

March 20, 2024

## President's Message

### Doug Still

Welcome to what we hope is the 'Spring' edition of *Executive Notes*! At the time of writing, the most recent cold snap associated with a significant storm is fading from memory, and the annual thaw is beginning to happen around the province.

Your Provincial Executive met on March 11 and 12 with Committee work and a full Executive meeting. The various Chairs and Co-chairs will be providing updates from our most recent deliberations.

Thank you once again to Chapter Presidents as this will be the fourth time that your Chapter members will be looking forward to receiving *Executive Notes* from you. Because *Outreach* has moved to quarterly issues, *Executive Notes* is published after each of the five Executive meetings with more detail, and issued in a more timely way. This document is also posted on our provincial website [here](#).

One new feature on our website is a listing of declared Candidates for the various positions on the Executive. On the home page, go to 'What We Do' and then to 'Annual General Meetings', or click [here](#). You will find the list of nominations received by March 1. Similar to what happens with elections at the local, provincial and national levels, the intent is to let as many of our members as possible know who is running for various positions.

At this time in our business year, significant planning takes place for the upcoming Annual General Meeting occurring May 7-9. As an organization of 12,223 which relies heavily on volunteers, the AGM is an opportunity for Delegates to gather, to network, and to conduct the business of the organization. Chapter Presidents have been busy contacting potential Delegates, and we hope that as many Delegates as possible will be able to gather in Saskatoon in May.

As an informational piece, I want to mention that the STS employs four staff, but none on a full-time basis. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. until noon, Monday to Friday. If you call during these times and staff are busy with another member, please leave a message so they can return the call when free. If you call in the afternoon, you will reach voice mail and will be asked to leave a message with your name and contact information. Staff will typically respond within 24 hours with the exception of the weekend.

If you have questions or comments about *Executive Notes* or need to contact the office, please touch base at [sts@sts.sk.ca](mailto:sts@sts.sk.ca) or by phone at (306) 373-3879, or contact your Executive Chapter Liaison, or me as Provincial President at [socrates@sasktel.net](mailto:socrates@sasktel.net).

## ACER-CART Report

### Helen Sukovleff

Having our voices heard is so important. Even after the pharmacare legislation has been tabled, we need to make sure Members of Parliament know that Canada needs an expanded pharmacare program. I want to thank all those people who took the time to "Share Your Voice". There is still time to keep the pressure on the politicians to deliver and push the



Canada Pharmacare Act to where it needs to go. Express your concerns by contacting your federal and provincial politicians on the easy-to-use letter-writing tool on the ACER-CART website (click [here](#)). Just enter your name, email and postal code. Click on “**Share Your Voice**” and read the prepared letter. Add to it if you wish. Press **SEND** and the email will go to all the politicians listed. You will also receive a copy. Please take a few minutes to sign this online petition and share with your contact lists.

At ACER-CART, we are watching the Canada Pharmacare Act and while coverage for contraception and diabetes drugs and related equipment have been included, this is a very limited list. However, it is important to note that that plan is being promoted as a “single-payer system”. This provides a pathway for expansion under the auspices of a Universal Pharmacare Plan. We now need to work on an expansion of the program.

## Advocacy Committee Report

### Huguette Kitchen, Devona Putland

The Advocacy Committee is continuing to do research for items of interest to the membership that would preferably be sharable on the STS Facebook site. News articles are no longer shareable in this format. In particular, the Committee is watching for articles related to climate change that might be able to be shared with members, partly in response to a resolution passed at the 2022 AGM.

Planning towards the Saskatchewan Provincial Election continued. The Committee decided on a six section pamphlet that will be available electronically or mailed out using the same method that the membership receives *Outreach*. Topics to be included are:

1. Engagement (where a difference between advocacy and partisanship will be explained, as well as how to engage with candidates as this may happen in a variety of ways depending on one’s locale)
2. Public Education
3. Healthy Aging in Place
4. Income Security and Affordability

STS Procedure for Chapters Engaging in Advocacy Efforts with the Provincial Government will be added as a procedure for development in next year’s goals.

In response to last year’s AGM resolution A16 requesting acknowledgement of the International Day of Older Persons/National Seniors’ Day, the Advocacy Committee recommended that the Executive approve a Special Project Grant to be made available to Chapters for the purpose of recognizing this day. This would follow an application process by Chapters similar to the procedure used for 50th Anniversary funding. The Executive endorsed this recommendation pending budget approval at the AGM.

## AGM Committee Report

### Huguette Kitchen, Anna Wehrkamp

The AGM Planning Committee discussed and finalized the program and activities for the 2024 AGM at the Travelodge in Saskatoon, May 7th-9th. The program will follow the same format as previous AGMs.

DOTS will be providing us with digital support again during the voting process. A two-minute time limit will once again be utilized for those speaking to resolutions.

Wakaw Chapter has volunteered to assist with registration packages at the AGM.

Delegates will receive pre-AGM packages via email or, if requested, by regular post mail. The full AGM package will be available at registration.

West of Mabou will be the entertainment on Wednesday night at the banquet.

## **Budget, Finance and Audit Committee Report**

### **Sue Amundrud**

The Budget, Finance and Audit Committee met on Tuesday March 12, 2024, in Saskatoon.

