

OUTREACH

February 2019

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Message from the Executive Director

By Elizabeth Nykorowytch Macnab, CHRL

Sometimes, we are involved in a situation and we're looking for the right decision maker to address the problem, whether it may be the right individual or level of government. Other times, we feel that we're the only ones with this problem. As our social networks get smaller, we forget that others may share the same views or sentiments. Finally, we may get discouraged and believe we no longer matter in society.

OSSCO encourages older people to not let "ageism" hold you back in sharing your views. OSSCO has received phone calls from people commenting about TTC's new Presto Card system with concerns about how it affects low-income seniors, how it's not easy for low vision or those with arthritis and how people need to be comfortable with technology.

Two years ago, OSSCO wrote to then TTC CEO, Andy Byford about the barriers of the Presto Card system for seniors. We identified that seniors are only able to register at one location, which is the Davisville office in Toronto. One location to service seniors and students in a city of three million?

I asked Mr. Byford to imagine this: I am accompanying my 80 year old mother-in-law who uses a cane to register for her seniors' discount at 1900 Yonge Street in Toronto, Ontario. To make things convenient for her, I would drive her and she would wait for me at Yonge and Davisville until I found a parking space. Then, together we would get her pass before I need to go back to my car to pick her up. Now, imagine the senior waiting in extreme hot, cold, snowy or wet weather. What about the senior out in Scarborough or Etobicoke who needs to travel more than an hour

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just to register and get the seniors' discount for the Presto Card? How about the disabled senior not eligible for wheeltrans? The TTC did not reply. Since 2017, nothing has changed and Presto's website makes it clear that there is only one location to get this discount - Davisville Station.

OSSCO believes that everyone has the right to be heard, and their needs considered. In February 2019, OSSCO will be launching one of its new programs - Healthy Involvement in Public Policy by Seniors.

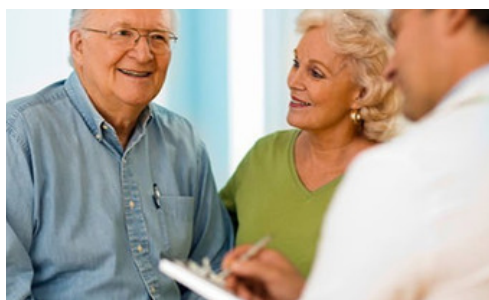
Seniors will learn how to speak to decision makers, and how to find things in common with other seniors or groups of seniors. Seniors are reminded that they are change makers - if nothing else, through the election process that we have.

Advocacy groups are perceived as ineffectual when in fact, advocacy groups have little funding or have a narrow focus for change. Advocacy groups can't be everything for everyone but everyone can take ownership for themselves, a friend or neighbour. This month, register for one of OSSCO's courses to remain independent and influential. Included with February's newsletter, you'll find

OSSCO's efforts with the Vulnerable Energy Consumers Coalition (VECC) to influence the Ontario Energy Board with the merger of Enbridge and Union Gas, affecting all Ontarians.

Advocacy & Seniors

By Sadaf Giyahi, HomeMedCare Pharmacy



As the population ages, there has been an increased focus on self-advocacy for the promotion of health and well-being for seniors in planning programs designed to meet their needs. Many seniors have been put in a position to be passive recipients of health care services, and thus are not able to take an active role in the decision-making process related to their care. This lack of participation is seen by many to disadvantage seniors as it is believed the seniors themselves are the best advocates for their own health. By removing seniors from the decision-making process, it creates a system where they lack the knowledge that will allow them to take a

more constructive role in their own health promotion.

Studies have shown an effective trend in the well-being of seniors when they are empowered to maintain and be more involved in their own health care. One way seniors can participate and become self-advocates in their own health decisions are to create cohesive support networks, such as family and health care professionals, that can provide and clarify health care decisions. Secondly, policy makers are urged to include seniors in any program planning. Doing so will enable an invaluable perspective to be included in any such programs.

As the population ages, self-advocacy is needed to raise the standard of care to all patients, most specifically the elderly, which in turn will raise their standard of care.



Home Med Care is a fully accredited pharmacy that provides pharmacy services at the comfort of the patients' home. Whether it be over the counter items, or

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prescription medication, our pharmacists will arrive at your door and provide counselling, delivery of your medication, and medication clean out at no charge.

