

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 2008

MARIE M. SMITH

December with shopping and all the preparations for Christmas can be very stressful. Make sure you take time to look after your health by getting plenty of rest (8 hours), proper diet and regular exercise. This is very important for caregivers and all seniors; also all age groups, even our teenagers who need to be reminded to take care of themselves.

By now you have received the fall mailing. Be sure to read all the articles and share them with your club. The reply to last year's brief is also enclosed. Have you taken time to phone Johnson Insurance for your out of province insurance medicare and a quote on your car and home insurance? Tell them you are a member of the USCO and your club name and number to see if Johnson Insurance is a saving for you as it was for me?

Ontario is making it easier for residents to move to another long-term care (LTC) home of their choice. New regulations under Ontario's long-term care home legislation will enable residents in different homes to switch places if the move is mutually desired. The highest priority will be given to residents who are seeking to be reunited with a spouse or partner. The next priority will be given to residents who are seeking admission to a LTC home that serves persons of their religion, ethnicity or language.

These changes may also encourage hospital patients, who are waiting for a LTC home bed, to accept a home that's not their first choice, knowing there's a greater opportunity to move to their first choice later on. This would make a hospital bed available sooner, improving the flow of patients throughout the hospital and reducing wait times.

Community Care Access Centres, which are responsible for admissions to LTC homes, will have the authority to facilitate moves when they become aware of a matching opportunity for two residents of two different LTC homes. As part of the 2008 budget, the total government investment for LTC homes increased to \$3.1 billion in 2008/09, an increase of 10.6 per cent over the 2007 budget.

The government will be redeveloping 35,000 older LTC beds over the next 10 years to ensure equitable access to quality LTC homes. For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only).

André Marin, Ontario Ombudsman, is conducting an independent investigation into the province's monitoring of long term care homes to ensure long term care homes and nursing homes are meeting the governments standards. Complaints can be filed by calling 1.800.263.1830 and online at www.ombudsman.on.ca as well as by mail or fax. Complaints are kept confidential and the ombudsman's investigations are impartial and independent of government or long term care authorities. I was just down at Queen's Park where Mario Sergio has requested an ombudsman for seniors. The USCO does pray this bill will pass through parliament.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, in partnership with the Ontario Long Term Care Association, the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors and the Institute for Safe Medication Practice Canada, is bringing together a team of leading experts in the field of medication management in long term care.

This task force will identify practical means to improve medication safety in long-term care facilities and provide an opportunity to learn from long-term providers with leading practices. Their mandate is to identify methods to maximize appropriate medication management practices in the cure of residents. They will collaborate with homes, practitioners, policy makers and other experts to build continuous medication safety improvement capacity. The task force began meeting in June and hope to have an interim report in six months. USCO will publish the final report when it is released.

You are probably aware that our new Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is David Caplan, who replaces George Smitherman. We all must work together to make David Caplan aware of the needs of our residents in long-term care homes.

I want to wish each of you a very happy and healthy Christmas and enjoy the season to the fullest. Celebrate the New Year and enjoy each day!

*Enjoy each day
and
God bless.*

