

ACA News

Alberta Council on Aging

An Independent Non-Profit Charitable Organization Since 1967

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What Can Alberta Council on Aging Do For You?

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>>> Governance

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Follow the Stretches!

Learn a new one each day!



>>> President's Report

Safeguard Programs in Spite of Fluctuations in Oil Industry



There has been a lot of publicity recently over budget issues in our province. Alberta Council on Aging did provide our views (see report on page 16) In short, it is our view that there needs to be enough changes to the revenue side of provincial taxes so that funding for important programs do not take a significant hit when income from the natural resource sector decreases. Many resource sector prices are cyclical. It is important that programs dealing with seniors, health care, education and other

social programs continue to be funded through these cycles.

Since the last newsletter, our new website has come on stream successfully (although we had some interesting times on the journey). We anticipate that more information will be put on the website now and we will be able to provide more timely updates that way.

We have also completed our major fundraiser of this year. We successfully worked at Yellowhead Casino on February 12 and 13. It will be May before we find out our actual profit from this event but we are expecting it to be in the order of \$70,000. I would like to thank all those who helped out.

Two areas I mentioned in the last newsletter remain very active: The Seniors Task Force has put together a task force on "the need for more accessible and affordable Home Care." The goal of this task force is to provide recommendations from the involved seniors groups on im-

provements that could be made in home care.

The second area is "Supporting George and Betty: An Integrated Management Strategy For Seniors Supports, Housing and Care." We did select three regions to work with (The Way In-Calgary, Kneehill County, and a group consisting of Edson, Evansburg, Hinton and Yellowhead County). Kick-off meetings were held with them in late November and early December. Since the start of 2013 we have been modifying our go forward strategy to reflect the Alberta Health Services Strategy for Family Care Clinics (FCCs) and clear signs from the government that funding to proceed with any new work may not be available. I will discuss this in the next newsletter.

In closing, I will bring your attention to our upcoming Annual General Meeting to be held in Daysland on June 11. You will find more information on page 19.

Gary Pool

Alberta Council on Aging Mission Statement

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. **Editor's note:** The Board of Directors will be undertaking strategic planning soon. Do you think the mission statement reflects what we do? Is it worded in such a way it is clear what we do and why we do it? Let us know, please.

>>> Executive Director's Report

Living Out Our Mission

Discussing and projecting statistics of the aging population in Alberta is not to alarm, it is something to pay attention to and to celebrate. The grey wave is a demographic group of younger Seniors to much older Seniors due in part to the baby boomers coming of age and longer life expectancy. Many years ago, while on a road trip, my then 16-year-old daughter commented, "If a person lives a good long life, a third of it will be as a senior." This is a diverse group of people with unique needs and wants. How then do we, as a society, empower seniors?

First, there is the problem with language. There are rumblings that the term "senior" is no longer appropriate. "Older adults" is the preferred term. The rationale is that "senior" conjures up negative connotations. I would suggest the term older adult will fare no better. Both are neutral terms and only cultural shifts in what we value will put a positive slant on either term. I propose we stay strong in raising the profile of senior citizens through awareness and education. And that we stay clear about the specific population group we are referring to.

When we speak about empowerment of senior citizens, we address these two questions:

What are the barriers to living your life the way you want to?

How is your quality of life improving with age?

On a work day, a caller asks, "Are

you the government"?

"Thank you for your call. No we are not the government. The Alberta Council on Aging is a charitable organization that for 45 years has worked to improve the quality of life of seniors."

How may I empower you today? I think as I prepare to listen. The caller's story begins to unfold: medical issues—physical and mental, housing challenges and what sounds to me like social isolation. Here we are at the onset, the presentation of key areas of concern: health, housing, and belonging.

The communication strategy is to align myself with the caller. We then move in to focusing on the complaint and mining for a solution. Finding a solution is not always an immediate outcome. However, through empowerment, the caller will begin to feel a growing confidence that it is because she is a senior citizen and not in spite of that fact, there will be a movement toward a solution. We will discuss legislation as well as feelings.

Another caller starts with complaint that no level of government is responding satisfactorily to an issue that is by his perception ruining his life. He makes his own statements of ageism when he comments his younger neighbours don't care about the situation—they are gone during the day and just watch TV or play loud music at night. By the time the conversation is over, the caller has some ideas about how to



approach the situation and this includes getting to know his younger neighbours to engage them in their community and the issue at hand. Through identification and empathy, the caller says goodbye and before doing so, says, "Yes, I can do this because I am after all, a senior citizen!" Sometimes, the social barrier is the senior citizen's impression of how little their impact on community can be. At what point does a senior's sense of self advocacy begin to diminish?

The age-friendly communities initiatives ranging from The World Health Organization to civic government, speak to making communities age-friendly. The vision centres on the growing number of senior citizens worldwide. Senior citizens share many of the same values—they want a good level of health, affordable and appropriate housing, transportation, information, and community engagement.

