues to be involved in a number of high-profile Seniors' issues. Elsewhere in this newsletter there are items on a conference entitled "Beyond Acute Care" coming up on February 24 and 25th. We are one of the members of the Seniors Task Force co-ordinated by Public Interest Alberta and are one of many Seniors Organizations co-sponsoring the conference and encouraging all interested parties to attend. Please see page 13 for more details.



In addition to the above event, ACA is assisting in the Grey Matters, a conference for Senior service providers on September 13 and 14, in Edmonton. Watch for details in our next issue of *ACA News*. Our Senior Friendly™ program should be a good fit with the other discussions planned at this conference.

In our January meeting, the ACA Board of Directors agreed to proceed with a major upgrade to our website. This will occur over the next several months. Our hope is that we will be able to provide members much more current information and make it easier for members to provide feedback to us.

We are a member of another group, Alberta Network of Seniors Related Organizations (ANSRO), which notes that the current approach to addressing Seniors' needs and/or care services is too fragmented and will not meet

the future needs of Seniors in general and those of the elderly frail and vulnerable in particular. ANSRO is suggesting an integrated management strategy for senior services per the White Paper they prepared last November, "Supporting George and Betty: An Integrated Management Strategy for Seniors Supports, Housing and Care in Alberta."

Below is the Executive Summary of ANSRO's proposal. If you wish more details on the proposals, we should have copies in the ACA office by the end of February. Directors Norm Bezanson and Bev Hanes have been working with this group on behalf of the ACA:

Executive summary

As a group, ANSRO is issuing the following Clarion Call to Government:

Recognizing the implications of the projected increase in the population of older adults, especially the elderly, frail and vulnerable, the challenges faced by community service providers, and the well-documented research on the needs that accompany the natural process of aging, ANSRO calls on the Government of Alberta and its agencies to (a) immediately resolve the funding and operational issues service providers have to deal with on a daily basis, and (b) implement a pilot project of a provincially standardized, community-based, Regional Seniors Resource Centre, and to make appropriate supporting regulatory and policy changes, thereby enabling seniors to enjoy an optimal quality of life as they age in the living environment of their choosing.

(continued on next page)

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

As population ages, we need to care for George and Betty

The following are excerpts from Alberta Network of Senior-Related Organizations (ANSRO) "Supporting George and Betty: An Integrated Management Strategy for Seniors Supports, Housing and Care in Alberta"

The document includes the following components:

1. An overview of Alberta's aging population, the state of Seniors services in Alberta and the challenges faced by service providers.

The demographic context of Alberta's aging population is well documented and discussed in the public sphere. Statistical research presents a picture of a clearly diverse and dynamic demographic. This is reflected in the wide range of needs, variations in income, health status and level of independence of Seniors today; circumstances, when added to service-funding issues, give rise to challenges service providers need to address on a daily basis.

2. Service provider issues that need immediate resolution.

Seniors service providers face limiting and restrictive challenges on a daily basis as they endeavour to address the needs of their clients, particularly as they age in place. The projected growth in Alberta's population of Seniors serves to reinforce the significance of appropriately addressing current service-funding inadequacies through necessary and sufficient resources in a manner that enables service providers to fully address Seniors' needs.

3. A plan for an integrated network of services for Seniors.

Considering the diversity of Alberta's aging population, and in light of the current challenges related to Senior service provision, ANSRO proposes the following plan to better integrate management strategies for Seniors supports, housing and overall care. This plan takes the form of a network of Regional Seniors Resource Centres. These centres would include the following components:

- Provincial oversight through a cross-ministry,

multi-sectoral, steering committee consisting of provincial representatives, municipal representatives, and Seniors service providers.

- Single provincial funding agency administered by the participating provincial ministries, i.e., at minimum, Alberta Seniors, Municipal Affairs, Human Services and Health and Wellness.
- Local governance by a board consisting of local stakeholders in seniors service provision. This membership should also include individuals from the local Seniors population.
- Provincially standardized business model that can be replicated in other communities.
- Local, community-based information service to provide information about locally available health-care, housing and community support services for a range of needs.
- Infrastructure to support robust information sharing across health, housing and community services.
- Referral, supportive pathway navigator and case management service provided by intake staff.
- Integrated assessment at two levels: preliminary and comprehensive.
- Community partnerships with agencies as direct service providers or in supporting the operation of the Centres themselves.
- Co-located, multi-disciplinary staff composed of a team of nurses, social workers, mental health workers, housing advisers, therapists, elder abuse professionals and others.

