



ACA News

Spring 2022 | Vol. 53 No. 3

In this issue:

In Support of Pharmacare 2022
Volunteer Spotlight
Learn about Men's Shed Program
Is this Ageism?

Canadian Publication Mail Product Agreement No. 40028759

Return Undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

PO Box 62099, Edmonton, AB T5M 4B5

**Thank you
to our casino
volunteers!**



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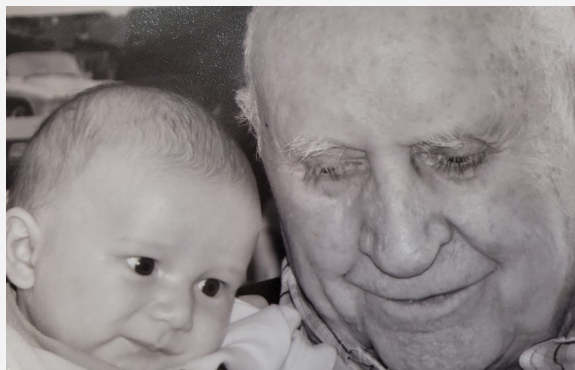
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Office Support Services:	Ashley Bowler



Your membership,
donations, volunteer
efforts and commitment
ensure we are here for
the next generation.

Thank You!

Contact us today

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Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of Alberta Council on Aging. We reserve the right to condense, rewrite, and reject material.

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Save the date!

**Alberta Council on
Aging
55th Anniversary and
Annual General Meeting**

October 1, 2022

- **Special guests**
- **Door prizes**
- **Meet other members**
- **Share your ideas!**

Special guest speaker

**Mitzi Murray
on
Ageism & Media**

Mitzi Murray will explore the power of media in shaping societal and individual perceptions, emotions, and attitudes on aging



Strategic Actions Report January – May 2022

Goal 1: Build awareness and capacity

Memberships

Our travellers are back on board and we see memberships continue to grow! Long standing members remain faithful in renewing their annual membership

Social Media/Website/Online/Face to face

Meetings

Volunteers and support staff are discussing life after the pandemic and how to be a brighter and more active presence in communities through Farmers Markets and hosting town halls. Office support staff working on active engagement through online programs and membership outreach

Funding

- AGLC Casino **March 26, 27** was a huge success. Proceeds are significant for us and are directed to programs and services. Volunteers made this happen!
- ACA qualified for CIP provincial grant for operations
- Project monies granted through partnership with UofA research study on caregivers

Goal 2: Align organizational structure to ensure viability and relevancy

Board of Directors meetings

Frequent meetings to discuss future planning around recruiting directors and understanding staff requirements. Ongoing discussion about regional representation and boundaries

Advocacy

- ACA as stakeholders on collaborative Futures

Policy Forum—focus on continuing care reform

- Ongoing discussions about ageism as per callers and volunteers (see page 22)

Administration

- Prepare year end and audit
- Prepare for 55th AGM
- Orientation of new staff and volunteers

Goal 3: Promote alliances with other senior serving organizations

Meetings/ Collaborations

- Continue as members of Alberta Age friendly community and Healthy Aging Alberta (CORE) platform, Seniors Task Force, Age friendly Edmonton, Calgary, Future Seniors Forum
- Lets Stop Ageism talking group submission to Seniors Ministry
- Exploring experiences with continuing care talking group
- Reciprocal mentorship talking group
- Caregivers research study with UofA

Goal 4: Provide and promote educational programs and services to seniors

- Distribution of Recognizing Fraud Toolkit, Let's Talk Dementia Toolkit
- CHOICES host sessions on Let's Stop Ageism and Let's Talk Dementia, delivered by practicum student
- ACA Spring News distributed to members and general public— online and hardcopy

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Rose, President

Donna Durand, Executive Director

Universal Pharmacare– Pharmacare 2022

Dear Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and Minister of Health,

We are health professionals and experts in health care and public policy who are concerned, as you are, with the quality, equity, and sustainability of Canada’s health care system – particularly under strains caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate your [recent commitment](#) to pass a Canada Pharmacare Act in 2023 and to develop a formulary and bulk purchasing plan for essential medicines by 2025; however, we are asking you to increase the **pace and scope** of your commitment to national pharmacare. Canadians should not have to wait for a universal and comprehensive public pharmacare program.

