**Pension & Retirement Committee Briefing Notes**

**Oct. 9, 2024**

Review of notes from previous meeting:

1. Full cost of living lacking in many provinces.
   * + Continue tracking the data for each provincial pension
     + Provide Members with data showing the loss of purchasing power with the cost-of-living provisions in their province
2. Alberta CPP replacement
   * + Seems to have dropped out of active consideration in Alberta for now. Helpful article: <https://financialpost.com/fp-finance/alberta-cpp-gambit-risks-undermining-canadian-achievement>
3. National Dental Plan
   * + The plan seems to be rolling out and some people are benefitting.
     + Unfairness of the plan is still a concern. Two people with equal need and financial resources do not have the same eligibility based on arbitrary rules.
     + The committee would urge Members to write the federal government encouraging them to make the plan more fair.

**AGM Resolution Referral from STS**: Saskatchewan is not currently lobbying on these issues as they are in the middle of an election campaign, and these are not priority issues**.**

1. **BE IT RESOLVED**that the STS Executive work with ACER-CART and SSM to advocate for the government to initiate a tax credit for seniors for their participation in activities to improve physical and mental health.
   * + The committee reviewed the tax-relief programs available for children:
       - $500 recreation tax credit for educational and recreational activities
       - $500 tax credit for artistic, cultural and recreational development
       - The purpose of these tax credits is to encourage and support participation in activities that provide for the physical and mental health of children as that is a benefit to all Canadian society.
     + The Committee supported a similar tax credit being available for senior citizens to encourage good physical and mental health which is a benefit to all Canadian society and would provide a saving in other health-related costs.
     + While this isn’t a priority for ACER-CART this year, we will promote this possibility to our Member Association who we encourage to lobby governments.
2. **BE IT RESOLVED**that the STS lobby the Provincial and Federal governments to include Massage Therapy as a tax-deductible health expense for taxpayers.
   * + There is significant discrepancy in what is a tax-deductible medical expense between the provinces. Referring to the following CRA webpage may encourage other Members to question why some services are tax-deductible in some provinces and not tax-deductible in others. *Shouldn’t the list be consistent across Canada?*
       - See <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/about-your-tax-return/tax-return/completing-a-tax-return/deductions-credits-expenses/lines-33099-33199-eligible-medical-expenses-you-claim-on-your-tax-return/authorized-medical-practitioners-purposes-medical-expense-tax-credit.html>
       - The following provinces allow tax deduction claims for registered massage therapy: BC, NB, NL, ON, PEI. There rest of the provinces do not recognize these expenses.
       - As these benefits are allowed federally by Revenue Canada, making the necessary change appears to be a provincial determination. If it is a priority to a Member Association, we would encourage a letter-writing campaign and we remind you that ACER-CART has a licence to use New Mode which we happily lend to Members to facilitate that campaign.

**How can we support ACER-CART Priorities?**

The Pension Committee’s mandate is to support Strategy 2: Working to help all seniors achieve financial stability to enable them to age in the right place. Achieving full cost-of-living increases is part of the solution.

**Committee goals for this coming year**

1. Achieving full cost-of-living increases for retired member of all pension plans
2. Continue to monitor the roll-out of the national dental plan with a view to making the criteria fair.
3. Raise the issue of tax credit for appropriate seniors with Members.
4. Provide information, support to Saskatchewan in their quest for tax coverage for registered massage therapy.
5. Focus on economic stability for retired seniors so they can age appropriately at home or in their community.