4. A call to action in support of this plan.

As a way of moving toward this described plan for Seniors services in Alberta, ANSRO is calling on provincial and municipal governments and community service providers to work together to implement the Regional Seniors Resource Centre model. The pilot project would include the following activities:

- Establishment of a multi-sectoral steering committee.
- Development of a business model.
- Selection of appropriate pilot communities.

- Identification of potential local partners.
- Examination of local Seniors population, services and service gaps.
- Development and implementation of a Seniors service plan.
- Development of a marketing/communications plan.
- A preliminary evaluation plan.
- Pilot expansion directed toward provincewide implementation.

Supporting George and Betty: An Integrated Management Strategy for Seniors Supports, Housing and Care in Alberta is based on the premise how systems of service delivery are structured, organized and resourced can have a major, positive impact on the accessibility, efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of the services provided to those served.

The overarching goals of the proposal made herein include ensuring availability of and enabling ready access to services; enhancing the quality of the services; increasing efficiency; improving user satisfaction; and, achieving better outcomes all through a seamless, integrated management strategy for Seniors supports, housing and care.

Credit goes to the following organizations for participating in this initiative:

Alberta Council on Aging,
 Alberta Continuing Care Association, Alberta
 Association on Gerontology, Alberta
 Association of Senior Centres, Alberta Senior
 Citizens' Housing Association,
 Alberta Seniors United Now,
 Public Interest Alberta,
 Confederation Park 55+ Activity Centre,
 Edmonton Seniors Co-ordinating Council,
 Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre,
 Greater Forest Lawn Seniors,
 Kerby Centre,
 Lethbridge Senior Citizens Organization,
 Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton,
 Seniors Housing Society of Alberta

We want to hear from you!

- Did you write a poem?
 - Do you know a joke or funny story?
 - Did you write a short story?
 - Do you have tips you would like to share?
 - Would you like to submit a letter to the Editor?
- ACA would like to hear from you and publish your piece in one of our upcoming Newsletters.

Please submit your contributions to our office either by mail, fax or email to daniela@acaging.ca.

Make sure you mention your name, phone number and consent to publish your contribution.

Please update our address

Dear members: please make sure you address your mail to us correctly.

Each week, we still receive a fair amount of mail which got sent to our old office location. Thankfully, the kind new tenant there kept forwarding our mail to us. To make sure that your membership applications do not get delayed or lost, please use the following address only:

Box 9, 11808 St. Albert Trail, Suite 232
 Circle Square Plaza, Edmonton, AB T5L 4G4

Thank you

REPORTS FROM REGIONS 1, 2, 3 AND 9

Grande Prairie ready to host AGM 2012



ACA Executive members of Region 1 invite all ACA members in Alberta to the 2012 Annual General Meeting in Grande Prairie.

This year, the AGM is being held in the “Land of the Mighty Peace” on Tuesday, June 5, during Alberta’s Seniors Week.

Visitors can take in the Seniors Trade Show and Rotary barbecue for Seniors on the Monday before the AGM.

Region 1 will host the AGM in the morning with guest speakers in the afternoon. All activities will be co-hosted by the Golden Age Centre in Grande Prairie, 10222-101 Avenue, on the bank of our beautiful Muskoseepi Park and Bear Creek.

How to get there: Coming from the south, take the circle route and enjoy a variety of scenery, north on Highway 40 from Hinton to Grande Prairie; on your return, continue north on Highway 2 to Peace River Town, cross the mighty Peace River at historical Dunvegan, enjoy the provincial park and campsite. Return home via No. 2 through High Prairie and Slave Lake, or take Highway 43, south through Valleyview, Whitecourt, and on to Edmonton.