We are writing now because the pandemic has increased the urgent need for a pharmacare system that provides universal access to appropriately prescribed, affordably priced, and equitably financed medicines from coast to coast to coast. Yes, there are many problems in the health care system requiring immediate attention nationwide – problems in areas such as [health human resources](#), [long term care](#), [mental health care](#), [primary health care](#), and [surgical wait times](#). But, [with adequate federal funding](#), the universal, public pharmacare program you have promised will immediately improve access to necessary medicines across Canada while generating billions in savings that provinces, territories, households, and businesses could invest in other health priorities. As you know, all nations are obligated to provide universal access to necessary medicines under [international agreements on health and human rights](#)—agreements that [Canada champions and helped create](#). To fulfil this obligation, every high-income country with a universal, public health care system provides universal, public coverage of medically necessary prescription drugs – every such country except Canada, that is.

In Canada, universal public health insurance effectively ends as soon as a patient receives a prescription to fill. Although many Canadians have some prescription drug coverage through private or public drug plans, approximately [one in five Canadians](#) is either uninsured or under-insured for the medications they need. Inadequate prescription drug coverage affects Canadians in all provinces and at all income levels; however, low- and middle-income households, women, and racialized Canadians are [least likely to have adequate medication coverage](#) and [most likely to skip prescriptions](#) because of out-of-pocket costs.

Canada’s current patchwork of public or private drug plans also exposes [households](#) and [businesses](#) to considerable and inequitable financial risks, adds considerably to the [administrative costs of prescriptions](#), and [isolates the management of prescription drugs](#) from other key components of Canadian Medicare. None of these things is good for the health of Canadians, the Canadian health care system, or the Canadian economy. All of these things are getting worse under health and economic strains caused by the pandemic.

Canadians deserve better.

{continued on page 6}

{continued from page 5}

Since the 1960s, five separate national commissions have recommended that medically necessary prescription drugs should be included in Canada's universal, public health insurance system. They all recommended this because it is the most equitable and affordable way to fulfil our obligation to ensure universal access to necessary medicines in Canada. The latest of such reports – the 2019 report of the [Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare](#) – provides your government sufficient detail to guide implementation, beginning with universal, public coverage of essential medications in 2022.

There is no need to delay. The moral and clinical case for universal prescription drug coverage is clear. The administrative infrastructure needed to run such a program exists. Further, government and academic studies estimate that a universal, public pharmacare program will save Canadians between [\\$4 billion](#) and [\\$7 billion](#) per year. That is enough savings to pay for 30 to 50 percent more primary health care providers across Canada. A national pharmacare system can achieve these savings – while increasing access to medicines across the country – because single-payer pharmacare systems negotiate the [best prices on the global pharmaceutical market](#).

This is why we are asking you to implement universal pharmacare now: when planning a post-pandemic recovery for Canada, the choice isn't pharmacare or other health system priorities. The choice is pharmacare and other priorities because pharmacare – and only pharmacare – can save the money needed to do the other things.

We know powerful interests in the pharmaceutical and insurance industries oppose the implementation of a universal, public pharmacare program [because they profit from the status quo](#). These forces of opposition do not make national pharmacare the wrong policy for Canada. They simply increase the need for strong, principled leadership from you, the Government of Canada, at this critically important time in our history.

The universal, public pharmacare program you have promised Canadians is the right thing to do. As recommended by your [Advisory Council](#), it should start **now, in 2022**, with a Pharmacare Act that embodies all five of the principles in the Canada Health Act:

Universality: all residents of Canada must be covered on equal terms and conditions;

Public administration: the plan must be publicly funded and administered;

Comprehensiveness: the plan must cover a broad range of safe, effective, evidence-based treatments as listed on a national formulary;

Accessibility: access to covered medicines must be based on medical need, not ability to pay;

Portability: benefits must be portable across provinces and territories when people travel or move.