(continued on next page)

It is said that if you program according to the frailest senior you will include everyone. The age-friendly initiative centres on the needs of senior citizens.

Indifference to the needs of seniors reflects a lack of regard and respect for seniors. This may be one of the contributing factors in terms of such crimes as abuse on any level and fraud. Seniors, as with you and I, are experts in their own lives. Rather than rushing in to impose our "plan" it is imperative to take the time to listen and creatively source out options. Some folks in the housing and care industry say seniors want choices. This is likely true; however, we believe even more fundamental than that is security and belonging.

Seniors want to know that should their health or their spouse's health fail, they will be supported as a member of the team and not an object to move through the system with the least resistance possible.

Empowering seniors means the senior is at the centre of discussions and planning for his or her life. Rather than crisis management, that is responding to various issues at the time of a significant shift in health, eco-

nomics, etc., there is a well thought out plan in place to support the senior into successful aging. Estate and will planning, personal directive, familiarizing oneself and family with community programs and supports such as public health, home care, leisure and lifestyle planning, identifying roles of family and friends should there be a health crisis, all are crucial to well-being.

First and foremost, seniors need to be viewed as citizens and not just consumers.

A healthy community is comprised of individuals who enjoy a setting where their contribution is central to the overall well being of the community. It is toward this aim that the Alberta Council on Aging works to improve the quality of life for seniors. A community which is inclusive and values all members of society is a healthy, vibrant community and easily recognizable.

Have a look at your family home, business, school, church... does it empower the seniors in your life...is it Senior Friendly™?

Donna Durand



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www.acaging.ca

My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person.

He believed in me.

Jim Valvano, Coaching Champion

Congratulations

To a former Executive Director of Alberta Council on Aging, Arlaine Monaghan on the honour of receiving the Jubilee Medal during this jubilee year in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

Living Longer and Stronger

Keep physically fit and strong

Know what you can do to be safe

Stay mentally active

Get out and about

Eat well

Ask for help when you need it

The 4-Way Test of the Things We Think, Say and Do

1. Is this the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build good will and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

Rotary International

SIDE STRETCH





NOTICE

Electricity Savings for Seniors

New Stable Electricity Rate for Seniors

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>>> Gratitude Wall

Thanks are in order.....



Civic Service Union 52 : Funding the publication of Senior Friendly™ 2013 upgrade

Gord Campbell of Edmonton. Shred.Com offers our office a **free** service that helps us maintain strict confidentiality of discarded documents.



Thank you, volunteers, Ashleigh and Natalia, for helping with the membership processing!

Larry, Danny and Wayne, thanks for finishing up the office cleanup. The big red cord on the wall that was an eyesore is no more!

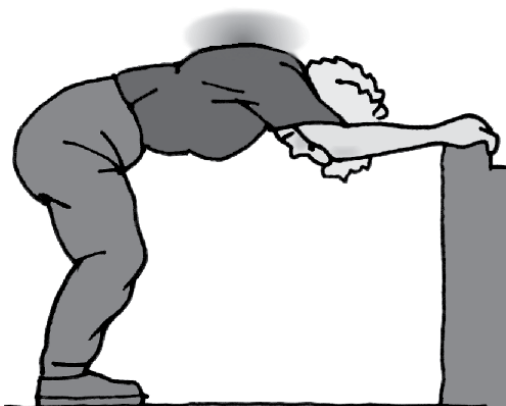
Thank you to our **board of directors, regional representatives and executives, casino volunteers**, and Senior Friendly™ volunteers. You are the best!

Farewell to Cathy Dyck and Nadia Willigar. May you truly enjoy your retirement.

Hats off to our volunteers!

Volunteers are the head, hands and heart of Alberta Council on Aging. You are appreciated as you help us improve the quality of life for seniors. Thank you for your gift of time and expertise. May you know your worth and may you be renewed.

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>>> Safety Tips

Police Warn: We Are All at Risk

Now that I have your attention I would like to explain myself. We are all at risk of becoming the next victim of a fraud or a scam.

I am Constable Matthew Wilton with the Camrose Police Service and one of my roles with CPS is to educate the citizens of Camrose about the current fraud trends so they can better protect themselves from the endless amount of scammers that are out there working to separate us from our money and personal information.

I am sure that most readers of this publication all have a mailing address and a phone number. Some may also have an email address or a social media account such as Facebook. It is through these channels that we are all at risk. Through my job I have seen many people get tricked from a sob story email, a fake lottery winning phone call, or a phoney inheritance letter.

I also see the trends in these types of crimes where seniors seem to be more heavily targeted than other groups of citizens. This can be attributed to the fact that seniors often are at home more during the day when these fraudsters typically make most of their calls. I also feel that seniors grew up in more of a trusting time where locking our doors and believing someone's story was common practice, but unfortunately there are scammers out there that are preying on these good-natured citizens.

