

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

APRIL 2009

MARIE M. SMITH

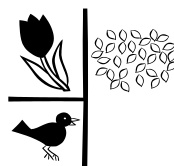
In my area it has been a long, snowy, cold winter. It is with open arms I welcome April with April showers to wash away all the snow. Each day I can hardly wait to peek into my garden to discover the bulbs poking their heads up through the warming soil, or did the squirrels get all my bulbs last fall!

Hopefully you have your resolutions into the office. Resolutions are due April 10th. Each club needs a voice with the government so they (the government) know the problems in your area. Don't forget more seniors per capita vote than any other age group so we have a lot of "grey power".

Last year Canada spent \$172 billion on health care. We must figure out a way to make our money go further without compromising the quality of care we have come to expect and need. The Health Council of Canada launched a forum designed to engage Canadians in a national dialogue about value for money, to open a conversation about how to get the biggest bang for the 'buck' in health care.

Join this important discussion at [www.Canadavalueshealth.ca](http://www.Canadavalueshealth.ca) where you will find the council's paper, *Value for Money: Making Health Care Stronger*. Visitors will be able to debate the issues, post comments, take part in surveys, watch videos, read what other people are saying.

Contrary to popular belief, aging and population growth are not the major causes of the rise in Canada's health care spending; half of the increase can be directly attributed to the accelerating use of the system. Apparently this is not a discussion about cutbacks or service reduction. It is about maintaining and enhancing the system by making smart spending choices.



The Health Council of Canada was created by the 2003 First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal. Their mandate is to monitor and report on the progress of health care renewals in Canada.

Councillors were appointed by participating provinces, territories and the Government of Canada. The Council is urging everyone to get involved. For further information contact Pierre Lachaine, Health Council of Canada at phone number 416.480.7085.

In Canada's Economic Action Plan, the federal government made a commitment to protect Canadians, including seniors, in difficult times by implementing some key measures:

1. Increase the Age Credit by \$1,000.00 for 2009 and beyond to allow eligible seniors to receive up to an additional \$150.00 in annual tax savings.
2. Provide seniors with \$200 million in tax relief by reducing the required minimum withdrawal amount for 2008 from Registered Retirement Income Funds by 25 percent, in recognition of the impact of the deterioration in market conditions on retirement savings.
3. Helping older workers and their families through these tough economic times by investing an additional \$60 million over three years in the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers and by expanding the number of eligible communities to include older workers in small cities.
4. Provide \$400 million over two years through the Affordable Housing Initiative for the construction of housing units for low income seniors.
5. Establish an independent Task Force to make recommendations on a cohesive national strategy on financial literacy for Canadians.

It will be interesting to see how these five strategies will play out.



Ontarians can now find health care close to home with the click of a mouse. Information about local health services is available in a single place: [www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions](http://www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions). Using this site people can find the nearest walk-in and after hours clinics, urgent care centers, family health teams, general practitioners and emergency rooms by typing in your postal code.

This service is being updated regularly. Ontarians can also call 1.800.445.1822 to register with the program and those who need care most will be helped first. Don't forget we can also call Tele-health Ontario at 1.866.797.0000, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you have questions on healthy eating call a registered dietitian free. Eat Right Ontario at 1.877.510.5102 or [www.ontario.ca/eatright](http://www.ontario.ca/eatright).

We would be interested in hearing how the Aging at Home Strategy is working in your area. It is the LHINS opportunity to change the way services and support are delivered and provide more equitable access for Ontario's diverse population. As I understand it, the LHINS are each running their own programs.

We want to wish you a very Happy Easter and hope you enjoy the time with family and friends. Do you have an Easter Parade or Easter egg hunt at your club? Be sure to take pictures and let us know all about your programs.

*Enjoy each day  
and  
God bless.*