<http://www.myhomemedicare.ca>

Navigating Your Personalized Health Care Pathway With A Professional Patient Advocate

By John G. Kelly

B.Com., LL.B., M.Sc. (international relations) M.A. (Jud.Admin) F.CIS

The Contemporary Health Care Conundrum

The traditional health model is hospital driven and doctor dominated. Contemporary health care has evolved into a dynamic professional services market that requires the integration of an increasing number of emergency health professionals and health technologists into a patient centered service continuum. Health is synonymous with societal wealth and well-being in a knowledge-based economy with an aging population.

Patients Want In

They increasingly see themselves as partners in their own care. They are less willing to accept:

- Poor customer service
- Communication gaps and outdated communication technology
- Long waiting times
- Poorly integrated services

They expect to interact with a responsive system that is designed around their needs, not around the preferences of providers and system managers.

The Professional Patient Advocate

The Alliance of Professional Health Advocates (APHA) (hphadvocates.org) was established in 2009. Its membership is an eclectic mix of individuals with diverse backgrounds in health care. They recognized the need and corresponding career opportunity for independent consulting for patients in need of patient focused "health pathway" guidance and the corresponding liaising, advocacy and negotiating with health care professionals and governmental and health plan funding sources. It's matured into a mainstream "peer to peer (PTP)" non-governmental network. APHA has been instrumental in establishing the nascent Patient Advocacy Certification Board - An International Certification/Credential for Patient Advocates (<https://pacboard.org>).

It's time to build a Canadian Professional Patient Advocacy Pathway.

Connect with John at john@activeretirement.ca

How Does An Ordinary Citizen Affect Change?

By Susan McDougall, Educational Program Assistant: Learning Projects

As we age, our social network decreases and our health may start to decline. It's frustrating trying to sort out which government agency is responsible for your individual needs and who to contact. Senior citizens are Canada's largest growing demographic, so your voice needs to be heard.

In OSSCO's **Healthy Involvement in Public Policy by Seniors** workshop, you will learn how to contribute your time and skills to solve public problems. It starts with a better understanding of the three levels of government and knowing your rights and responsibilities as a citizen. Then, progresses to advocacy processes and techniques that might advance your cause: including letter writing,

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petitions and social media.

This workshop is part of the Learning Without Barriers series, which is free of charge to senior citizens groups of fifteen or more.

For information on other Learning Without Barriers workshop's please visit OSSCO's website

www.ocscsco.ca

Technology and Aging...Together?

By James Ellis, President & Managing Director, The Rotary Dial Council



This week, we had a fascinating discussion with Dr Lia Tsotsos, Director of the Centre for Elder Research at Sheridan College in Oakville, and the subject was: Technology for Active Aging. My first observation with her was that it is rare to hear the words 'technology' and 'aging' occupy the same sentence, especially with some of our demographic being a little suspicious of today's technologies.

What ensued was a refreshing discussion about the latest in technologies coming our way in Robotics, Virtual Reality, Facial Recognition, Body Movement, Remote Medicine and my favourite, Artificial Intelligence. And when I say refreshing, it was that while these technologies truly are advanced and powerful, many still remain only as 'tools' for consideration.

Yes, facial recognition technology might be able to detect a change in expression that might indicate that I'm in excruciating pain, but it could also indicate a harmless sneeze. And body movement technology might detect indications of a loss of balance from a stroke, but it could also indicate that I stubbed my toe on the coffee table, for the third time today. The bottom line is, there is still a lot to be done in turning these technical capabilities into realistic and useable solutions for us all.

All said, one shouldn't worry that your gall bladder surgery gets interrupted because you forgot your password any time soon. We will still need the human touch of a medical professional that can look you

in the eye and say "you're going to be just fine".

<https://rotarydialcouncil.com>



Be Part of the Influence
Be Part of the Council

Seniors Bullying Project: Spring 2019 ThinkTanks

By Liza Franes, Research Manager, Sheridan College

Thank you to everyone who was involved in completing the Senior Bullying Project surveys this past summer, the response was overwhelming. We have had over 650 respondents complete our surveys and provide valuable insight to what is happening across the province regarding peer to peer bullying in the older adult community.

Our next steps for the project after the data analysis will be to host 4 ThinkTanks across Ontario in the Spring of 2019. The workshops will host 40 stakeholders each that include and are not limited to professionals who works with older adults and older adults themselves. These ThinkTanks

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are a full day exercise that will have stakeholders engaging with the senior bullying project team and with one another to help offer feedback on the survey results and to use the data and feedback to develop a resource package of best practices for older adults, frontline staff, and agencies to use in order to prevent and respond to bullying.

