**Health Services Committee Report**

**ACER-CART**

**January 2021**

**Members:** Bill Berryman, Nova Scotia Alyson Hillier, Nova Scotia

Marie LeBlanc-Warwick, Saskatchewan Peggy Prendergast, Manitoba

Chair: Margaret Urquhart, Regional Representative East, New Brunswick

The committee has met twice since the October 2020 report, which included potential agenda items for the October meeting, to the Executive Committee. Discussion notes from that meeting follow:

**Review of relevant items from October 16th Executive Meeting**

* Priorities – idea of doing both pharmacare and seniors strategy/health/long term care and combining as appropriate positively received
* Use of both petition and letters/emails to MLA’s and MP’s to promote priorities.
* Appreciate role/support of Advocacy committee in preparing materials
* President Tiede’s availability for meetings appreciated
* Advised website is live and protocols pertinent to content, including recommendations for links, reviewed
* Resolutions referred to Health Committee – current year and 2019 - reviewed

**Discussion Points**

* Covid 19 provides incontrovertible and overwhelming evidence and a strong case for senior care/strategies and pharmacare/vaccines
* Any actions ACER-CART recommends to Members for their action and that of their individual members need to be easy/require minimal effort and have maximum impact. (eg process described by Martha during Zoom meeting)
* Steps taken need to expand knowledge and engage individuals/expand the conversation
* Suggest techniques used by Members who had the best response to the petition be gathered and shared
* Vaccines, pharmacy rebates/kickbacks fall under broader umbrellas of both pharmacare and senior care. These can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.
* Canada Health Act based on basic principles however is ever changing. Health Transfer Funding is a tool the federal government has – a possible consequence of failure to comply. This is also true for the Bilateral Health Accords. (Improving access to home and community care was part of every accord) ACER-CART needs Members to monitor, report and hold respective governments accountable.

Subsequent to the meeting website links were reviewed and recommendations made to the Communications Committee. We have since learned of a document – A Decade of Healthy Aging - released by the World Health Organization. The Health Services Committee believes Members would appreciate accessing it and **recommends** consideration be given to putting it on the webpage. (<https://www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing>)

A potential letter for ACER-CART and Members to send to provincial/territorial and federal Ministers was drafted and submitted for consideration in late November. (Appendix 1). The decision to suggest such a letter was based on an understanding that orders for prescription drugs for 2021 was imminent and a 2020 resolution to advocate for universal coverage for all vaccines for seniors. The decision was to place it on the agenda for the January Executive Meeting.

In early December the Canadian Medical Association’s Health Advocates email with links for sending individual letters was forwarded to the Executive as something for ACER-CART to consider pursuing.

Our January Meeting included a review of Health Policies (Appendix 2) and Committee Terms of Reference as requested. As requested, feedback on the Terms of Reference was emailed to President Gerry Tiede.

Resolutions from 2019 and 2020 AGM’s were again reviewed and consensus was our efforts are being directed towards them.

We **recommend** Member Associations be asked for information regarding vaccines, including high dose flu, pharmaceutical company kickbacks, and violations of the Canada Health Act. (Appendix 3). We anticipate reporting results in March.

A further **recommendation** is that individual members contact provincial/territorial and federal legislators regarding priorities. (Appendix 4) In recommending this we noted it needs to be “easy” and suggest investigating the feasibility of the process Martha Foster described during the last Executive Meeting.

The Drug Prices Review information sent to the Executive in a January 8th, 2021 email from Bill Berryman was shared with the committee.

The committee also acknowledged seniors of advanced age, often unable to speak for themselves, may well be invisible/forgotten in terms of their needs and wellness, including financial.

For medical reasons Marie LeBlanc Warwick was unable to participate in our January 8th meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for March 5th.

Respectfully submitted

Margaret Urquhart, Chair Health Services and East Coast Representative