



ALBERTA RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Member Report 2022

Major Concerns of Association at the Provincial Level

The provincial government continues to make changes that are detrimental in the areas of public health care, seniors care, public education, and in general, for the common working person. The budget brought forth this spring indicates that more funding will go to private surgical clinics, and charter and private schools.

Health Care

Health care continues to be a major concern in Alberta. The present government continues its goal of privatization of health care. The government is moving towards privatization of labs, EMS, blood plasma, and multiple other health care services. Pay for Plasma Clinics have now opened in Alberta.

Bill 11, *The Health Care Protection Act*, allows for private clinics to sell enhanced services to patients. This basically means that two-tiered health care is a reality in Alberta.

According to Heather Smith (head of the nurses union), in January of 2022, 5000 staff were on sick leave or in isolation. There are staff shortages across the province. The new EMS directive is to “drop and depart” in emergency rather than wait with the patient for triage.

Long-term care is an issue – The government continues to challenge private entities to refurbish existing space as continuing care beds. Bill 70 provides protection for the long-term providers facing lawsuits over death and injury due to Covid 19. Long-term revenue is going out of the province. Alberta does not make any money from these corporations – the profits go to Ontario and the U.S.

Additional Information

I sit as a representative for ARTA on the Public Interest Alberta for the Seniors Task Force. This is a group of people who meet once a month to discuss seniors issues. There are 17 organizations represented. They currently have a campaign “Seniors Deserve Better.” This campaign promotes putting an independent Seniors Advocate in place to the government of Alberta. In speaking to the former Seniors’ Advocate of the province, the following information was shared. She was not independent from the government and her hands were tied. She stated the position needs to be an independent position. The phone calls that came into her office were broken down into the following: Health Care 28%, Income Support 25%, Social Supports 26%, and Housing 21%. Public Interest Alberta is also involved with the national

housing strategy which includes looking at affordable housing for seniors (and others). Companies, like Boardwalk, have high rental fees – people are not able to afford housing from these companies.

Bill 32, *Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplace Act*, rolls back workers and union rights. Some of this legislation places further restrictions on the right to strike and terminates the binding arbitration process for post secondary institutions. One of the things that Bill 85, *Education (Students First) Statute Amendment Act, 2021* does, is to promote a public online registry for teachers – using the argument that transparency is important, and that the public will gain confidence in public education by sharing the professional standing of a teacher. The government is also looking at the oversight of teachers. Bill 15, *the Education (Reforming Teacher Profession Discipline) Amendment Act*, gives the Education Minister unilateral power over our discipline function. There is a move by this government to weaken the Alberta Teachers' Association. The collegial approach that is currently in place is under attack.

Federal Concerns

National Pharmacare continues to be of interest. It remains to be seen whether the agreement between the Liberal government and the NPD will bear fruit for Canadians.

Long-term care is also a concern at the federal level since it is clear that the provincial and federal governments would need to work together in order to make the system better.

Priorities for ARTA in 2022

The priorities in Alberta are – a National Seniors strategy, long-term care, ageing in place, and universal pharmacare.

Main Activities since our last AGM

ARTA's mission is to support, "*an engaged lifestyle after retirement through member-center services, advocacy, communication, wellness, and leadership.*"

ARTA RX is new. ARTA has opened its own pharmacy to serve its members, including having van delivery of prescriptions.

Membership – Membership continues to grow, and as of April 2022, ARTA has 27,473 members. This is a year-to-year growth of 4.9%.

The ARTA office took over a larger building as space was needed for additional staff members. Additional staff was hired, and the ARTA office now consists of over 40 individuals.

Covid has still been playing a major role in the operations of ARTA. ARTA staff worked from home until the end of April 2022. All meetings of committees, the executive, and the board of directors were held by Zoom until that time.

Each Branch will be participating in our annual "Wellness Challenge" which involves members keeping track of their physical activity for a period of time and submitting the information.

Annual Retreat - ARTA held a retreat on May 24-26, 2022 in Canmore, Alberta. The last two retreats have been by Zoom. It was nice to be back in person. The theme of the retreat was

“Welcome Back.” Guest speakers included Bob Gray, author of the best-selling book “Right Brain Rapid Recall”; Dr. Thomas Homer-Dixon who spoke on “Commanding Hope: The Power We Have to Renew a World in Peril”; Dr. Elaine Chin, author of a new book “Welcome Back! Reboot your physical and mental resiliency in a post-pandemic world”; and Dr. Susan Biali Haas, an award-winning medical doctor who gave a presentation on how to enjoy optimal health, avoid burnout, and increase our resiliency. Everyone at the retreat received a copy of the book written by Dr. Elaine Chin.

Charity Golf Classic – after a 2-year absence, the Charity Golf Classic will be held on June 16, 2022 in Ponoka, Alberta.

Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation – Our Foundation continues its journey to become a charity of choice. Each year, ARTA has groups that we partner with. This year ARTA, through its Charitable Foundation, has donated funds to the following charities:

The Alberta Branch of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind - \$25,000
Parkinson Association of Alberta - \$25,000
Alzheimer Society of Alberta - \$20,000

Lawrence Hrycan – ACER-CART Director
Lorna McIlroy – ARTA President
Marilyn Bossert – ACER-CART Regional Representative West
Daniel Mulloy – ARTA CEO & Executive