Also as recommended by your [Advisory Council](#), coverage under national pharmacare should begin **now, in 2022**, with universal coverage of essential medicines; and it should be expanded to become a comprehensive system of public drug coverage—like those integrated within the health care systems of [comparable countries](#)—by 2027.

Acting in these ways to realise the full promise and potential of national pharmacare **now** will immediately transform health care in Canada for the better while generating billions in savings needed to address other health system challenges. You can count on our support as you do so.

Yours sincerely,

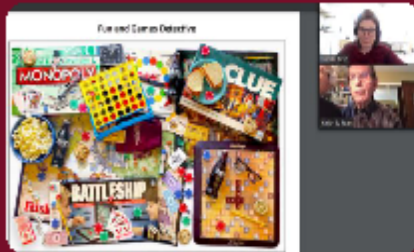
[More than 1,000 health professionals and experts in health care and public policy.](#) <- Click here to view signatures

HAVE RECREATION YOUR WAY

THE BRENDA STRAFFORD FOUNDATION
IS LAUNCHING

REC@HOME

A VIRTUAL RECREATION PROGRAM FOR
OLDER ADULTS (55+) IN THE
COMMUNITY STARTING APRIL 1, 2022



"I am extremely happy with virtual. The exercise program has the same requirements as what physio has asked me to do. The games and puzzles are great for the mind and helps everyone keep their mind busy and I love socializing with my peers."

"I am really enjoying this program and it has helped me through a rather difficult winter, as likely so many others."



For more information and how to register please visit:

www.theBSF.ca/RecAtHome



Not sure if it's for you?

TRY YOUR
FIRST WEEK

FREE

Activities Include:

Social Gatherings
Cognitive Games
Exercises
Armchair Travels
Museum Tours
Live Musical
Entertainment
And so much more!

Contact Us:

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and The Pursuit of Happiness*

theBSF.ca

[Members Submissions]

WHAT IS A MEN'S SHED, YOU ASK?

By Leslie Morgenstern

Men's Sheds are a program by men for men to help combat loneliness, loss of purpose, isolation and to provide a place for men to socialize and have fun. Men's Sheds bring men together with shared interests in woodworking, horticulture, bicycle repairs, model railways, bee hives, and the list goes on (and on) depending on the interests of each individual shed.

After retirement, men are more inclined to become isolated and lose their sense of purpose which in turn can lead to mental and physical issues creating more dependence on the health care system. Men's Sheds reduce anxiety, depression, loneliness and at the same time create incredible things and help the community. Mens Sheds make toys for daycare, teach women to use tools, build standing grow beds, do clothing drives and many other useful projects. It allows men to connect, converse, learn new skills and pass on the skills they already have to others while helping fill various community needs.

The movement began in Sydney, Australia in 1998 and now there are over 1000 men sheds in Australia. There are over 2500 Mens Sheds worldwide: in the U.S., Denmark, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, UK, Finland, Greece, Iceland, New Zealand and Canada. Led by men for men, Mens' Sheds work with schools, communities, do mentoring and champion various causes. One of the Men's Sheds in Edmonton is helping the plight of the bees by making special hives in their workshop.

"It gave me a purpose to get up in the morning. Before, I used to sit at home, now I am involved in projects for the community and I have made new friends" –that is one quote. "Now I have somewhere to belong, meet different people and have fun" – is another. "Sometimes I just go and have coffee and talk with the guys."

Edmonton used to have 6 Men's Sheds before Covid, now we only have two but are hoping for more as things return to slightly more normal times.

Mens Sheds are an invaluable and somewhat unknown resource that deserves more recognition

and we need to have more—here in Edmonton and across Canada.

So now that you know what Mens Sheds are and what they do, don't you want to rush out and join one? Or better yet, maybe start one of your own?

Resources

<https://mensshedsyeg.ca/> Edmonton

<https://menssheds.ca/> Canada

<https://mensshed.com/> International

Toolkit: <https://menssheds.ca/the-toolkit/>

Farewell to dear friends and members,

We are sad to share the news of the passing of these dear friends, and yet all three have left their mark on our organization and in many many other areas of life.

