

GOVERNMENT - Ministry of Health/Premier

June 15, 2016

Pat Trask

Saskatchewan Seniors Assn Inc.

1504 – 2503 Louise Street

Saskatoon, Sask. S7J 3Z6

The Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. just concluded its Annual Convention/AGM in Saskatoon on June 9th. This convention was a representation of delegates from clubs/regions representing the seniors of Saskatchewan. SSAI represents the seniors of the province as the Voice of Seniors to address the issues, concerns and inequities which are restricting or reducing their ability to enjoy a decent quality of life. While some of the resolutions address actions which might seem to be minor, from a senior's perspective they are very important.

After much review and debate, the seniors overwhelmingly passed the following resolutions which are requesting the attention and action of your ministry/organization.

These include the following:

1. Dispensing Fees Resolution:

Whereas pharmacies throughout the province of Saskatchewan have no consistency in the dispensing of fees have adopted several variations

And whereas, this dispensing fee inconsistency is creating confusion, especially among seniors;

And whereas, the difficulties of accessing prescribed medications in rural Saskatchewan can have some serious implications

Therefore be it Resolved that the Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. lobby the Government of Saskatchewan to amend the legislation that regulates pharmacies and the dispensing of fees to effect required changes which would protect the consumers, provide a consistent approach to the dispensing of medications, and enable dispensing a prescription of more than one month for one fee.

SSAI JUNE 8/2016 - PASSED

2. Deprescribing Drugs Resolution

Whereas unnecessary hospitalizations result from taking too many medicines.

And further, many long term care facilities can manifest this issue by over prescribing medication to control behaviour.

And Whereas among retirement-aged older men and women in Canada:

66% take five drugs or more,

27% take 10 drugs or more,

Over age 85, 39% take 10 drugs or more,

1-in-4 of these medicines is potentially harmful and unnecessary.

And whereas the National Pensioners Federation Executive Board has announced its decision to join the Canadian Deprescribing Network.

Therefore be it resolved that SSAI urge the Ministry of Health, Province of Saskatchewan, to engage in this process to enable positive deprescribing drug practises

be put in place, with the goal of reducing inappropriate prescriptions for seniors by 50 per cent by 2020.

SSAI JUNE 8/2016 - PASSED

3. SENIORS BILL OF RIGHTS

Whereas the seniors of this province have dedicated their whole lives in the developing of this province so as to be able to enjoy their retirement years peacefully;

And whereas seniors in society tend to get overlooked, taken for granted, or exploited by many agencies, government departments and ministries;

And whereas many seniors, in trying to access needed medical, physical and/or social attention, get exploited for fraudulent purposes;

And whereas seniors need to have legal protection to assist in maintaining a quality of life with dignity and security;
Now therefore be it resolved that SSAI lobby of the Government of Saskatchewan to enact a Seniors' Bill of Rights to enable seniors to have a legal framework for their protection.

SSAI JUNE 8/2016 - PASSED

4. HEALTH CARE RESOLUTION

Whereas rural residents that require medical surgery in larger centres are discharged to their local hospital to recover and,

Whereas the local family physician is not on duty when they are admitted, they automatically become under the care of the doctor on duty and

Whereas many of the doctors on duty are not permanent and are not familiar with the patient's medical history, this practise can jeopardize the well-being of the patient,

Therefore be it resolved that the patients have the right to demand that their local physician be in charge of their recovery.

SSAI JUNE 8/2016 - PASSED

5. Special Care Homes

Whereas Saskatchewan has an aging population, and will require more Special Care beds,

And whereas many surgical procedures have to be postponed time and time again, due to acute care hospital beds being taken up by seniors waiting to be transferred to Special Care Homes,

Be it resolved that more publically funded and administered Special Care Homes be expanded or built in rural centres, nearer Seniors' home base and their families.

AMENDED SSAI JUNE 8/2016 - PASSED

6. Shingles Vaccine

Whereas Shingles, a horrible disease causing great discomfort, is becoming more prevalent in the province of Saskatchewan.

Whereas, there is a vaccine for this disease costing \$200.00 and most of our seniors cannot afford it and would rather take the chance they will not contract the disease.

Whereas, if nothing is done and seniors do get shingles, it means a thousand dollars a day in hospital costs, money which could be put to better use elsewhere.
And whereas the recovery period can take a year or longer, there is no reason for our seniors suffering from Shingles unnecessarily when a vaccine is available.

Therefore be it resolved that SSAI urge the Government of Saskatchewan to make Shingles vaccine available and free to all seniors in our province.

SSAI JUNE 8/2016 - PASSED

7. PRESCRIPTION FEE INCREASE IN 2016 BUDGET

Whereas a high percentage of seniors are attempting to carry a lifestyle at an income level which is below the poverty level of Saskatchewanians and Canadians.

Whereas the CCP increase for senior this year is 1.2% and the OAS increase is 0.1% for the first quarter of 2016.

And whereas the Saskatchewan Government has approved a Saskpower utility increase of 10% over two phase in periods - 5% increase effective July 1, 2016 and 5% increase effective January 1, 2017. This follows **five per cent** rate increase (system-wide average) for 2015.

And whereas the Saskatchewan Government, Effective 1 July 2015, reduced the income threshold above which individuals are not eligible to participate in the Seniors' Drug Plan to \$65,515 from its current level of \$80,255. The reduction in the income threshold is expected to remove 6,000 seniors in Saskatchewan from the Seniors' Drug Plan and result in a savings to the province of \$3 million in the 2015/2016 fiscal year.

And whereas the Saskatchewan Government, in its 2016 budget decided to increase the **per prescription fee by \$5** (to a maximum of \$25) under Seniors' Drug Plan. This change will affect 120,000 seniors by an average of \$80 per year - minimum.

Therefore be it resolved that SSAI lobby the Government of Saskatchewan and the opposition to immediately introduce legislation to amend the budget to eliminate the proposed increase in the per prescription fee of \$5.00

SSAI JUNE 8/2016 – PASSED

SSAI invites your initial response and proposed plan of action. In addition, SSAI would be more than interested in meeting with you to further identify and clarify any of the areas to enable a positive response as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention to the resolutions submitted for action. We await your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pat Trask". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Pat Trask, President,
SSAI