

Advocacy in Action 2022
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As we bid farewell to 2022 and welcome 2023, it is appropriate to reflect on the advocacy actions that the Association and the member organizations of the Coalition have undertaken in the past year. As we do this reflection, it is also important to emphasize that our collective advocacy actions also require your individual voice to emphasize the issues and concerns that are important to us, as aging persons, to our political leaders so that change can happen as we expect and deserve. For the full text documents for these advocacy actions, visit:

<https://nlpspa.ca/advocacy>

On January 13, 2022, the Coalition met with Consumer Advocate, Dennis Browne to express concerns over the rising costs of heating fuels and to offer support, voice, and input to his advocacy work in trying to keep fuel prices at a reasonable rate.

On January 14, 2022, the Coalition met with MP Clifford Small to appraise him of the issues on the federal agenda and to inform him of the Coalition's position on the issues identified to the Liberal MP's and to engage his support in accountability for these issues. A meeting has been requested before the House of Commons resumes at the end of January.

On January 19, 2022, the Coalition met with the Liberal MPs for Newfoundland & Labrador, including Minister Gudie Hutchings and Minister Seamus O'Regan, to discuss ongoing concerns for urgent and immediate action on a variety of issues, including a National Seniors Strategy, National Universal Pharmacare, Long Term Care Standards, Aging at Home, Preventative Health Services, Financial Security, and Seniors Poverty. Another meeting is anticipated early in 2023.

January 27, 2022, feedback was provided on the proposed legislative changes to the Building Accessibility Act.

In January, the Coalition wrote Minister Abbott and Minister Hogan concerning delayed amendments to the criminal code for elder abuse. This was the result of a Coalition meeting with Minister Abbott in December of 2021. The Minister replied that the matter would be on the agenda for an F/P/T meeting of Ministers for Seniors in February. The Coalition will continue to monitor this matter.

February 9, 2022, there was attendance at a HBE webinar on Healthy City Designs.

On February 16, 2022, NLPSPA hosted a virtual membership meeting on Tax Benefits and Credits presented by CRA.

On February 24, 2022, NLPSPA hosted another virtual membership meeting on How to Conserve Energy Use presented by TakeChargeNL.

On March 18, May 4, and again on May 31, letters were written to Minister John Abbott and Minister Sarah Stoodley to ensure that the increased usage of digital services for a variety of business uses was not to the detriment of those persons who did not have the equipment, skills and accessibility to such services.

On March 23, 2022, a Letter was sent to Minister Yves Duclos, Minister of Health, Canada, pressing for an immediate implementation of a National Universal Pharmacare Plan.

Also on March 23, 2022, another virtual membership meeting was presented “Demystifying Bankruptcy”.

In March, the Association and the Coalition jointly issued a Press Statement calling upon the Provincial Government to take immediate action to remediate the escalating fuel prices by implementing tax relief measures and for fuel companies and distributors to exercise patience as customers struggle to pay their heating accounts this season.

In March, Ann Marie Cleary and I engaged in an online response to the guiding principles being established to guide the Long-Term Care Standards. The issues identified were no mention of family involvement; no metric for measuring outcomes; no identification of a policing body; no one accountable for COVID deaths, especially in private care settings; lack of penalties for non-compliance or under compliance; and the quality of care has no measurable goals or outcomes.

In March, April and May, the Association publicly acknowledged Administrative Professionals Day, National Day of Mourning, and National Volunteer Week.

At the end of May, another letter was sent to Government on problems with accessibility to the registration technology at the Blood Collection Service on Major’s Path. A rapid response was received from Minister John Haggie and the CEO of Eastern Health advising some remediation of the problem.

The Association participated regularly in meetings of the Seniors Groups Sub-Committee of the Vulnerable Populations Task Force.

The Association participated regularly in bi-weekly meetings of the Health Accord, Aging Populations Committee, and contributed considerably to the recommendations contained within the final report.

On July 25, 2022, Anne-Marie Cleary and I met with Darrin Fisher, the Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Seniors. The meeting was a discussion of Service Canada’s services and delivery. There was

an information session about grants that are available and the application process. It was stated that in some circumstances the funding of a grant does not coincide with the actual implementation of the grant project timeline. The application can be difficult to complete and the project for which funding is being sought often spans longer than a year, but the funding is annually limited, forcing groups to drop the project or find a new way to message the project in the application to seek continued funding.

On September 28, 2022, a meeting was held with Minister Tom Osborne, Health and Community Services. A number of topics were discussed, including pharmacare, the Blueprint for the Health Accord, Aging at Home and the need for services, building codes, vaccines, dental care, ageism, and digital services.

On October 20, 2022, a letter was sent to Government requesting an amendment to the Tourism Levy Tax to exempt guests who "for a daily charge, fee or remuneration are accommodated, lodge or stay in a room in a building within the city, that is licensed under the Tourist Establishments Act or owned by Memorial University" for purposes of medical or other health connected or health related treatment.

On November 14, 2022, a letter was sent to Government to seek their leadership in examining and revising the rates payable for mileage coverage for medical transportation through the Group Insurance Program and through the Medical Transportation Assistance Program.

On December 5, 2022, the Association and the Coalition sponsored a public engagement session with the Seniors' Advocate. The goal of the engagement was to hear the voice of seniors on current concerns, priorities, and ideas for positive change. High attention was given to health care, with additional reference to housing, transportation, and financial security and the high cost of living.

Last but by no means least were the actions taken by the Association and the Coalition to draw attention to the mis-direction being taken by Government in revising the Poverty Reduction Strategy, now being re-named as the Social & Economic Well-Being Plan. A meeting with the Government's engagement team was held on December 7, with a follow-up meeting held with Minister John Abbott and his staff team on December 21. The concerns expressed included the direction being taken by government to align this Plan with the Health Accord, to focus the discussions on life cycles emphasizing children, education, finance, housing and services currently being offered by government and their successes, and the lack of direction specific for seniors. On December 21, it was re-emphasized that Government was not getting the "on the ground picture", folks want some quick changes, and cannot wait 10 years for a full roll-out. The final message was "do some things now that put or allow more people to keep money in their pockets". It was also pointed out that the Income Support program and other programs were making people dependent and these programs all need a refocus to independence.

Conclusion: Clearly 2022 was a busy and active year in holding Government at all levels accountable. These and other actions will continue in 2023.