Jennifer Wrzosek

Regional director for Region 1– Grande Prairie and area, Jennifer was multi talented and loved by all. She wanted to write an article together on facing our mortality, all the while had an unexpected illness and death. Jennifer was very proud to have completed two children's books—www.jenniferwrzosek.com/

Bernie Travis

CEO for Early Onset Dementia Alberta Foundation Berne was a passionate agent of change. She will be sorely missed in the dementia community and beyond. Simply put, she called all of us to do better.

David Ruptash

Our longest standing member was a dedicated casino volunteer and ongoing advisor. David reminded us of the significance of the dash between: its what we do after we are born and throughout our life that really matters. He called ACA to discover a strong business unit and to explore the potential of developing a high level program on the ecology of age to address ageism. David met his death head on and departed as gently as he served.

Finding Joy, Sharing Joy

This is a drawing I did for a neighbourhood home school family. Two years ago I dug a deep hole in my backyard, lined it with wood, sealed a trunk full of costume jewelry in it then sealed it with a lid. I told the kids after they had helped me rake some leaves that I'd heard there was a buried treasure in my yard that the pirates had buried years ago. I had small shovels ready and asked them if they could help this old man dig it up. They were blown away by what they found. So to help them remember this magic moment for the rest of their lives I did a cartoon of them dressed as pirates. I also had it made into a 500 piece puzzle.



“One of the secrets of growing old gracefully I find is to let your “inner child” do stuff for kids that I wish the grown ups of my day would have done for me. “

-Grant Woodcock

ACA is looking for volunteers for these roles

Board of Director Representatives

Positions open for board members and
ad hoc committee members

Coordinator

Responsible for coordinating special
events/ campaigns/ volunteers

Fundraising Lead

Provide Leadership for awareness and
fundraising to ensure organizations
viability

Presenter/ Facilitator

Present Alberta Council on Aging's age
friendly programs to live, online/
telephone participants

Photographer

Take and share photos for use in
newsletters, social media, blogs and
marketing materials

Social Media Influencer

Follow Alberta Council on Aging on
social media and share social media
posts/ blog posts/ newsletters with
friends and family. Introduce the council
to new friends and contacts

www.acaging.ca

Silent snow falls
 From a gray heaven
 On this peaceful Easter morn
 Covering my neighborhood
 In a thin lacey blanket
 Above the tall elms
 Crows call out
 Where are you
 As they fly
 Bringing sounds
 Of pasts remembered
 Of sacred walks
 I took
 As a child
 I ran past ditches
 In my small town
 Looking for crocuses
 Growing purple and wild
 I wanted this moment to last
 But I needed to rush
 To be with
 My family
 Already seated
 At the great round table
 Engaged in delicious conversation
 Sharing a meal
 Maman and papa

Had made
 On this unforgettable day
 I needed to hurry
 To be with
 My brothers and sisters
 Before they all left

April 17th, 2022 Af
 Adele Fontaine Author of My Sundays with
 Normand

The Letter

I cried when I read my faraway friend's letter.
 Her husband died during the pandemic-
 49 years of marriage and then
 Separated for many of his last weeks.

How did video chats resonate
 with a person whose neurons were failing?
 How did all the voices sound to him?
 What good did the old eyeglasses do?

Were the colors in his brain vivid or dull?
 Were his memories active for those moments?
 Finally, she was allowed to visit in person.

Final days, final hours,

Final moments, snuggled together in bed,

Courtesy of kindness via nurse.
 The long farewell now expressed
 With warmth, touch, and love.

Judy Brownlee Dec. 21, 2021

5th Annual THIRD ACTION

FILM
FESTIVAL



SIMULCAST)))
online & in-person

June 10-12
2022

www.thirdactionfilmfest.ca

[Volunteer Spotlight]

My name is Paige Walker. I am a new volunteer with Alberta Council on Aging. I come to the organization with a passion for and experience with working with older adults. I have worked in healthcare for the past seven years and I am currently a nursing student. I have volunteered as a friendly visitor in long term care facilities for the past 4 years which sparked my enthusiasm for working with the older adult population.