Grande Prairie offers a variety of accommodations. Camping is as close as a one-kilometre walk from the Golden Age Centre

Come to Grande Prairie in June. Region 1 extends a hearty, Peace Country welcome to you!

Respectfully submitted,
Yvonne Dickson, Director, Region 1

Region 2

Region 2 met at the Lac La Biche Heritage Society on Nov 24. There was a lot on the agenda and the participation by the Seniors was wonderful. We heard an earful and responded to their concerns regarding the possible

Region 1 executive include, from left, Karen Burgess, Grande Prairie; Bev Gibson, Rycroft; Cliff Mitchell, Grande Prairie and Martha Dawson, Grande Prairie. Not pictured: Yvonne Dickson, Director.

removal on the cap for accommodations costs in Senior housing, the lack of transportation with the closure of Greyhound bus lines passenger service, the food being fed to longterm care residents under the Provincial 21 Day Menu Plan, and the billing fees being charged by Telus Cellular and Epcor for those individuals who do not use e-billing.

Regarding the first three issues, motions were approved to write to government officials about our concerns. I can report that I did receive responses to the letters about our concerns but that there has been no resolution to our concerns and there appears to be none forthcoming.

Because November is Seniors Falls Prevention Month, time was spent reviewing the four steps to prevent a fall: keep active, check your medications, watch your step, and speak up about dizziness. Materials on these four steps were made available to the participants.

Our main speaker for the meeting was Laura Keegan with the Alberta Rural Physicians’ Action Plan (ARPAP). Laura’s presentation was very informative and there were many questions from the floor. We were surprised to learn that Lac La Biche is one of the few communities that does not have a local Physician Recruitment and Retention committee. Hopefully, this meeting spurred Seniors to push their local politicians to spearhead such a committee.

Time was also spent clarifying the terminology used in the various types of Senior housing. Terms such as assisted living, designated assisted living, supportive living, levels 3 and 4 as well as 4D can be confusing. Diana

REPORTS FROM REGIONS 1, 2, 3 AND 9

Anderson from the SACA (Seniors' Advisory Council of Alberta) led the discussion and provided handouts for participants.

The long-awaited Continuing Care Centre promised for Fort McMurray continues to be an ongoing saga. First it was to be built by government, then cancelled, then to be built under a P3 model, then because private operators wanted too much money the government decided to build it; property close to the hospital was selected and construction was to begin the end of September 2011; then a new site was chosen, and finally nothing is resolved.

Fort McMurray is Alberta's third largest city and the home of the oilsands, which are the economic engine of this province. Other than a Seniors Lodge known as Rotary House, there is no Senior housing in the community. Seniors who require care are housed on the third and fourth floors of the Northern Lights Health Centre. As one of our members says the more accurate term is "warehoused." It is a pity that the Seniors in Fort McMurray are not receiving better treatment by the government.

Now that the Christmas season is behind us, the executive of Region 2 planned to meet on Feb. 1 to plan our next two meetings for the end of February and end of April. Locations and topics for these meetings are yet to be decided. We welcome input from the Seniors in northeastern Alberta as to where to hold the next meetings and what they would like to see on the agenda.

Respectfully submitted,
Edith Read, President Region 2

Region 3

Now that January is nearly done, and Senior groups are planning meetings, I would like to hear from your centre. I can be reached at info@acaging.ca or (1-888-423-9666) or at my listed number.

This year, we will be working on Age Friendly Communities. If you have any ideas on how your community could become Age Friendly, please let us know. I am looking forward to becoming more familiar with this area and where your Senior Centres are located. If there are items you would like to see in the *ACA News* please call the office.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Walker, Director, Region 3



Region 9

No visits were scheduled in the region so far this winter. The terms of reference for the Regional and Chapter officers are still being worked up. A list of all Seniors' centres in the region is being compiled along with addresses, phone numbers and dates of meetings if available. A letter will be sent to each inviting the centre to have the Regional Director come and speak about ACA membership and its benefits as well as what ACA is doing for Seniors in the province. An attempt is being made to list all continuing care centres in the Region as well as the names of administrators. Contact will be made requesting a meeting with residents to talk of ACA benefits and programs.