In Camrose, I enlist help from several concerned citizens who sit on a volunteer committee called the Wise Owl Program. These citizens help me educate our community about frauds and scams, with the group's main focus being senior-related fraud. It is a way for motivated seniors to help protect their peers. When it comes to mass market frauds and scams, catching the bad guys is often quite difficult due to geographic barriers and technically savvy scammers who are able to remain completely anonymous over the internet and other forms of correspondence.



This is why utilizing education to prevent these crimes before they happen is the best way at stopping these criminals.

There are so many different scams out there that it is hard to describe each one but I feel that all of them can be sufficiently warned through the caveat "if it is too good to be true... it probably is."

Only in the movies does someone win a lottery that they never

entered or receive an inheritance from a long-lost relative that they didn't even know existed. A little common sense is all that is needed to stop these scammers. However, many of the victims I have spoken to have felt embarrassed telling me their stories because only after they lost their money or gave their personal information did they realize how obvious a scam it really was.

These scammers do this for a living and frankly they are very good at separating us from our money and information.

One scam that I have seen that is particularly troubling is the "Grandparent Scam." In this scam, a senior is contacted over the phone by an individual pretending to be that person's grandchild. The "grandchild" will tell the senior that they are in a different province or country and they are in trouble. They will ask the senior to send them money to help get them out of their difficult situation and often they will stress confidentiality for whatever reason. Often it is only after the grandparent sends the money, regularly through an untraceable money transfer, that the grandparent realizes this is a scam and they have been tricked.

So watch out and be wise to these types of scams. They can all have different messages and ploys but they all will have the same end result — an empty bank account or the theft of your identity.

For more information, please visit the website for the Canadian Anti-Fraud Center (www.antifraudcentre.ca), or contact your local police.

What has Alberta Council on Aging Been Doing?

Meetings

- Honourable George VanderBurg, Associate Minister of Health to discuss age friendly initiative, aging in place and Senior Friendly™
- Honourable Fred Horne, Minister of Health as part of Seniors Task Force
- Region 5 (CACA) executive to discuss future of organization
- David Eggen MLA re aging in place and age friendly and recommendations for provincial budget
- Johnson Inc. to review and celebrate sponsorship

Partnerships

- Approved for SCIP Serving Communities Internship Program placement to work on update of policy and procedures manual
- Visited Ponoka Town Hall to discuss celebrating their Senior Friendly™ status as well as implementing new strategy
- Met with City of Edmonton and Edmonton Seniors Co-ordinating Council to discuss Senior Friendly™ train the trainer strategy 2013
- Met with Dr. Duncan Robertson's team: Strategic Clinical Network Alberta Health Services to become better acquainted with each other's services
- Continued efforts on ANSRO project

Presentations

- Presented draft business plan and budget 2013 to the board of directors
- Fraud Prevention and Awareness presentations in Edmonton (Donna) and Central Alberta (Bev Hanes)
- Senior Friendly™ presentation to Spruce Grove Rotary, Alberta Supports
- Seniors and Poverty presentation to Gateway Rotary

Communications

- Launched our new website
- Radio interview re long-term care issue in central Alberta (CBC Calgary)
- Correspondence to government re provincial budget
- Correspondence to government re "cuts to Home Care" budget
- Interviews in Calgary Herald, Edmonton Journal, St. Albert Gazette re current seniors issues
- Interviewed live Prime Time CTV regarding Concept Paper, provincial budget 2013/2014
- Interviewed by phone Prime Time CTV re workplace and ageism
- Attended Alberta Continuing Care Association Conference and stakeholders meeting

Front cover photo by Murray MacKay,
avid photographer, birder and poet

The Mountain Bluebird

We wait every spring for the first to arrive.
And to see their leader, we truly do strive.
We wait for a twitter, or a flash made of blue.
You know when it's there, it's spring, that is true.
You know it is spring and that winter has passed.
You have your old friend, so you'll wait for the grass.



Thank You for Your Donations!

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 Gerry & Otilie Taillefer.....Redcliff
 Bill and Eleanor Taylor.....Strathmore
 Ed Thomlinson.....Sherwood Park
 Bruce & Lois Thurber.....High River
 David Tickell & Sandra Pearce.....NanOOSE Bay, BC
 Florence Tisdale.....Medicine Hat
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>>> Regional reports

REGION 1: Northeast

Region One has had very little activity in the past several months. A planning meeting was scheduled for Feb. 28 in regards to having a fall event. There will be information forthcoming in the next newsletter regarding date, time, location, and more information about this activity.

In the meantime, Region One wishes every one peace of mind, and safety, in their daily lives and activities!

Respectfully submitted, Yvonne Dickson,

REGION 5: Central Alberta

The Central Alberta Council on Aging had two general meetings since my last report. In December, the focus was on Technical Supports to Promote Independent Living with two presenters: Glynis White-Russell, Lifeline Co-ordinator and Drew DeClerk, a technical researcher from the Red Deer College.