Through the Alberta Council on Aging organization, I am interested in learning more about working with older adults, gaining perspective on the challenges faced, and working toward spreading understanding. I am specifically interested in learning about what the best practice is for caring for older adults, and how this standard can be met in all forms of care. My intention is to take this knowledge and use it in my practice as a future nurse. I am committed to learning what I can do to connect people and work toward a level of genuine care and understanding that is truly deserved by older adults. In my spare time, I enjoy hiking with my fiancé and puppy, spending time with friends and family, figure skating and reading. I am always looking to challenge myself and find ways to grow by learning new things. Older adults have so much to teach us about life, and I am extremely excited to start volunteering with ACA.



Erin Olde
Social Work Practicum Student
Northern Lakes College



Paige and her grandmother

I am a registered massage therapist and for the past 10 years have been specializing in deep tissue therapeutic treatments for health and wellness. With the physical aspect of health and wellness being taken care of I am now focused on the mental health and well-being of humanity in social work. Previously I worked in British Columbia in mental health and addictions with Island Health Authority as a community support worker. This rewarding field gave way to becoming my authentic self: learning, growing and being. Drawing from the recent past, my biggest takeaway is to:

“never stop learning; for when we stop learning we stop growing”

- Loyal Jack Hewman

Volunteering with Purpose

“Have you ever had an unplanned opportunity just fall into your lap? One that checked all the boxes that you hadn’t even known existed?”

That’s what happened to me in 2018 when a friend told me about a new film festival: the THIRD ACTION Film Festival.

The opportunity.....become a film reviewer!

Never mind that I had never reviewed a film before in my life.

I met for coffee with the Founder and Executive Director, Mitzi Murray, whose passion for this festival convinced me that I wanted to be involved.

But why did I think this opportunity was right for me?

I had been a career and retirement consultant focused on shifting to a new concept of aging, one ripe with possibilities and options to continue to be a contributing member of society as we get older.

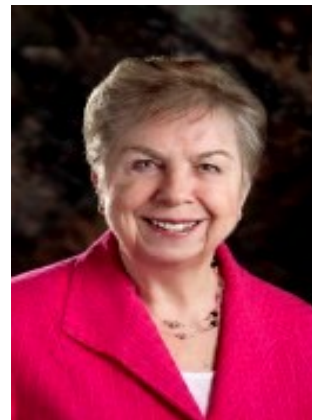
And that’s what THIRD ACTION aimed to do as well - through film rather than workshops, presentations, and books that had been my medium.

THIRD ACTION’s mission is to create a culture shift and to bring awareness of aging issues such as intergenerational relationships, caregiving roles, mentoring, spirituality, culture, grieving and death. Most importantly though, it is to celebrate those who have chosen to enrich their lives and

others through positive, joyful choices as they age.

For the past five years, this has been a rewarding experience for me. I learned from what global filmmakers chose as their subject matter, how to watch and rate films objectively, to avoid personal biases, and to write a review that was meaningful and helpful to the Program Team that was ultimately responsible for creating an interesting, entertaining, and informative program.

I encourage you, at minimum, to check out THIRD ACTION’s 2022 festival and if the boxes that I ticked apply to you too, consider becoming a volunteer. You will not regret it!



Nell Smith, Octogenarian

Volunteering with Purpose

It's one of the nine life habits that lead to a long and healthy life in the world's Blue Zones.

I can tell you that volunteering for THIRD ACTION is but one of many of Nell's purposes and we are very glad she chose us to invest her time and energy into.

Known as Ikigai in Japan and Plan de Vida (which translate into "why I wake up in the morning") in Costa Rica, purpose can give you goals, intentions and the opportunity for personal growth and development. As humans, we should never stop learning, evolving, and expanding.

Having a purpose doesn't mean you need to volunteer with THIRD ACTION. It could be a hobby, continuing to work, caring for others or anything that you can dream of that "floats your boat".

What having purpose does is improve your happiness, self-esteem, gratitude and can give you a positive outlook on life. It is that positive outlook on life and aging that can add up to 7 years to your life span.

No matter what your purpose is, we wish you luck.



If you need ideas on how to keep learning, evolving, and expanding while being entertained, then join us at this year's festival from June 10-12, 2022 (both virtually and in person in Calgary). And maybe.....volunteer!