Respectfully submitted Fred Olsen,
Director, Region 9

Physical fitness, resistance training benefits older adults

The participants at the various Seniors lodges, Golden Age Centre, and the Multiplex in Grande Prairie range from the active independent ager to the very dependent and frail. These classes have been ongoing for over a year in most places and improvements have been realized from one end of the spectrum to the other, regardless of age or ability.

With a focus on strength, endurance and flexibility, many have been able to improve their fitness levels and most importantly, their balance. Falls are one of the most dangerous health issues and one of the major reasons for a person losing his or her functional independence.

With this in mind, balance and falls prevention strategies make up a large portion of the types of movements and functional exercises done in each session. Exercising the brain in addition to the body is included, as well as relaxation and stress reduction techniques.

Having fun doing physical activity in a non-threatening and safe environment is key to participant adherence and for the regulars who attend, the improvements not only in physical health but social camaraderie is apparent. Being able to continue to function independently and to do the activities of daily living is one of the main reasons people want to be physically active.

Here are some comments from participants:

“I’ve had a stiff neck for several years so that I could not look easily over the left shoulder. Since doing these exercises, I can now turn in either direction as needed. I still drive and certainly this is an improvement for this activity.”

A 73-year-old woman said that *“she is now able to stand up and put her boots on. Good balance.”*

Having the strength and endurance to walk and “keep up” while on vacation continues to be another huge motivator and benefit to keeping active.

On a riverboat vacation along the Volga River in Russia last summer, Mac and Chris Henderson offered this comment: *“...walking on gravel and pavement, in crowded museums, stair climbing both on land and on board the riverboat— we were constantly experiencing situations where what we had been practising in our Seniors Keep Fit classes proved most beneficial... We began our trip feeling very confident we were “pre-*



Mac and Chris Henderson get fit with Nordic walking sticks before their vacation to Russia.

(Photo courtesy of Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune)

pared” and feel our holiday was greatly enhanced by participating in these classes.”

In summary, some of the many benefits of physical activity and resistance training in older adults I have observed are the self-confidence in the progress of the participants; the better mood and interaction; the physical changes where even other participants notice their fellow classmate improving in balance, gait, and power and the exuberance of individual well-being experienced by many. The ability to remain independent for as long as possible is one of the main functional goals and is widely becoming the focus for many health-care professionals and government bodies in their plans for future budgets and health-care improvements.

*Prepared by Sherry Ouimet, CSEP-CPT
Older Adult Specialization, Be Fit For Life Centre
Grande Prairie Regional College*

Practical steps to minimize risk of fall

Outside your home:

- Paint the edges of outdoor steps and any steps that are especially narrow or are higher or lower than the rest.
- Paint outside stairs with a mixture of sand and paint for better traction. Keep outdoor walkways clear and well-lit.
- Clear snow and ice from entrances and sidewalks.

Inside your home:

Remove all clutter in your house.

- Keep telephone and electrical cords out of pathways.
- Tack rugs and glue vinyl flooring so they lie flat. Remove or replace rugs or runners that tend to slip, or attach nonslip backing.
- Ensure that carpets are firmly attached to the stairs.
- Do not stand on a chair to reach things. Store frequently used objects where you can reach them easily.
- Keep a well-lit home
- Have a lamp or light switch that you can easily reach without getting out of bed.
- Use night lights in the bedroom, bathroom and hallways.
- Keep a flashlight handy.
- Have light switches at both ends of stairs and halls. Install handrails on both sides of stairs.
- Turn on lights when you go into the house at night.

Bathroom tips

- Add grab bars in shower, tub and toilet areas.
- Use nonslip adhesive strips or a mat in shower or tub.
- Consider sitting on a bench or stool in the shower.
- Consider using an elevated toilet seat.
- Use care walking
- Use helping devices, such as canes, as directed by your health-care provider.
- Wear nonslip, low-heeled shoes or slippers that fit snugly. Avoid walking around in stocking feet.

And don't forget...

