

**Association canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants retraités**



**Canadian Association of Retired Teachers**

 **PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

**ACER-CART 2018-19**

The three key ACER-CART priorities for 2018-2019 are encapsulated in the following sentence:

 “Participate in the 2019 Federal Election by co-operating with other like-minded

 groups to protect pensions, to advocate for a single payer national pharmacare

 plan and a Federal Ministry for Seniors”.

I am very proud to report that the Executive has followed up on all of these issues and I now provide updates on our efforts to date.

**Ministry of Seniors**

I wrote a letter of congratulations to Minister of Seniors Filomena Tassi on July 22, 2018 after her appointment was announced by Prime Minister Trudeau on July 18, 2018. I indicated that ACER-CART was looking forward to the opportunity to meet with her to introduce ourselves and discuss ways we could work collaboratively to accelerate progress on the many issues affecting seniors in Canada. I am pleased to report that the Minister graciously accepted my invitation to speak at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) Banquet on the evening of June 7, 2019.

**Pharmacare Consultations – Dr. Eric Hoskins Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare**

ACER-CART was very privileged to have representatives from Ontario, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador invited to participate in the “roundtable” discussions in their respective provinces. I attended the September 18, 2018 meeting in Halifax with thirty other participants which included health care providers, the pharmaceutical industry, private insurance companies, pharmacists as well as business, labour and patient groups. At the “roundtable” discussions I was very forceful in advocating for a single payer, universal national pharmacare program with the principles of accessibility, comprehensiveness, public administration and portability.

On September 20, 2018 I wrote a letter on behalf of the organization to the Advisory Council and emphasized the development of a universal, national pharmacare program with the establishment of a national pharmaceutical formulary. I would like to thank Marg Urquhart and her Health Services and Insurance Committee for providing the research on the letter and, in particular the eleven suggestions on how to implement the program.

**Vibrant Voices**

ACER-CART was invited to affiliate with the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO/ERO) and the National Association of Federal Retirees (NAFR) in sponsoring Leadership Alignment Session for Canada’s Vibrant Voices – 2019 Federal Election in Toronto on November 16, 2018. Representing the organization at the conference was Gordon Cumming, Gerry Tiede, Martin Higgs, Roger Regimbal and myself.

Eight other seniors organizations were also invited to participate and the conference was designed to help each organization reach alignment on one to three key areas of opportunity to advocate together in the October 21, 2019 Federal Election. The vision was to align, collaborate and champion the national campaign with one “vibrant voice”. The twenty five participants spent considerable time discussing various campaign issues and all agreed on the following three key priorities for the election:

1. National Pharmacare Program
2. Implement a National Seniors Strategy
3. Make Retirement Income More Secure

**Lobby Day on Parliament Hill**

After the conference in Toronto the NAFR Advocacy Team, under the Leadership of Sayward Montague and Candace Jazvac, developed written documentation on the three priorities in a booklet form with the key message, the challenges and the questions on each issue.

On February 19, 2019 Gerry Tiede, Gordon Cumming and Roger Regimbal, along with other members from the Toronto conference, were provided a lobby day training and preparation on the material in the booklet. On the following day each had various meetings arranged with Members of Parliament to discuss the three priorities. Well over 60 meetings took place during the day and that evening there was a reception with the Minister of Seniors and 20 other Members of Parliament in attendance.

I am pleased to report that Gordon Cumming and his Political Advocacy Committee have developed a similar workbook on the three priorities as well as the privatization of medical services in Canada. The Committee used the same format, but added more information and direct questions to allow ACER-CART members to discuss these issues with prospective candidates. The booklet will be available at the June 7-8, 2019 Annual General Meeting.

**Pension Issues**

I have been very impressed with the leadership of Gerry Tiede and his Pension and Retirement Income Committee over the past year. Gerry brought to our attention in December 2018 that the Federal government was establishing an on-line survey seeking responses to the Government of Canada National Consultation on Enhancing Retirement Security. I want to thank member organizations for bringing this to the attention of your members and completing the survey. I wrote a letter on behalf of ACER-CART and I understand that some member organizations did as well.

At the January 11, 2019 Executive telephone conference call Gerry requested approval of E-petition 2039 (Pension Security). The Executive agreed it was an excellent idea and Gerry proceeded to convince Mark Warawa, Conservative Member of Parliament for Langley-Aldergrove to sponsor the petition. The organization was extremely pleased to have 13,740 signatures over the two month posting. We are now looking forward to Mark presenting the petition in the House of Commons on June 6, 2019.

**Federal Budget**

On March 19, 2019 Federal Minister of Finance Morneau presented the Liberal party pre-election budget. ACER-CART was pleased to see some of the recommendations of Dr. Eric Hoskins Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare interim report of March 6, 2019 in the budget. The following “building blocks” were stated:

1. **Canadian Drug Agency**

With a budget of $35 million over 4 years starting this year, the agency will act as a clearing house to access the effectiveness of new drugs, negotiate drug prices on behalf of Canada’s drug plans and recommend the best value for drugs.

1. **Catastrophic Drugs**

With a promise of $500 million in 2022 and another $500 million in 2023 to subsidize drugs that treat rare diseases.

1. **National Formulary**

 Create a national formulary of a list of drugs that have been evaluated for both efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

**Communications**

ACER-CART has been very fortunate over the past year to have up-to-date information disseminated to member organizations on national pharmacare, pension issues and the “Vibrant Voices” campaign. I want to sincerely thank the ACER-CART Communications Committee of Martin Higgs and Roger Regimbal for producing the three issues of OPTIONS newsletter and posting important and relevant information on the ACER-CART Website.

**Thank You**

I believe that ACER-CART has had an effective year in implementing or “sowing the seeds” for the priorities established at the 2018 Annual General Meeting. The organization would not have been able to accomplish this without the tremendous support of the Executive, Executive Committees, Directors, Provincial Presidents and Executive Directors. I want to sincerely thank all of you for responding to my requests and providing information to your members in a timely manner. I also owe a huge debt of gratitude to Roger Regimbal for his tireless efforts in working on behalf of the organization, his superior technical skills in getting material published on short notice and his gentle way in keeping me focused on my responsibilities of this great organization.

As the saying goes “If you want to go fast, go it alone. If you want to go farther, go together”. I want to thank all of you for working together as a team for the betterment of ACER-CART and for this reason we need to pat ourselves on the back for a job well done.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Berryman

President