- Representatives from Deloitte were in attendance both in person and via TEAMS, to present the Audit Plan for 2024 for our information and approval.
- Our membership has grown slightly again, with 12,223 members as of February 29th – up five.
- We reviewed our quarterly financial statements. As of December 31, 2023, our year-to-date revenue in the Operating Fund was \$588,730.23, while our year-to-date expenses were \$468,264.38. We continue to manage within our approved budget for 2023-24, and expect to end with a surplus this fiscal year (although some of our major expenditures are not incurred until the AGM in May). Please see the Group Benefits Report for details in that area.
- We continue to monitor our Reserve Funds to ensure that they fall within previously established ranges and to address any that may fall below minimum or above maximum.
- The Committee reviewed the final draft of the proposed 2024-25 budget, discussed the implications of changes (both increases and decreases) in some of the budget lines, and the addition of one new budget line. This draft will be published in the AGM booklet and will go to the Delegates at the AGM for final approval.

The proposed budget for 2024-25 for consideration at 2024 AGM is included in the email sent to Chapter Presidents and posted on the STS website [here](#).

## **Communications Advisory Report**

### **Joyce Hoffman**

The Communications Advisory Committee met to continue working through the various items that form the communication of the STS. As the Committee continues working through the various areas, we are hoping that methods to improve and strengthen communication with our fellow superannuates are found.

If you are looking for information about STS or events happening around the province, check the STS website [here](#).

## **Group Benefits Committee Report**

### **Sunil Pandlla**

As we near the end of this fiscal year for the Group Benefits Plan, our Plan continues to see excess revenues over expenditures. The January numbers showed a deficit of \$112K, but overall, we are still at a surplus of approximately \$823K for the year as of January 2024. The last half of the year may reduce our surplus as members address their health needs and the costs for health care continue to rise. While there have been fewer claims, the costs in the healthcare sector have gone up which accounts for the deficit in January. We continue to monitor the Plan and are pleased to provide you with the latest information. Our membership increased slightly to 9,050.

As you are aware the Canadian Dental Care Plan is making headlines regarding both eligibility and coverage. This is still at a relatively early stage in the rollout, and we have to wait until all the fine details have been worked out to determine how older adults may be impacted or benefit from this Plan. One of the key criteria is that to qualify, older adults cannot have access to an existing Dental Plan. Early indications are that this may rule out STS members because they have access to a Dental Plan, whether they have joined or not. We continue to monitor information regarding the Canadian Dental Plan as it becomes available.

The National Pharmacare Program is also in its infancy and many more details have to be worked out.

Finally, we are pleased to have a framework for a renewed Agreement with Saskatchewan Blue Cross in place starting July 2024 and the financial basis for this Agreement arises from our strong financial position, healthy reserves and our accumulated surplus. This information was emailed to Chapter Presidents and sent to all members earlier. The highlights of the new, one-year agreement are as follows:

- To extend the current Agreement with Saskatchewan Blue Cross to June 30, 2025, **keeping premiums charged to members unchanged** for all aspects of the Plan
- To utilize accumulated surpluses and/or reserves to cover expected shortfalls in the coming year resulting from keeping premiums unchanged
- To approve the negotiated reduction of Saskatchewan Blue Cross administrative fees by 0.25%
- To authorize the following **ongoing and sustainable enhancements** to be made to the Plan effective July 1, 2024:
  - Increase the Prescription Drug maximum benefit from \$2,250 to \$2,500 per person per calendar year
  - Create a new Vaccine Benefit with a \$500 annual maximum (at 80% coinsurance)
  - Create a new paramedical practitioner benefit with a \$500 annual maximum (at 80% coinsurance) for Registered Nurse Foot Care Outside the Home
  - Add Psychotherapist to the Psychology/Social Worker/Counsellor practitioner benefit with a \$500 combined annual maximum
  - Add Myofascial Release Treatment within the Massage Therapy practitioner at \$500 annual maximum
  - Enhance flexibility within the Hearing Aid benefit by increasing from \$1,000 every 3 years to \$2,000 every 6 years
- To monitor the financial status of the Plan over the next year as we consider the initiation of another Health Spending Account as early as January 1, 2025.

If you have any questions regarding the Extended Health Benefits Plan, it is important that you contact the Office and the staff will assist you with your concerns.

## Honorary Life Membership Committee Report

### Don Gabel

The Committee met and reviewed seven nominations for the Honorary Life Membership Award. After reviewing the nominations using our rubric it was decided to recommend to the Executive that four awards be presented this year. The Executive approved the Committee's recommendation.

The recipients will be presented their award at the AGM in May.

# Recreation Committee Report

## Alan Laughlin, Don Gabel

The STS Executive approved two applications for provincial recreation activities.

1. Kaiser will be hosted by the Wakaw Chapter and will be held on October 10, 2024, in Bruno, SK.
2. Keep Fit and Knit will be hosted by the Kerrobert Chapter and will be held on May 14-16, 2024, in Macklin, SK.

Previously, the Executive approved an application from Mainline Chapter for Stitch'n'Quilt, however the specific dates were not available. This event will be held on Sept. 23-26th in Grenfell, SK.

The Executive was made aware that the dates for Provincial Golf and the Sask. Senior Fitness Games coincide. Unfortunately, the dates for Provincial STS Golf will not change.

If Chapters are interested in hosting events, please contact the Recreation Committee Chairpersons and the STS Office well in advance of the proposed dates. When considering to host events, please refer to Guideline 2.2.3 which refers to liability insurance.

To view upcoming recreation events on the STS website, click [here](#).

# Resolutions Committee Report

## Alan Laughlin, Don Gabel

The Resolutions Committee met and looked at submitted resolutions. After reviewing the resolutions, 25 were approved. One was rejected because it did not meet the criteria. The resolutions will be printed and debated by Delegates at the AGM in May.

The resolutions approved to date to be debated at 2024 AGM are included in the email sent to Chapter Presidents and posted on the STS website [here](#).