- Review medications with your doctor or pharmacist. Some drugs can make you drowsy, dizzy and unsteady.
- Discuss safe amounts of alcohol intake with your physician.
- Have your hearing and eyesight tested. Inner ear problems can affect balance. Vision problems make it difficult to see potential hazards.
- Exercise regularly to improve muscle flexibility, strength, and balance. Talk to your health-care professional about exercise programs that are right for you.
- If you feel dizzy or lightheaded, sit down or stay seated until your head clears. Stand up slowly to avoid unsteadiness.

(From Lifeline Brochure. Used with permission and submitted by Yvonne Dickson)

2017 – 50 years of ACA

In 2017, the Alberta Council on Aging will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Today, we are asking our members for their input and help.

Do you have stories about ACA's early years?

Were you a member of the board or do you have stories about past events and meetings?

Do you have pictures from early events you would like to share?

Do you have copies of old newsletters prior to 1984?

We are trying to gather as much information as early as possible and would appreciate your help.

Please give us a call, email, fax or write to us with your stories. Thank you.

Would you like to receive your ACA News via email?

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(Your email contact information will remain in our database for Newsletter emailing purposes only and will be treated with utmost confidentiality!)

Understanding mental illness

Special care needed for patients with passive-dependent disorder

Editor's note: Bev Hanes, Director of Region 5, recently wrote a paper addressing mental health care in Canada. In it, she provided her audience with a general overview and then specifically addresses passive dependent personality disorder. The following is part three of her three-part series that addresses residential plans for individuals diagnosed with this disorder. We welcome your input on this important issue!

Overall, passive dependent personalities tend to be appealing clients (or lodge residents), as they are not demanding. Their inclination to use denial and escape to manage their lives or even each day can be catered to if sedative type drugs are prescribed. This personality disorder can however be vulnerable to addictions for stimulants and care should be taken in prescribing these medications.

This resident needs to know that assistance is available, but for those functions or activities which the resident is capable of help it is not.

Care and a conscious effort to compliment this person about accomplishments, wardrobe, a smile etc. will make the person feel much better and more capable.

An effort needs to be made to include them in activities, even if it is just to watch..

Finally, the best assistance would be to set up discussion groups on various subjects designed to examine their past lives and encourage them to express feelings. There should be no sense of right or wrong and an emphasis on the validity of everyone's opinion and feelings being acceptable.

I feel many Seniors residing in our Seniors' homes suffer to some degree with depression due to the aging process and these discussions could provide a great service.

Another strategy would be to pair this person up with a resident who likes to be in charge and who likes to help



Humour, in films such as *Grumpy Old Men*, is an excellent way in helping Seniors keep their sense of well-being.

other residents.

In the end, I always feel good humour goes a long way in keeping one's sense of well-being positive. To address this, I would recommend more British comedies – such as those on the PBS TV stations or the Vision network and I feel an active search of comedy movies geared to seniors should be a regular occurrence. Movies such as *Gone Fishing*, *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, *Waking Ned Devine* and of course *Grumpy Old Men* are just some examples.

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Bev Hanes's interest in Seniors' issues comes from helping to care for her father through seven years of Alzheimers; she also looks after her mother, who now lives with her and her family.

Bev has a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Alberta, and has almost completed a certificate course for Site Managers of Seniors' Residences.

Thank you for your donations!

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Donna Chamberland, past president of ACA, and her husband Paul, have made a special \$500 donation: "In memory of Mr. Lloyd Sereda and Mr. Mike Cherniawski, for their work in promoting the first ACA Grandparents' Walk in Mundare, AB."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Inadequacy of care for Seniors worth noting before election

I chair Public Interest Alberta's Seniors' Task Force.

We formed the Task Force about 7 years ago to bring together Seniors groups and organizations whose members provide care to Seniors, all of whom were concerned about the state of Seniors' care in Alberta.

Our principal concerns are the inadequacy of the home-care system, the chronic shortage of nursing home (LTC) beds, and the growing tendency of the government to transfer its responsibilities onto the private sector, thereby off-loading care costs onto those who require the care.

We have organized a conference on acute care Feb 24-25 to highlight these issues in advance of the provincial election.

Home Care:

The government talks a good line about home care – we all want to stay in our own homes as long as possible and it saves the government money to support this. However, far too many Seniors are not able to get the care and support they need in their homes, and the system is being quickly turned over to private corporations that pay very low wages. The policy isn't working because the government has not provided the resources to support a reliable, high quality, home-care system.