The February meeting had a lively Q & A session after an explanation from a City of Red Deer representative about the new utility bills for water usage; a historical presentation by Michael Dawe, the city's knowledgeable historian and lastly, my Fraud Prevention presentation based on the Alberta Council on Aging Fraud Prevention handbook.

The Central Alberta Executive has been meeting to identify our goals for the year. We are working to develop closer partnerships with like-minded groups in the region and establish greater electronic communications with members and the public.

We would like a stronger single voice on relevant issues and be more timely as these issues arise while also being mindful of our volunteers' time and abilities. In January we welcomed Gary Pool, Alberta Council on Aging President and Donna Durand, Executive Director.

The NDP caucus visited Red Deer. Issues dis-



From left, front row: Donna Durand, Gary Pool
Middle row: Fran Lees, Margaret Day, Glenna Thompson
Back row: Jim Saltvold, Viggo Nielsen, Monica Morrison,
Ron Rose, Doug Janssen. Missing: Bev Hanes,
Shirley Thomas

cussed included agriculture trends and problems, environmental and educational concerns, as well as aboriginal health care. The CACA spoke on seniors' issues and what we would like to see in the next budget.

On March 2, I attended a Wildrose Party forum on seniors' issues along with other three other CACA members. The crowd was a little sparse, but the format was a relaxed Q & A session. We heard more of the same concerns regarding seniors' care or lack thereof in their own homes or in a care facility. Those in attendance would like more long-term care beds, more nutritious home-cooked food and better home-care services.

The issue of government transparency regarding contracts between senior home operators and the government, and lack of information being provided when requested, were also main problems discussed.

Please mark June 7 on your calendars for the Seniors Week pancake breakfast co-hosted again by the CACA and Golden Circle in Red Deer. We hope to see you at our next meeting on April 2.

Respectfully submitted, Bev Hanes

>>> Regional Reports

REGION 9: East Central

After a successful fall of visiting, I slowed down a little and enjoyed the holiday season. Another information letter was sent out with Seasons Greetings and from this I have another invitation to speak at a seniors centre in the Region.

A mid-winter letter is being sent presently (see below) with the 2013 Alberta Council on Aging AGM poster included. Region 9 will hold its Annual General Meeting in Hay Lakes on April 16. No agenda has been set but I am trying to get a "Wise Owl" presentation.

Organization for the 2013 Annual General Meeting is progressing well. Mark the date on your calendar. It's Tuesday, June 11, 2013 at the Daysland Seniors Centre.

(This letter was sent out to our seniors' centres in the region)

The holiday season has passed and it is time to get back to visiting centres across the region. I have one invitation already and would love to have many more. The changes that are occurring in the province that have an effect on seniors' lives are important pieces of information that all seniors should have at their disposal. This is the basic reason for my asking for an invitation to meet with the seniors of Region 9. My presentation takes approximately one hour and covers Senior Friendly™, the latest information on benefits and taxes, and I can answer some of your questions on provincial policies.

Two dates to mark on your calendar are:
 16 April: The Regional Annual General Meeting at the Hay Lakes Senior Center. More details will be sent out.
 11 June: The Provincial Alberta Council on Aging Annual General Meeting at Daysland Seniors Centre.

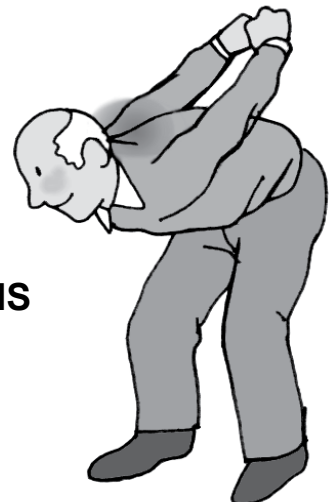
Respectfully submitted, Fred Olsen



Congratulations on this issue, Donna! I like the positive stories and inspiration. It seems ACA is often focused on the negative issues for older seniors with declining health — fraud, frailty, abuse, finances, bad health care, bad customer service — that it was delightful to read some positive stories.

Nell Smith Creator and Founder:
 Retire to the Life You Design

**BEND ARMS
 BEHIND**



>>> Opinion

Pharmacare Changes Worth Considering

A universal Pharmacare program for Albertans of all ages would be a valuable enhancement to Medicare. Although seniors presently have a government funded plan, a few years ago we saw threats to modify it so that middle and high income seniors would have to pay. These threats are likely to re-surface due to falling government revenues and an irrational belief that taxes must never be raised. The present seniors' plan would be much more secure if everyone had a Pharmacare plan.

Under a government funded plan, the total cost for drugs in Alberta would be lower than at present. A Blue Cross administered plan funded by the provincial government would have one payer instead of a million payers if every family purchased an equivalent plan. Considering that credit card companies typically charge merchants a minimum of 2 per cent of the value of each purchase, we can expect savings of this order if the government is the single payer. There should also be some cost savings due to more people taking their medication and having better health instead of not taking medication due to not being able to afford it. Of course, the primary reason for advocating for Pharmacare should be that it is the right thing to do whether or not the cost is lower or higher.

