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

**The Canadian Association of Retired Teachers**

**OPTIONS**

**The Newsletter of ACER-CART**

**Summer 2018 Editor: Martin Higgs**

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

**Bill Berryman**

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Welcome to the 2018-2019 year. Although most of us have been retired for a number of years, we continue to think that each year is like a school year and we look forward to September in trepidation of what is to come when the students arrive in our classroom on the first teaching day!

If you recall our number one priority for 2018-2019 was “to 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 program and a Federal Minister of Seniors.”

On July 18, 2018, Filomena Tassi was introduced as the Federal Minister for Seniors. On July 22, 2018, I wrote a letter of congratulation on behalf of ACER-CART and also indicated that we were delighted with her appointment. I indicated that ACER-CART was looking forward to working collaboratively with her department on a National Pharmacare Program and a National Seniors Strategy and would welcome the opportunity to meet in the near future.

Dr. Eric Hoskins Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare has commenced its responsibility and anticipates reporting to the Federal government in the spring of 2019. There is a wealth of information on [www.letstalkhealth.ca](http://www.letstalkhealth.ca) when you click National Pharmacare On-line Consultation. Some of the important links include a discussion paper, questionnaire, events and FAQs.

I would urge members to read the 19-page discussion paper entitled “Towards Implementation of National Pharmacare” and share your views on the [www.canada.ca/pharmacare](http://www.canada.ca/pharmacare) website.

Please consult the “events” section on a regular basis to find out when the Advisory Council will be in your region. The first meeting was held on August 15, 2018, in Vancouver. Vice-President Gerry Tiede advised me that the British Columbia Retired Teachers Association was on the list of proposed participants at the Round Table, but in the end no seniors organizations were selected. Gerry did attend the Town Hall meeting and the following topics were discussed:

* What should our approach to pharmacare be?
* Who should be covered and how should it be implemented?
* Which medications should be covered?
* Who shall pay for the plan?

You have received information from Marg Urquhart, Chair of the ACER-CART Health Services Committee with an invitation to join the discussion and share your thoughts on National Pharmacare by visiting the Advisory Council’s on-line consultation platform or sending a written submission to pharmacare-assurance- medicaments@canada.ca

**2018 Annual meeting**

The ACER-CART Annual General Meeting was held in Ottawa at the beginning of June. For the first time, Executive Directors from the member organizations were invited to participate as non-voting members and made a positive contribution to our discussions.

**New Executive Elected for 2018-19**

President: Bill Berryman RTO-NSTU
Vice-President: Gerry Tiede BCRTA
Past President: Brian Kenney RTO/ERO
Regional Representatives:
 East: Marg Urquhart NBSRT
 Ontario: Martin Higgs RTO/ERO
 West: Gordon Cumming ARTA

Key Concerns from Members included the protection of pensions, the privatization of some aspects of health care and government actions which could have a negative impact on retirees.

There was discussion of the relationship among ACER-CART provincial organizations and the Executive was instructed to develop guidelines to bring back to the next AGM in 2019.

We received valuable input from lobby consultant Geoff Norquay on how best to influence governments. Politicians follow social media and we need to work at linking our ideas to government proposals to increase our effectiveness. Johnson Insurance, in their presentation, dealt with trends in travel insurance that in some jurisdictions doctors were selling bills to collection agencies with patients being harassed within 24 hours, and the potential impact of medical marijuana on benefit plans.

**ACER-CART Committees**

Following the AGM, the new Executive held its first meeting and the following committee assignments were established:

Pension & Retirement Income: Gerry Tiede
Communications: Martin Higgs
Health Services: Marg Urquhart
Nominations & Elections: Brian Kenny
Political Advocacy: Gordon Cumming
Legislation: Brian Kenny

Changes in our articles now state that committees are composed of at least three members. They are not necessarily directors but could be some of your members who have a particular interest in that field. If you wish to suggest someone please contact the executive member responsible for that committee.

**Priorities 2018-19**

The Executive also refined the ACER-CART Priorities for 2018-19 as follows.

***ACER-CART will participate in the 2019 Federal elections 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.***

In support of this priority we will continue to:

* Monitor the 10-year bilateral health funding agreements with the provinces,
* Oppose the surrender of the accrued benefits inherent in defined benefit plans,
* Support the enhancement of the CPP, and
* Oppose the privatization of health care.

Since our AGM, we are very pleased that Prime Minister Trudeau has announced the creation of a Ministry of Seniors and appointed Filomena Tassi, the MP for Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, as the new minister responsible for seniors care.

While ACER-CART certainly cannot claim full credit for the creation of this new ministry, our lobbying along with that of like-minded organizations has achieved this positive result. We have written to the new Minister offering our congratulations on her appointment and looking forward to the opportunity to meet with her to introduce ourselves and discuss ways we can work collaboratively to accelerate progress on the many issues affecting seniors in Canada.

**Next Executive Meeting**

Your ACER-CART Executive will meet by teleconference in early September. Please contact your Regional Representative or any member of the executive if you have items you would like us to bring forward.

**Oops**

As you can see there are not many photos of our AGM. I had a problem with my lens so most of them turned out blurred. If anyone has any good ones, please share them with me. Roger