Nursing Home (LTC) Beds:

This issue was highlighted in the fall of 2010 when ER doctors predicted the imminent collapse of the ER system, largely because of the number of Seniors occupying acute-care beds awaiting LTC placement.

This crisis was brought to a head in December 2008 when then Health Minister Liepert announced the Continuing Care Strategy. It froze the number of LTC beds in the province, despite the growing number of Seniors and the disabled requiring such care.

No one I have ever met wants to end up in a nursing home, but it is the only feasible option for people with cognitive impairment who need 24/7 monitoring, or people with debilitating illnesses, or people so profoundly frail that they require help getting out of bed, toileting, bathing, dressing, and sometimes feeding, or people who are severely injured or disabled.

Acute-care hospital beds are one of the worst places

for frail people with compromised immune systems, and a ridiculously expensive way to care for people who basically require nursing and personal care.

Privatization:

Rather than build the nursing home beds required, the government has been subsidizing the private sector to build and operate Supportive or Assisted Living facilities. Because these facilities do not have the trained staff or expertise to provide the level of care required in a LTC facility, they end up shipping an inordinate number of patients off to the ER and hospital system.

In December 2010 the government proudly announced grants of \$48.2 million to build 511 supportive living beds and a grand total of 30 LTC beds, all of which were in Strathmore. All but three of the agencies were private-for-profit, investor owned corporations, one of which (AgeCare) received two grants totalling \$13.5 million.

Now, the government is talking about lifting the cap on LTC accommodation rates in hopes that the private sector will see enough potential profit to start building and operating nursing homes for those who can afford the cost.

Unfortunately, it is not the wealthy we need to worry about; they already have lots of options.

Beyond Acute Care:

The conference title points to the fact that when people become disabled, frail or demented enough to be past the point where acute care can help, our society abandons the principle of the CHA — that care should be based on need rather than the ability to pay.

Seniors and the disabled who paid health-care premiums throughout their working lives and still pay taxes on whatever income they have, find themselves abandoned to the tender mercies of the private sector at costs most will not be able to afford.

In these privately-operated care facilities, they can be charged fees for services such as being given their medications, night checks, extra baths, being wheeled to the dining room, being fed when there. This is a shameful way to treat our most vulnerable citizens.

Noel Sommerville, Chair of Public Interest
Alberta's Seniors' Task Force

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tax cheats hurt everyone's pocketbook

On July 13, 2011, I emailed Canada's Minister of National Revenue, the Hon. Gail Shea, pointing out that in October, 2010, both the CBC and the *Globe and Mail* ran a story about 1,700 very wealthy Canadians using Swiss bank accounts to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. I asked the Minister how many of the 1,700 Canadians were audited and what the aggregate total of tax recovered was.

In her lengthy written reply to me dated August 16, 2011, the Minister assured me that "fairness and equal treatment are cornerstones of Canada's tax system," but made no mention of the two questions I asked. I responded by email August 26, 2011, by insisting she answer the questions.

The Minister's second written reply dated October 6, 2011, included the following statements: "The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) supports openness and transparency within the boundaries of governing legislation. As well, the CRA takes seriously its obligation to follow confidentiality and privacy legislation, which helps to ensure CRA's integrity and credibility with Canadians."

And: "For example your question about how many people in the group that the *Globe and Mail* and the CBC mentioned have been audited and the total tax revenue the CRA has recovered relate to information the CRA received through an international tax treaty. That information is protected through both the "Exchange of Information" article of the tax treaty and the Privacy Act, therefore I am prohibited from sharing it."

Again, I emailed a reply pointing out that the two questions I asked did not involve outside sources or identities, only aggregate totals. It appears that our laws are designed to prevent ordinary Canadians from knowing whether or not the Ottawa government is doing anything about the greedy super rich using tax havens to avoid paying their fair share of taxes ... and as long as they don't pay their share, you and I have to pay more.

