Association canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants retraités



Canadian Association of Retired Teachers

**POLITICAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE**

**AGM 2018 REPORT**

**Committee Members**:

Bill Berryman, Chair–Regional Representative–East

**Terms of Reference**:

The Political Advocacy Committee shall:

1. develop and recommend to the Executive actions to accomplish goals and objectives established by the Board;
2. monitor political issues and advise the Executive or the Board on emerging issues relevant to ACER-CART;
3. plan and organize political action if so directed by the executive;
4. include in its membership a representative from each ACER-CART Region.

At the conclusion of the ACER-CART 2017 AGM, the Executive referred the following two items to the Political Advocacy Committee:

1. Develop strategies and produce resources for retired teachers and seniors supporting a one Canadian purchaser national pharmaceutical formulary.
2. Investigate and develop strategies to produce resources for retired teachers and seniors to counter elder abuse.

**National Pharmacare Program**

I have written an article on this topic for the ACER-CART newsletter and a similar article for the Retired Teachers Organization of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union winter newsletter.

ACER-CART is very pleased that the 2018 Federal Budget announced the establishment of an Advisory Council on a National Pharmacare Program chaired by Dr. Eric Hoskins, former provincial Health Minister in Ontario. It will be absolutely vital that organizations participate in this endeavour by attending public meetings and providing written submissions. The Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Federation of Nurses and the Canadian Doctors for Medicare has sent a strong message to Prime Minister Trudeau advocating a national, single universal pharmacare program with a one Canadian purchaser national pharmaceutical formulary.

Please contact your provincial minister of Health and convey the same message. I have spoken to Nova Scotia’s Minister of Health and Wellness and Minister of Seniors and they agree with the ACER-CART definition of a National Pharmacare Program and are willing to bring this to the attention of Dr. Hoskins Advisory Council.

ACER-CART is extremely disappointed that Finance Minister Bill Morneau has undermined the Advisory Council by stating, “a new national pharmacare program will be fiscally responsible and designed to fill in gaps, not provide prescription drugs for Canadians already covered by existing plans.” The mandate of the Advisory Council contradicts this statement by indicating the Council is to look at international models, such as New Zealand, and make recommendations for a made in Canada program. I believe the Finance Minister has once again placed himself in a conflict of interest, similar to Bill C-27, with his ties to his former company Morneau Sheppell.

On March 27, 2018, I attended a Canadian Labour Congress town hall on **Pharmacare – A Plan for Everyone**. The Congress has organized 25 of these town halls across the country in an attempt to inform the public of the tremendous cost benefits of a National Pharmacare Program. Presentations were made by the Nurses Union of Nova Scotia, the Canadian Coalition of Health and the Canadian Doctors for Medicare. All presenters strongly emphasized the need to lobby all politicians–federal, provincial, municipal–of the benefits of a universal program and the savings that would ensue to provide other services to Canadians.

**Elder Abuse**

I have written a position paper on Elder Abuse which has been formatted in the form of a pamphlet, similar to the **A Vision for Canada** and copies will be provided at the AGM. The pamphlet is a series of questions and answers on the topic as well as definitions of the many forms of elder abuse. I continue to research the issue and will be providing updates and listings of new websites.

**Bill C-27 an Act to Amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act 1985**

I am grateful for the extensive information materials on this issue from Gerry Tiede, Chair ACER-CART Pension and Retirement Committee. This is a very important issue to all members, and their defined benefit pension plan, and I thank you for all your lobbying efforts with federal and provincial politicians over the past year. A major concern for the Coalition for Pension Security is that Bill C-27’s Second Reading could be called very quickly after the ethics commissioner submits his report on Finance Minister Morneau’s conflict of interest. ACER-CART will be vigilant when this happens and we will seek your support as we continue to work against the objectives of this legislation.

**Healthy Seniors Pilot Project**

One of the items not highlighted in the 2018 Federal Budget was the $75 million provided to New Brunswick in the 2018-2019 fiscal year to support a Healthy Seniors Pilot Project. Language in the budget stated that “this project will help government better understand the gendered impacts of an aging population, improve the quality of life for senior citizens and help lay the groundwork for the dissemination of best practices in supporting healthy aging for all Canadians.” There is some speculation that the results of this initiative will be used by the Trudeau government in their 2019 election platform.

**Ministry for Seniors**

One of the recommendations in the ACER-CART pamphlet **A Vision for Canada** was a National Seniors Care Plan. In preparing for the 2019 Federal election I believe we need to lobby all political parties to implement a national seniors care plan which would co-ordinate care for seniors across Canada. This would involve a universal system of home care, home support, long-term care services and hospice and palliative care. Another part of this plan should include a National Dementia Strategy.

I believe that political advocacy has now become an integral part of many ACER-CART activities. I would also like to thank fellow Executive members for their work with the following organizations:

* President Brian’s Lobby on the Hill February 26-27, 2018 with members of the Canadian Health Coalition
* Executive Director Roger’s participation in the Coalition for Retirement Security and the Canadian Medical Association
* Past-President JoAnn for her work with Seniors Voice and the National Pensioners' Federation

Looking to the future, ACER-CART will be heavily involved in the 2019 Federal election and we would appreciate all organizations support in disseminating information to your members when speaking to all political parties. ACER-CART will also continue to work diligently with our coalition partners as we collaborate on important issues that affect Canadian seniors and our own retired teachers.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Berryman