Possible methods of financing a Pharma Care plan are:

A fixed sum surtax. Everyone above a certain income would pay the full amount and everyone below a certain income would pay nothing. The surtax would be phased in between these two levels. Under this method, most people would not pay any more than at present and introducing a new tax would not as bad as some people would like us to believe.

Raising the Alberta flat tax or having two or more tax

rates. Under this method, the wealthy would pay more, which would result in a fairer tax system.

Introducing a sales tax to cover universal Pharma Care and other needed services. A sales tax has pros and cons and who would pay more or less is not as obvious as under the other two methods.

I believe that doing sufficient research to put a well-thought-out proposal for universal Pharmacare to the provincial government would be a worthwhile project for Alberta Council on Aging to pursue with help from groups such as Public Interest Alberta and Parkland Institute. Alberta Council on Aging may also be able to obtain some help from the Canadian Health Coalition, who are presently advocating for a national plan. (See <http://pharmacarenow.ca/>.)

Even if the government rejects the proposal, the research may help people think more rationally about taxes and also be more willing to put the common good above their own selfish interests. A better informed public with a changed attitude will give better direction as to how government serves its constituents and how it treats the public purse.

Jim Saltvold

HAMSTRING HASSOCK



Coming Next Issue

Getting your house in order: from de-cluttering
to writing a personal directive

>>> Information for Seniors

Home Accessibility Requires Attention

There are two categories that most people fall into when trying to make their home accessible. One category is where someone has suffered a life-changing event such as a stroke, car accident or some other catastrophe. In this case, the person may end up in a wheelchair and thereby need their home to be made accessible to permit mobility equipment to be used inside.

The second category is where peoples' needs slowly change over time and evolve from perhaps needing a cane to a walker to a stair lift to a wheelchair.

The needs for accessibility equipment could start with a stair lift so that one can access both levels of the home. A stair lift is mounted on the stair treads and there is very little alteration to the home. An exterior stair lift may assist with outside stairs if necessary. The next piece of equipment that could be required may be used in the bathroom where perhaps a walk-in tub is required. Ceiling to floor poles to assist with getting up from a bed or chair is also a popular device.

The real need for home renovations to make a home accessible comes when a wheelchair is required. This is when a porch lift or a ramp may be needed to get the wheelchair up to the threshold height of the doorway entrance. Any bump outside or inside the home is a huge barrier to one's freedom in a wheelchair. Bathroom renovations to permit a roll-in shower is another common need.

One of the main challenges inside the home is how to move a wheelchair from one level to another. If a wheelchair user is seriously considering making his or her home accessible the advice of a knowledgeable person is a must.

Each person's situation is somewhat different. Look for a company that can grow with your needs, offer recycled equipment and accept trade-ins as your needs evolve over time.

Submitted by: Phil Hochhausen and Gary Warchola

TOWEL UP & DOWN



Age does not diminish the extreme disappointment of having a scoop of ice cream fall from the cone.

— Jim Fiebig



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>>> Alberta Council on Aging Perspective

Recommendations for Provincial Budget

The following are recommendations, submitted to the Government of Alberta, from Alberta Council on Aging, regarding the upcoming and future provincial budgets:

Ensure a clear business plan, matched with cost per action be developed to avoid further erosion of public health care. Quality of life for seniors includes:

- Helping senior citizens age in place
- Promotion of a seamless continuum of care
- A clear outline of standards of care both for Home Care and care providers/operators in facility and hospital to reduce potential of elder abuse, i.e. neglect
- Protection for Persons in Care Act universally applied to all health services: family homes, care homes, hospital and Home Care, whether privately or publicly funded
- Increased funding to Public Home Care to ensure patient safety and quality of life
- Revised patient care funding formula to reward all care providers whether public, P3, non-profit or private operators

In order for senior citizens in Alberta to enjoy the quality of life we are proud to promote such as aging in place, respect and dignity for all within a seamless continuum of care, additional monies will need to be allocated. The reports from seniors, family members and care providers are that health care for seniors and vulnerable citizens receiving care is currently underfunded and unacceptable. To maintain the previous bottom line means services to this group will continue to be underfunded.

We recognize if funding to health care is increased, income/revenue must be reviewed. The government needs to seek other revenue sources such as a revised tax structure.

Social programming is fundamental to well being and cannot be contingent on the revenues of oil and gas industry alone as the program funding will then fluctuate, thereby compromising the programs and program recipients. We recognize social programs cost money and we recognize there must be a plan in place to keep the programs running during periods of low oil and gas revenue.

We call on our government to invest in the well being of senior citizens and the vulnerable people of Alberta. We charge the government to invest and lead in the industry of human/social services in order to demonstrate the promotion of well being for all citizens.

Gary Pool, President,
February 2013

**HEEL
ROCK**



Attitude is the little thing that makes the big difference.
— Winston Churchill

>>> Correspondence

Letter to Minister of Health Regarding Home Care

The Honourable Fred Horne, Minister of Health
December, 2012.