Mitzi Murray
Executive Director

**Check out our film and speaker
line up on our website:**



Africa Centre Seniors Program, Edmonton

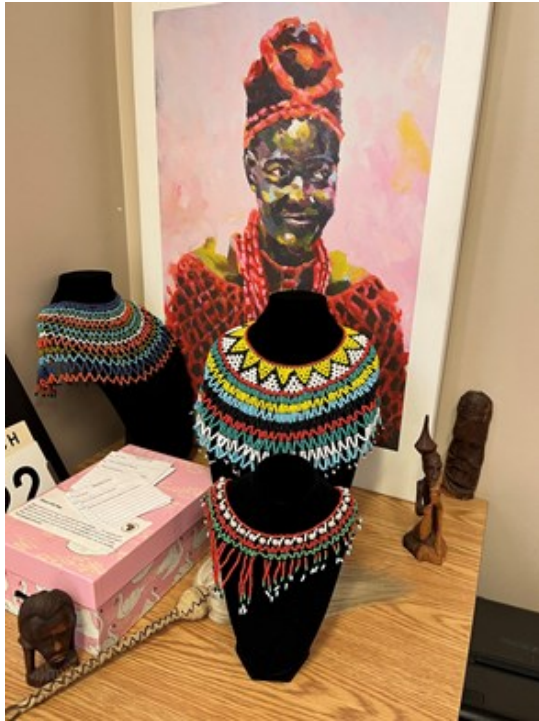
Unique stories and narratives of aging provide others with perceptions into the inner aspects of aging through ways in which individuals come to terms with their daily experiences for themselves and others. As the levels of ageing increases in the community of African descent Canadians in Alberta, their participation in social activities becomes crucial to their wellness and socialization.

The Seniors Program at the Africa Centre is constructed to encourage and help build a thriving community by reimagining seniors' social programs with the lens of reducing isolation and maintaining culturally appropriate program delivery. We ensure that the identity and status of older adults is respected as they have led a good and exemplary life full of local understanding and knowledge. Older adults are given the prospects of having a good life despite social, economic and health constraints.

Our aim is to empower seniors and allowing them to express themselves in different spaces so that we can showcase their individuality allowing them to share their knowledge, skills and wisdom. Showcasing the beauty of our seniors is the structure under which the program strives for and operates. Looking at the way they dress and carry themselves is the basis for different aspects of diversity within in terms of culture and language of the African continent. Many of our elders have survived various hardships nevertheless they are able to transmit their stories and lived experiences to the youth and provide a cultural support system. Learning through the uniqueness of the different cultural elements, the Seniors Program ensure a strong conviviality concept.

The program allows older adults to partake in various activities, have access to information on resources, enjoy friendships with other seniors and connect to services that are available in the community. Digital skills, ESL classes and crafts are some of the many interests' older adults enjoy doing in our centre. We focus on building safe spaces for older adults support their interdependence and improve their overall quality of life.

As hope sleeps in our bones like a bear waiting for spring after a long winter, we are looking forward to a glorious season to create wonderful memories with our elders. **-Aurelia Uarsama**



Our elders and samples of their work.

Activity Reports

Southwest Region

As we welcome spring with its flowers and greenery, there are opportunities to get ourselves out of the winter doldrums. I have been walking every day to enjoy the outdoors and watch the mating rituals at the lake. It is great to see so many others coming out to achieve some normalcy in their lives. Some of the issues we have been facing here in Region 7 are still there. We are dramatically short of physicians in this area. Some members are concerned about how to get their driving license medical, some are worried about their chronic health issues and some just worry about Covid numbers with no masking and no doctor. I am elated to hear the government is implementing some measures to encourage MDs to locate in smaller Alberta centers. It is a great start. Both the senior centers in Lethbridge have opened to pre pandemic activities. Some of our rural centers are opening as well. That is also a good start. Now we all have to try our best to resume the pre pandemic lives we all enjoyed and work to keep ourselves active and healthy.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Santa Region 7 Director

