



President's Message – May 2016

Gerry Graham

Wow! The weather down in southern Ontario is all over the map. The past two weeks we have witnessed hail, snow and so much rain the farmers cannot get out to work their farms without walking in mud. Looks like it will be a late planting season and we need those tomatoes. Now the sun is out and we can get out for a walk without a coat. The grass is also growing. I am not sure whether to get the snow blower out of storage or cut the grass.

We were invited to a very positive meeting with the Ontario Seniors Secretariat Liaison Committee at Queens Park. In all the years I have been attending these meetings at Queens Park, this was the first time we had a Federal Minister, The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Also present was Mario Sergio Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs. Now was the time to bring up some of our USCO issues to the Federal government and move forward on some provincial issues that were brought forth in the past. One issue was increasing the CPP and merging with the ORPP for the next generation, our children and grandchildren. The answer from the Minister Jean-Yves Duclos is that the federal government is having discussions with the provinces.

Something near and dear to my heart is a need for a Phamacare plan across Canada that will save billions of dollars and that will be used to stop cutbacks to our hospitals and nurses. During this time the seniors population will be doubling and need more care in the immediate future. The Minister said they are aware of an aging population and have policy advisors looking at other models around the world. Also I mentioned that there are only 3 industrialized countries in the world that do not have Phamacare. They are Mexico, USA and Canada.

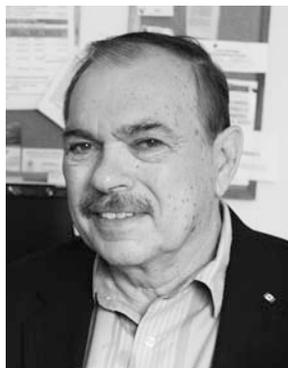
I also said that seniors want the choice of aging at home with their family and that this is important. They need the proper level of professional care for as long as they choose in order to be cared for at home. This will save the government money as the hospital cost is \$1000 a day. We are hearing about cuts to staffing on a regular basis and we hope that they bring back the nurses.

I also brought up waiting lists for properly staffed and safe Long Term Care facilities. We need to keep seniors connected and active. Their answer was that they are seriously looking at LTC and also they mentioned they are looking at a voucher system. Not sure how that will work but I will find out as much as I can at the next OSSLC meeting.

Finally I asked if there were any thoughts into having a dedicated Minister for Seniors at the federal level that we can address. Please change that as there are a lot of us and it will double quickly. We don't expect to get all this right away. Phasing in some of these issues would be a start and some other issues need attention now.

With respect to the provincial Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Mario Sergio and Jean-Yves Duclos federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, thank you for caring about seniors and thank you for listening. You listened to all of us.

To the members of the USCO stay tuned the United Senior Citizens of Ontario are on it. I am looking forward to seeing all of you at our next convention in Cambridge August 8-10, 2016. Remember to get your clubs provincial and federal resolutions in to the office by May 27, 2016.



President Gerry Graham