Dear Sir,

Please consider the Alberta Council on Aging Senior Friendly™ Public Policy which aligns with the federal and provincial government initiatives around age-friendly communities and aging in place. This public policy needs to be considered when implementing changes to Home Care that will negatively affect the quality of life for seniors.

Perhaps we are misunderstanding a recent announcement about Home Care being stretched even further. The keystone of successful aging in place is contingent upon the universality of Home Care.

To maintain a healthy community, the goal is, always, to move ill people to wellness. To cut time from Home Care caseloads means cutting time from care people are receiving. Some care provided is of the sub-acute nature: care that would have been carried out either in a hospital bed or emergency services unit. This requires a refined skill set and time and patience to deliver

the specialized care.

When workers are rushed, they make mistakes. When elderly frail seniors are rushed they feel they are being abused. There is clear information on this, through federal, provincial and the Elder Abuse Awareness program developed by Alberta Council on Aging.

Please ensure sufficient resources are in place to deliver the highest level of Home Care for seniors and vulnerable people.

As Albertans we have agreed to publicly fund health care, with Home Care being a significant feature of the universal care we cherish. Please, at the earliest opportunity define Home Care Services and eligibility for the program. Ensure the program is receiving the attention and money it needs to be successful.

We very much look forward to your communication and are eager to share your response with our several thousand concerned citizens and members.

Sincerely, Gary Pool,
President, Alberta Council on Aging

If you want happiness for the future, help the
new generation.

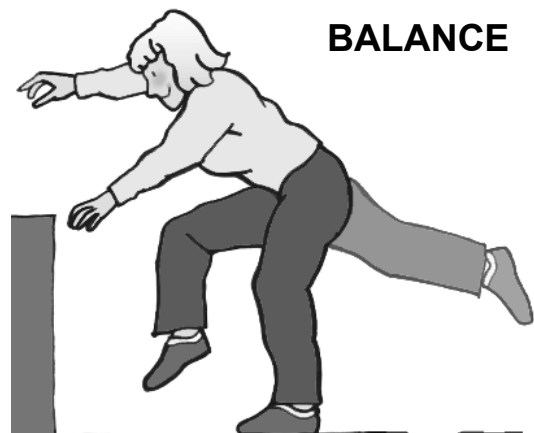
— Chinese proverb

Don't go to the grave with life unused.

— Bobby Bowden

If you change nothing, nothing changes.

— Anonymous



>>> News from Johnson Inc.

Health: A State of Well-Being

Travel to Arizona is a favourite spot for Canadians to vacation in the winter to enjoy the warm sunshine and golfers' paradise. This past February, a large group of Canadians travelled to Arizona for another reason: a Health and Wellness Innovations Conference for advisers and sponsors of health plans. Four years ago, the International Foundation of Employee Benefits created a new conference focused on Canadian innovation in employee benefits. Topics in this fourth annual conference included:

- keys to health
- the many benefits of exercise
- how sugar increases weight as well as the diabetes risk
- the aging brain and factors that slow down the onset of dementia
- diagnostic health fairs that save lives and reduce plan costs
- disease state management strategies
- new drug therapy costs and benefits
- Canada's new standard on psychological health and safety in the workplace
- why minor acts of incivility can lead to bullying
- e-health technology and
- future health models

A current theme of a local physician specializing in holistic medicine is what was old has become new. What was previously known as alternative medicine is now being integrated with traditional western medicine and the health outcomes are being studied with a focus on proactive wellness and prevention versus reactive disease state management. He is impressed with the relatively favourable health outcomes in the Canadian system.

Dr. Robert L. Crocker directs the strategic clinical planning and implementation of the newly formed Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine. Comparing Canada and the U.S. shows that health outcomes do not always correlate with health expenditures. According to the World Health Organization 2012 statistics, the U.S.

ranks No. 1 in terms of health care spending per capita (\$7,960), compared with Canada ranking No. 8 (\$4,314). U.S. life expectancy ranks No. 40 while Canada ranks No. 11. Currently the U.S. spends only \$10 per person per year on prevention.

Transformative change to a holistic approach may change that, or at least influence the American discussions on wellness, he predicts. The Arizona Integrative Health Center opened in October 2012 and is a prototype model to study the impact of preventative care and holistic treatment with a patient focus by a health-care team of traditional and alternative health resources. A health outcomes study by the Centre is being funded by the Adolph Coors Family Foundation and will influence the national discussion on the financing of wellness, preventative and integrated medical services.

For both individuals and groups, old keys to health have greater impact in the context of the new information shared at the conference—lots of movement and exercise, low sugar diet, adequate sleep, weight management, healthy habits, adherence to treatment programs, social and intellectual engagement, the right amount of stress and overall balance.