Southeast Region

As my term of office as Region 8 Director comes to an end and I reflect back on the past five years, I am very grateful for the opportunity to have served as a Alberta Council on Aging Board member. It has afforded me growth in my personal life as I have come to know and better understand the needs and concerns of our seniors at a provincial level. I quickly became aware of the fact that the ACA has been a strong, impactful voice to government for our seniors over the past fifty plus years. In order to continue providing this much needed representation, it is imperative that seniors across the province maintain a strong membership support for the successful operation of the ACA. Our seniors are facing

many new challenges including those brought on by Covid-19 and they will need continued support from us. To that end, we are very fortunate in that three new enthusiastic individuals from other regions have recently been accepted to the ACA Board of Directors.

As my position as Southeast Region 8 Director is now vacant, I would encourage anyone who has the well being of seniors in their heart to give thoughtful consideration to sharing your expertise as a member of the ACA Board of Directors.

I would like to thank all members of the ACA team for the opportunity to share our individual areas of expertise as we worked together to help ensure seniors in Alberta are able to live the best lifestyle possible according to their needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon Nott Region 8

*Thank you Gordon Nott for
serving with joy, kindness,
compassion and skill.
You are appreciated!*

-Board of Directors



Are you a family caregiver?

Do you look after an older family member who is not in a hospital or a nursing home?

We are looking for family caregivers to interview by phone or the zoom program.

We want to learn what help is needed by family caregivers across Alberta.

We hope for a short (15 minute interview once a week with you).

We have \$20 to give you for each interview, as we know your care is time consuming and expensive.

For more information about this study, please call 780-492-5574 and leave a telephone number. We will call you back that day or the next day. You could also email us at donna.wilson@ualberta.ca and she will get back to you that day or the next day.

Thank you. Donna Wilson, a nursing professor at the University of Alberta. Approved study: PR00119491

Reducing Caregiver Stress

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Learn about the disease | 6. Be positive |
| 2. Be realistic about the disease | 7. Look for humour |
| 3. Be realistic about yourself | 8. Take care of yourself (diet, exercise, take breaks, sleep, etc.) |
| 4. Accept your feelings | 9. Get help—accept help |
| 5. Share information and feelings | 10. Plan for the future |

- [Alzheimer Canada](#)

Learn Along with Future Geriatricians!

Dear Readers,

Thank you for your questions! In this column, we'd like to focus on Long Term Care (LTC). Specifically, what is LTC? When and why would a person or family decide to move to LTC? What is it like to live in LTC? How can we best support older adults who live in LTC? Keep reading to find out!

In Alberta, there are multiple ways that older adults can get support in their day-to-day life. From cooking to cleaning, bathing to managing multiple medications, there can be tasks that become harder to do independently over time. When tasks around the house become more of a challenge (or even a safety concern) then may be time to find out what options are available for extra help.

Some of these options include Home Care, which is a program that arranges for a helper to come to your home and help with things like preparing and assisting with taking medications, helping with personal care, taking care of wounds, checking your blood pressure, or many others.

Sometimes, there are multiple areas in a person's life that need support and a program called Supportive Living would be more helpful. Supportive Living centres are places where older adults can live and access services both routinely and as-needed. This helps them continue to live independently. Some of the services might include the same personal care that Home Care can provide, with the addition of meal preparation (sometimes even with opportunities to eat with friends and neighbours in a dining room), housekeeping, linen services, and organized activities to enjoy with others.

Finally, when an older adult needs more medical support for complex and unpredictable medical problems, moving to a Long-Term Care home can be a good option. There are publicly and privately funded LTC options in Alberta, with many differences from place to place.

Accommodations range from private to shared rooms. LTC homes have nurses and other staff members present at all times during the day and night, and are always available to help. Living in LTC can be an adjustment for older adults and their families. As currently implemented, we know that LTC facilities can be imperfect solutions to difficult situations. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone light on many of the challenges faced, and advocacy groups are working hard with the government to raise the bar and make positive changes. We hope to write more about these changes and ideas in our next edition.

When it comes to creating a positive experience for older adults living in LTC, the environment plays a huge role. This is the same as how you would want your own home to be. There have been many studies looking into what the best environment would be and they've found a number of important factors. These can be broken down into physical and environmental factors.