The dates and locations (specific site locations TBA) for the workshops are:

- Oakville: Tuesday April 23, 2019
- Ottawa: Friday May 3, 2019
- London: Friday May 17, 2019
- Peterborough: Friday May 24, 2019

If you are interested in attending any of the workshops listed above or you are interested in adding your email to the listserv, please contact Liza Franses, Research Manager at liza.franses@sheridancollege.ca



Social Sciences and Humanities
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- **Senior Bullying Project Website:**
<https://www.sheridancollege.ca/research/active-research/serc/bullying-between-older-adults>
- **Elder Abuse Ontario Webinars & PDF slides:**
<https://www.elderabuseontario.com/training-education/training/webinars>

Caregiving Leads to Advocacy

By Ron Beleno, Co-chair of AGE-WELL NCE's Older Adult and Caregiver Advisory Committee



My dad Rey lived with Alzheimer's for over 10+ years until his passing in January 2018. Being an only child, I was a caregiver supporting my aging parents in the Toronto area. To help us live as best as possible with our dementia journey, we utilized the Alzheimer's Society, friends,

neighbours, the local community, and even technology to live as well as we could.

As the challenges of dementia increased for my dad and caregiver mom, I became their voices to advocate for what our family needed, especially for dad who no longer was able to communicate clearly. Over time, because of our unique strategies to keep him at home as long as possible, I was asked to share my stories and solutions in presentations. Eventually I became quite involved with AGE-WELL NCE and the Centre for Aging & Brain Health Innovation (CABHI) at Baycrest as a mentor and advisor.

What initially were simply stories being shared of caregiving challenges eventually lead me to advocating for other caregivers and older adults. I have realized that there is a growing trend of lived experienced advocates, especially caregivers across the country in the past years. As the experts of our experiences, we need to connect with those working to make our lives better, such as researchers, policy makers,

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policy makers, healthcare providers and innovators to create greater impact. I challenge others to consider being an advocate, especially for older adults since it becomes extremely rewarding in many ways.

Follow Ron on Twitter:
[@rb33canada](https://twitter.com/rb33canada)
<http://www.rb33.com/>

Exploring A New Learning Adventure

By Nghy Nguyen, OSSCO Placement Student



Nghy Nguyen joined OSSCO in early January 2019 as a placement student. She is assisting OSSCO with the Enhancing Economic Opportunities for Older Workers program.

Nghy Nguyen is on the way to finishing her diploma in Social Service Worker Program at Fleming College. Before moving to Canada to pursue her education in community

services, Nghy had extensive experience in Market and Consumer Research Industry. She was also a proactive volunteer of a local voluntary group. Through charity work and working with vulnerable individuals, Nghy developed a passion for helping people. As Nghy got more involved with social work, she became more attached to making an impact on the vulnerable community. She believed that a social service worker could bring about positive change to the unfortunate individuals through the efforts and sense of social responsibility.

Nghy loves working with and working for the aging population, because she trusts that the interaction between seniors' rich life experience and her youthful passion would be a perfect combo factor for senior community development.

During her placement at OSSCO (January - April 2019), Nghy is looking forward to contributing her skills and knowledge to the program of Enhancing Economic Opportunities for Older Workers and to OSSCO in general. She hopes that the placement at OSSCO will enrich her knowledge and sharpen her skills in working with older people.

Provincial Workshops & Lectures with OSSCO

Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations continues to bring a lifetime of experience to a wide variety of topics. OSSCO presenters and facilitators have a keen understanding of their subject matter and help raise awareness on subjects to enhance quality of life.

OSSCO delivers a wide variety of topics across Ontario to seniors' groups and organizations. Topics include:

- Engaging Seniors' in Civic Dialogue: From Dialogue to Action
- Home Alone: Overcoming Loneliness & Social Isolation
- It's Not Right! (Elder Abuse)
- My Home, My Community: Safety Starts Here
- What's Next? Housing and Healthy Discussion
- What's Your Why? Cancer Screening Awareness Program for Older Adults

Interested in booking a presentation? Call OSSCO at 1-800-265-0779 or email ocsco@ocsco.ca to book an OSSCO presenter or for more information.

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