Health is not just the absence of disease as suggested by the typical dictionary definition. In the 1946 preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, in 1946, "health" is defined as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Innovative conferences such as these integrate the old with the new as we move forward together to improve health outcomes for Canadians and influence our neighbours south of the border.

Shannon Patershuk, MBA, FCIA, is the West Regional Manager, Retiree Program Relations for Johnson Inc.

Alberta Council on Aging Annual General Meeting

Tuesday June 11, 2013 at
Daysland Senior Center

8:15 A.M. Registration

Tickets: \$7.50 per person includes hot lunch

What's ahead for Seniors' Health Care?

Guest Speakers:

Dr. Donna Wilson

Wendy Armstrong

Ol' Ugly

To register, contact:

Region 9 Director

Fred Olsen

bobcat.41@hotmail.com

Alberta Council on Aging

1.888.423.9666 or

info@acaging.ca



Region 9 ACA



>>> Family

Stop the Grandparent/Grandchild Disconnect

We don't have far to go to hear about how we've abandoned our elderly to the places we put them, and we hear on TV and from other media outlets that we live in an expendable society and that certainly is true for our parents. As a Life Coach, it is my job to help people to uncover what gets in the way of their personal happiness and when talking to clients about the struggles they have with their difficult parents, I always encourage them to go deal with it. Not because it's the right and proper thing to do; which it is, and not because our parents deserve more, which is also true; I counsel people to go deal with their difficult parents because it's in their own best interest to do so.

Of course if it's an abusive relationship, then that is a different matter, but I'm talking about the majority of the adult-child/parent relationship which is all too often conflict ridden.

When I say go deal with it, what I'm really talking about is: take a good look why interacting with our parent(s) causes us to lose peace of mind. More specifically: there is no better way to learn about the things we need to personally work on when we deal with our difficult parents, who upset us or as I call it "pull us sideways."

And if by chance we have children of our own, then all the more reason to go and "deal with your stuff." I don't suspect that this is a popular message for people to read, but in all frankness; too bad. You owe it to yourself to take a good look at the issues which get in the way of you have good relationships with your parents.

I've been blessed with two beautiful children and I have intentionally gone out of my way to ensure that they know their grandmother, who is my only living parent. This isn't born out of a need for my children to have a connection like I did with my grandmother, quite the contrary, because I didn't have any kind of relationship with my grandparents. When I hear others speak fondly of their relationship with their grandmother or grandfather, I can only guess what that might have been



Luc and his mother Agnes enjoy a visit.

like if I had that in my life.

My main intent of my children having a solid relationship with their Mere, is to break the cycle of what I call "Grandparent/Grandchild Disconnection." And again, not because it's the proper thing to do, it's purely self serving; for I don't want to be ignored when I'm an old man. I do want my children to have a good point of reference when it comes to staying connected to their grandmother, especially if I should be blessed with grandchildren.

Somebody wise once relayed to me a disturbing concept: "The older we get, the more we become ourselves." I'm quite aware of the fact that I more than my share of personal shortcomings, therefore I have endeavored to take a good look at myself and find out why I get pulled sideways when I deal with my sometimes difficult mother. As hard as it's been to look at some of my issues (like being worthy), I do, so I don't give my children a good reason to put me on the proverbial "ice-floe."

Wishing you peace and joy, Luc Bouchard
www.solve-act.com

>>> Tales From the Koffee Klatch

Depends on Dennis

By Colsen

Poor Dennis. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer. The prognosis was not good they said. He had a less than 5 per cent chance to live for three years. But, they said. (Always a but).

There was a program, a clinical trail. No guarantees, but if Dennis fit the criteria he could join. So Dennis signed up.

To keep this short, I will only relate that he had a radical prostate surgery to remove his prostate, four doses of chemo, three weeks apart. Then, 35 doses of radiation and started hormone therapy. This was to continue for two years. All went as planned. Dennis didn't feel as bad as they said he would until he finished his radiation. Then he hit the wall, he was always tired. But he soon learned to slow down and take things a bit easier. He had been told this would happen.

Let's advance a few months. Oh joy of joys, Dennis is cancer free. It is a time to celebrate.

Advance two years now. This would have been when Dennis was supposed to have passed away. He is still enjoying life, up to a point. You see Dennis hadn't been told all the side effects. He



was now chemically neutered. His bone density was dropping. It got so bad, that his teeth started to break off. He would eventually have to get full dentures. Something he wasn't told to expect. Although he was told that he would have control problems with his bladder, he wasn't told about the potential for radiation burn to his sphincter.

So he is now in Depends for the rest of his life.

Our Dennis is cancer free. He did have another bout with it, but successfully fought it again.

He feels he should have had things better explained in the beginning. He says it is probably because the doctors are so busy with so many patients, that they just forget.

Would he have gone into the program, knowing what he does today?

Depends.

Oh, and those Depends..... Most seniors who qualify for Aids to Daily Living can be reimbursed the cost. Check with your Home Care provider or seniors assistance offices. There is also a federal tax form that you and your doctor fill out.