Some of the important physical factors include the type of unit, the number of residents living in the units, and the space itself. Special care units are tailored for persons who live with dementia. They have dementia-trained staff, try to facilitate family involvement, and tailor care programs specifically for each person. Small units (between 5-15 residents) that have a living room, kitchen, dining room, furniture, and outdoor spaces can make LTC facilities become more home-like. People who have dementia can become confused when trying to find the way back to their room, and cues can help. For example, previous photographs of themselves in their room, name tags in front of their door, or unique décor can help to distinguish their own space.

Environmental factors that have been researched include lighting, noise, and temperature. Ideally, the noise in a LTC facility should be less than 50 dB (this is no louder than a household refrigerator). Dim lighting can negatively impact mood; some of us may feel the same way during the winter. LTC facilities might use bright light boxes to help with this. Finally, colour with contrast, instead of dark lines, especially on the floor, can help to prevent confusion. Overall, physical and environmental designs can really help to reduce agitation, anxiety, confusion, and improve quality of life and mood in LTC.

There is a great variability in the programs available in LTC facilities, and being able to provide quality care for all older adults living in LTC remains imperative. Some of these programs include case management, recreational activities, and spiritual services. Broadly, case management is when you have a group of healthcare providers review a person's care to find the best way to help them. This is how tailored and specialized interventions are made. Recreational activities include art classes, pet and music therapy, yoga, exercise programs, and gardening. The best available research shows us that some of these programs, specifically, exercise, cognitive stimulation (things like memory exercises) and massage therapy are beneficial in reducing symptoms of depression in those who suffer dementia. Music therapy may help to reduce symptoms of anxiety.

Every family has a different experience with Long-Term Care, and it's important to remember that everyone has different needs and preferences. Because of this, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor, nurse, or home care case manager to help you decide what type of supports would be best for you or your family. There are lots of helpful websites where you learn more, including the Alberta Health Services website here: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/cc/Page15339.aspx>

Thank you for taking the time to learn about LTC and other Support Programs with us! In our next edition, we will be talking to healthcare workers, families, and advocates about LTC and asking them what the future may hold. We all have a role in supporting older adults in our growing 65+ population, especially given the challenges presented by COVID-19. Stay tuned!

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Disclaimer:

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Peter Hoang



Emily Goudie

Is this Ageism?

From talking groups to concerned members and citizens getting in touch... this is what we are hearing and discovering:

- ♦ Curriculum– **Kindergarten to Grade 12** does not address **age** as a human right
- ♦ Disability Insurance Coverage for Older Workers– discontinues at age **65**
- ♦ Automatic Cancellation of Alberta Drivers License at **75** years of age
- ♦ De-listing of medical tests –by age (i.e. mammogram test covered only up to age **74**)
- ♦ “Inclusive” hiring policies that do not include hiring or supporting older workers

What is currently in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education curriculum about older people and the aging process? Does curriculum lead to further and future study and career focus beyond K to 12 in relation to the needs and rights of older people?

Alberta Council on Aging would like to emphasize this fast growing demographic of older adults holds a lot of opportunity for future policy makers, researchers, designers, builders, specializations in geriatrics to front line service providers of any kind. We also stress a greater need to address and **meet the social needs** of older people versus viewing and treating older people as potential cost drivers in health. Although it is important to understand physiological changes that may happen with aging, it is significant to know that **changing attitudes from anti to pro aging** will inevitably help change environments. These two fundamental building blocks will eliminate barriers that create isolation, unsafe living conditions and low quality of life. We find there are so many positive changes that happen to people as they age. **Aging is a natural process, and is enhanced by life long determinants of quality of life, which start in the early years.**

Since the 1999 Senior Friendly™ Program, we continue to see the need to dispel myths around aging. Please let us know, as well as your MLA and MP's what your thoughts are on older adults and ageism.

We would like to share a few learning outcomes with you through our short presentation



Online program or ask us for a hard copy

Let's Stop Ageism

Did you know?

There is a link between ageism and elder abuse.

Ageism and Abuse

Ask for a hard copy or a presentation.

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