**President’s Message**

**Bill Berryman**

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Martin Higgs and his Communications Committee for the production of the Summer Edition of Options and now look forward to perusing the information in this edition. This newsletter provides a vital communication link to ACER-CART Executive and Directors who then provide up-to-date information to our 140,000 members.

I would also like to congratulate the Alberta Retired Teachers’ Association, la Société des Enseignants et Enseignants Retraites Francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick, the British Columbia Retired Teachers’ Association, the Yukon Retired Teachers’ Alumni, the Retired Teachers’ Association of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Prince Edward Island Retired Teachers’ Association for their successful Annual General Meetings which have taken place since the last publication of Options. I understand that each meeting promoted and enhanced the interests and well-being of their membership and provided an opportunity for fruitful discussion and rich social interaction.

I would now like to update you on the following ACER-CART initiatives as a follow up to our 2018-2019 priorities as approved at the June 2-3, 2018 Annual General Meeting.

***Federal Minister of Seniors the Honourable Filomena Tassi***

On behalf of ACER-CART I wrote a letter of congratulations to the new Minister of Seniors and provided her with a copy of the Elder Abuse pamphlet. She also received a copy of SHIFT – Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for an Aging Population and our 2018-2019 priorities from Darrell Samson, Member of Parliament for Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook. I have also written a second letter to Minister Tassi inviting her to speak at the 2019 Annual General Meeting Dinner on June 7, 2019. I also sent a letter of congratulations to Sherry Romando, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, providing her with information on the Organization and indicated that ACER-CART advocates for all Canadian seniors, not solely retired teachers in Canada.

***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 and Newfoundland and Labrador invited to participate in “roundtable” discussions in their respective provinces with the Advisory Council. I attended the September 19, 2018 meeting in Halifax with thirty other participants which included health care providers; the pharmaceutical industry; private insurance companies; pharmacists; and business, labour and patient groups. Over three hours participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. How should pharmacare be delivered and who should be covered?

2. What drugs should be covered?

3. How should pharmacare be paid for?

I was not surprised by the many divergent opinions of participants due to the groups they represent. I was very forceful in advocating for a single payer universal national pharmacare program with the principles of universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, public administration and portability. I also urged the participants that there needs to be an evidence based comprehensive national formulary with one negotiator.

On September 20, 2018 I wrote a letter to the Advisory Council on behalf of ACER-CART and emphasized the development of a universal, national pharmacare plan with the establishment of a national pharmaceutical formulary. I would like to thank Marg Urquhart and her Political Action Committee for providing the research for the letter and in particular the eleven suggestions on how to implement the plan.

***Vibrant Voices***

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

Eight organizations were invited and the conference was designed to help every 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 a national campaign with one vibrant voice.

The twenty participants spend considerable time discussing possible campaign issues and agreed on the following key priorities for the October election:

1. National Pharmacare Program

2. National Health Care Strategy for Seniors

3. Pension/Retirement Income Security

Information will be tabulated from this powerful conference and will be provided to each organization for follow up and final decision on the next step. The ACER-CART Executive will be determining our course of action at the Executive telephone conference call on January 10, 2019.

***Eastern Canadian Retired Teachers Organization (ECRTO)***

Retired teacher representatives from Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick (anglophone and francophone) and Quebec participated in the biannual conference at the Hotel on Pownal in Charlottetown on October 24-25, 2018. The conference provided an opportunity to meet and to share our current practices and learn from each other. There were three excellent guest speakers who provided information relevant to the six organizations and the needs of seniors. The guest speakers were and the topics presented are as follows:

1. Dr. Steven Wong – Rediscover the Sounds of Life

2. Dale Weldon – Comparing the Atlantic Provinces Retired Teachers’ Group Insurance Plans

3. Olive Bryanton – Growing Old Gracefully

Marg Urquhart led a small group discussion with each group responsible to answer three questions. Marg will tabulate the responses and provide a written report to all participants who can then use the information with their respective organizations.

The twenty five participants were pleased to hear Jan Langelier, President of the Quebec Provincial Association of Retired School Administrators, offer her association as host of the 2020 ECRTO conference in Montreal. All organizations are looking forward to attending this first ECRTO conference hosted in Quebec.

As this will be the last issue of Options for 2018 I would like to extend a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year to the ACER-CART family and hope everyone has an enjoyable holiday with family and friends. Rest and relax as I believe it is going to be a very busy and interesting 2019!

Bill Berryman

President, ACER-CART