

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 2009

MARIE M. SMITH

Happy New Year everyone! We hope you enjoyed the Christmas season and are now ready for 2009. How the years slip by. A new year means a clean slate. This year resolve to be good to yourself and make 2009 the year of friendly living. As you plan your interesting January meeting could you have each member bring a guest so that they know about your club and what the USCO is doing for seniors? Most clubs enjoy a pot luck luncheon. It is just one idea to increase your membership. A new year's resolution could be to add membership in many different ways. Most clubs I visit ask how to increase membership so if you have any ideas, let all of us know.

A professor always used to say to our class that if we always did what we have always done, we will get what we always had. So let's try and do something different and see what the results will be in our clubs.

As you know, most fires occur at night so it is important that your smoke alarm is working. Did you change the batteries when you rolled your clock back? It is the responsibility of landlords to ensure their rental properties comply with the law. If you are a tenant of rental property and do not have the required number of smoke alarms, contact your landlord immediately. It is against the law for tenants to remove the batteries or tamper with the alarm in any way.



Shirlee Sharkey's report on long term care homes was released in June. Ms. Sharkey and her team report endorsed two main goals:

- ✓ Strengthen staff capacity for better care and,
- ✓ Establish a strong foundation for quality care and accountability for resident outcomes.

We are still asking for provincial staffing standards but it does recognize the need for more funding to strengthen staff capacity. The report recommends linking resources to resident outcomes through measurements of quality care and also staff satisfaction. The USCO is still asking for 3.5 – 4 hours of care per resident each day. In August the government announced \$23.3 million is being provided to create 873 new personal support worker positions and 2000 more nurses over the next four years.

People Caring for People, Shirlee Sharkey's report, can be found on the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care website. Let us know if you see any improvement in your long term care home in your area. Infection control in our long term care homes and hospitals is a big, big problem.

Poor hand hygiene is the top culprit. Superbugs that are resistant to a drug or antibiotic are strains of E.coli and viral influenza, vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE) and the staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) plus many other bugs. These bugs are resistant to regular treatment therefore controls are extremely necessary. Health care professionals and infection control specialists around the world are scrambling for a solution, but proper hand washing can not be overlooked. We must all do our part to help prevent the spread of these superbugs.

January

Three programs - the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI), the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) were each to have expired in March 2009. Extensions of the programs last October for five years will cost more than 1.9 billion.

The AHI funds the development of new affordable rental housing and provides subsidies for special needs tenants at a cost of \$125 million annually. The RRAP program offers grants and loans to renovate and preserve existing affordable housing at a cost of \$128 million annually. The HPS funds homelessness strategies in partnership with local communities at a cost of \$134 million each year.

The AHI has in the past received matching funding from the provincial government. We need to urge our local municipal governments to take advantage of these programs.

To stay motivated break big goals down into smaller steps and reward yourself for small successes along the way.

*Enjoy each day
and
God bless.*