See ya round, eh.

FINGER PUSH



HANDS BEHIND BACK



>> Hot Topic

Seniors Living in Poverty

Insidious Poverty

Seniors just above the threshold line are at high risk for poverty and impacted by the growing erosion of the middle class. This is due to ineligibility for subsidized or government programs and the increased cost of living, as well as the decrease in public housing projects such as lodges, and publicly funded long-term care. De-listing of some medical services is also problematic in terms of individual or household budgets.

Aging in Place

Seniors in Alberta live in smaller and older homes. These homes require adaptations and upgrades as people age, some of which are costly — steps, furnaces, hot water heating, roof repair, lifts, bars, flooring, lighting, and so on. As people age they may need supports in terms of health care, meal preparation, cleaning services, assistance with appointments, transportation, etc. Some of these services are public; however, many are not.

The Social Consequence of Poverty

To live a full and inclusive life certain factors must be in place. Poverty affects the keystones fundamental to good health and well being. These include:

Diet: Poverty can lead to cutting corners and purchasing lower quality foods. Some seniors lose some mobility and agility as they age.

Exercise: Memberships and fees are required to belong to exercise clubs. Some seniors find it extremely challenging to walk on an outdoor path due to poor lighting, no rails, no resting spot.

Social Inclusion: To take part in community events as a volunteer or participant, transportation is often required. Upkeep and insurance of a vehicle is costly, as is public transportation or taxis, if they even exist in rural communities. Health aids such as glasses, hearing assists, dental care, medications are also costly.

As you can see, day to day life can be expensive

By the Numbers

Population of seniors in Alberta	425,000
Percentage of seniors who are female	54%
Highest Percentage of Seniors (Camrose)	20%
Income Threshold:	
Individuals:	\$25,100
Couples:	\$40,000
Living Below Threshold	35%
Most affected by low income: single women (widowed)	
Most seniors live in:	
private homes (owned)	71%
Rental	19%
Seniors apartments and lodges	7%
Seniors living in long-term care	3%
Seniors with an existing mortgage has been steadily rising	

and many seniors in one of Canada’s wealthiest province suffer an impoverished existence. The Alberta Council on Aging Senior Friendly™ program works to make life easier for seniors and consequently all people. The Senior Friendly™ program challenges and changes attitudes toward seniors and challenges all communities to address the areas that impact the quality of life for seniors: participation and employment, community and health services, transportation, outdoor and public spaces, housing, respect and social inclusion, communication and information.

Gary Pool and Donna Durand

References: Seniors Programs and Services Guide
Government of Alberta 2012-2013

Alberta Council on Aging Profile of Alberta Seniors
2003

A Profile of Alberta Seniors, Government of Alberta
2010

>>> Active Living

A Life of Faith in Action

Donna Durand chats with Mina Pool



What do you expect of the Alberta Council on Aging?

Serve seniors to a greater extent as life is becoming harder for seniors. I expect you will go toe to toe with the government as advisors on housing, health care, and social opportunities. Right now I am unhappy with government wastefulness.

What are your concerns for seniors today?

Lack of appropriate facilities, for instance when a person needs more care than the situation or program allows for. Family caregivers have too big of a load. There seems to be a lack of co-ordinated effort. I worry that private care homes are concerned with profit margins and not the whole person.

My advice to other seniors as they age is to continue to care for each other. Planning for social opportunities is so important!

What is the single most important thing in your life?

People, without a doubt. Anybody and everybody. I attend a community group on Thursdays for socialization. We play games and get exercise and are together all day. Once a month, after Church a group of us have a meal together. I like the feeling that so many people know me.

What do you want to be known for?

I have done a lot of things. I am a life member of UCW (United Church Women), was president of business and professional women's association. I have often been in a leadership role — promoting health and education and led many different groups from church camp to CGIT. My first career was as a public health nurse. I was posted in the Athabasca area. I would drive to appointments by car and would always have spare tires in the back seat- just in case! And of course I knew how to change a tire among other things.

While I was being recommended to go to McGill University to become a teacher of public health, I had a sense of a change of direction. I began praying about this. One morning, I awoke at 2 a.m. and as if God was pulling on my big toe I got the clear message, "full-time church work". (Mina went on to become one of the first female ministers in Western Canada of the United Church).

At this point in your life, what do you want to learn?

Learn to be satisfied with life and not to expect too much. Some of my contemporaries seem so dissatisfied. I believe in faith in action and that was in my background. My mother had a faith beyond anyone I have known.

More of the story...

Born on a farm outside of Beaverlodge 93 years ago, by a midwife who was also her Grandmother, Mina was the last child born in her large family, and a sickly child at that. She became stronger and stronger. **So strong**, Mina provided noteworthy leadership and has mentored many people in her life. And she still attends her reunions for Royal Alex graduates. **So gentle**, Mina closes each night with a conversation with her Creator: "When I talk to God at night, I tell him what I wish for the people of the world, but I personally don't expect any favours."



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