Yours truly, William Dascavich, Edmonton

Budget needs to reflect Seniors' concerns

(The following was sent from Gary Pool on behalf of the ACA, to Ron Liepert, Minister of Finance for the Government of Alberta)

Re: Input to Budget 2012

Thank you for your request for input from the Alberta Council on Aging in the 2012 budget process. Our input is in areas that impact on Alberta's Seniors. Our members have continued to identify three major issues:

1. Being able to reside in the place that is appropriate to their circumstances;
2. Having access to adequate financial resources to meet their needs;
3. Having access to the appropriate level of continuing care services.

One example can illustrate these three issues. The Alberta Continuing Care Association in their winter 2009 newsletter indicated that the average total cost for each resident in a long-term care home was \$5,190 a month (\$62,280 per year or \$124,560 for a couple). There have been suggestions that the full cost of care would be transferred to Seniors in private care facilities. Such suggestions, if they come to pass would significantly impact the financial resources of many Seniors and their ability to receive appropriate continuing care.

ACA proposes for consideration the following policy and practical suggestions:

POLICY: That the budget protect Seniors, their assets and well-being in all government departments;

That any change in service or fees be supported by strong input from public consultation with Seniors.

PRACTICAL : That the threshold level for the Alberta Seniors Benefit be adjusted for both singles and couples;

That the Alberta Seniors Benefit threshold be adjusted further if service or fee changes impact on Seniors;

That the tax credit for the disabled (including disabled Seniors) be increased;

That the tax credit for caregivers supporting Seniors in their own home be increased.

Submitted by Gary Pool,
President, Alberta Council on Aging

Ralph Nader guest speaker

Beyond Acute Care focuses on concerns of Seniors, disabled

Renowned consumer-rights advocate Ralph Nader will be the keynote speaker on Friday, Feb. 24, at a major conference in Edmonton on provincial and national policies needed to ensure fair and compassionate care of Seniors and the disabled.

The two-day conference — “Beyond Acute Care: Covering Seniors and the Disabled with the Medicare Umbrella” — will close on Saturday, Feb. 25, with remarks by Maude Barlow, National Chair of the Council of Canadians and a tireless defender of our country’s public health care.



Ralph Nader

“The impetus for this conference grew out of the concerns raised by a number of Seniors’ groups about the serious deficits in Alberta’s and Canada’s public health care system when patients, especially Seniors and the disabled, move beyond the need for acute care,” said Noel Somerville, chair of Public Interest Alberta’s Senior’s Task Force.

Groups involved in the conference include Public Interest Alberta’s Seniors Task Force, the Alberta Council on Aging, the Alberta Retired Teachers’ Association and Seniors United Now, as well as the United Nurses of Alberta, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Health Sciences Association of Alberta and the Alberta Federation of Labour. The conference, to be held at the Crowne Plaza Chateau Lacombe Conference Centre, 10111 Bellamy Hill in Edmonton, is open to the public, Somerville said.

The fee for the conference is \$75, with lunch included on Saturday. There is a \$50 rate for Seniors and low-income participants. To register, go to the website, beyondacutecare.ca.

For more information, contact:

Noel Somerville, Chair, Public Interest Alberta Seniors’ Task Force, 780-452-1846

Heather Smith, President, United Nurses of Alberta, 780-425-1025

Gil McGowan, President, Alberta Federation of Labour, 780-483-3021

Bill Moore-Kilgannon, Executive Director, Public Interest Alberta, 780-420-0471.



The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) is hosting the 2012 Seniors Services Conference in partnership with Alberta Seniors. The event will be held Sept. 13-14 at the Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton.

This two-day conference is an opportunity for individuals who work with Seniors to network and learn more about the programs, services and issues important to Seniors.

The conference planning committee invites those interested in presenting at the 2012 Grey Matters Seniors Services Conference to submit proposals for presentations that answer the question:

What is being done to help people age in place?

For more details on the conference, please visit the ESCC website at: www.seniorscouncil.net.

Notice of rate increase

Due to the rising cost of publication and delivery, please know that the ACA Board of Directors approved an increase in our rates slightly for Household Membership.

Effective January 1, 2012, the cost for Household Membership increased from \$20 to \$22 per year.

As always, we are committed to enhancing our services, and we look forward to doing that over the next year.

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