



COAGB TELECONFERENCE FEBRUARY 12, 2021 Informal Summary 'At a Glance'

PRESENT: via teleconference Dave B., Doug W., Mary Beth L., Jan C., Tanya S., Sharron C., Lynn S., Ed. P., Randy H., Stephanie L-A. Colleen B., Muriel S., Mary-Diane, Ann M., Frank E.,

GUESTS: Nick Wilson, OPP, Karla Trudgen, The Meeting Place, Tobermory
Karla was invited to this meeting by Sharron C. who stated that she has been a great help promoting the Bruce Grey Seniors' Centre Without Walls initiative.

REGRETS: Sandra H., Loretta D., Wally H.

Tanya S., Chair of the COAGB welcomed all those on the call.
Karla Trudgen of the Meeting Place in Tobermory has been very helpful states Sharron C., in promoting the Seniors Centre Without Walls in Northern Bruce. Karla and has been preparing the monthly calendar and placing information on Facebook. Karla is interested in learning more about the Council on Aging Grey Bruce and was invited to the teleconference by Sharron C.

PRESENTATION: Speaker: Frank E.: Chair, Political Advocacy Unit #1, Retired Teachers of Ontario or RTO. RTO's mandate is to ensure that the retired teachers community lives retirement on their own terms. RTO is the largest member organization of its kind, with more than 80,00 members across the country who belong to this non-profit organization. RTO has 48 districts in Ontario. District #10 includes Grey and Bruce county and Dufferin, amongst others, and is Frank's district. Frank's presentation is based on one given to the Seniors Centre Without Walls with Sharron C.'s group. It is twofold and reflects the advocacy work of RTO Vibrant Voices, which focuses on three key issues including 1. the Senior's Strategy, 2. Geriatric Healthcare, and 3. Environmental Stewardship as well as on the research on seniors and social isolation during COVID-19 out of Women's College Hospital, in partnership with RTO.

PART A: RTO'S VIBRANT VOICES SENIORS STRATEGY: Issue: Frank stated that currently there is 1 senior for every 4 Canadians, thus making seniors the largest demographic. Consequently there is a need for seniors to speak up and demand accountability with a coordinated national senior's strategy that focuses on income security. 12% of senior families and 28.5% of single seniors qualify as low income. More needs to be done beyond Old Age Security. Defined benefits pensions are proven to make retirement secure. Some of the challenges include;

1. UNIVERSAL PUBLIC PHARMACARE: Canada is the only country in the world with universal health care that lacks universal drug coverage. We consistently pay among the highest prices for prescription drugs. 10% of citizens don't have adequate coverage to meet their needs. One in four households can't afford to fill their prescriptions.
2. SOCIAL ISOLATION: Meaningful connections with others keep us engaged and socially active. In contrast, social isolation can affect emotional, mental and physical health. That can happen to anyone, but is a risk after when people retire, lose a spouse, or experience decreased mobility or cognitive decline. Upwards of 30% of seniors are in danger of becoming socially isolated.
3. AT HOME: Most seniors want to stay in their own homes as long as possible. Health, finances, transportation, safety and other considerations can derail that dream.
4. RIGHTS FOR SENIORS: The rights of older people are embedded yet not specific in international human rights conventions. Such conventions cover economic, social, civil, cultural and political rights. Ageism and age discrimination are real. Protecting older people's rights will help them to lead dignified, secure lives, as equal members of society.

RTO members are asked to become advocates and encouraged to ask a series of questions of their politicians, noted on the website https://rtoero.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Vibrant-Voices-2020-Seniors-Strategy_En.pdf.

RTO'S VIBRANT VOICES & GERIATRIC HEALTH CARE

Frank addressed the issues associated with healthy aging, long-term care, and elder abuse as elements of geriatric healthcare in Canada. There was discussion amongst the group about the challenge of attracting doctors to geriatric care and the resulting shortage of geriatric doctors. Questions to ask politicians can be found at https://rtoero.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Vibrant-Voices-2020-Geriatric-Health-Care_En.pdf.

RTO'S VIBRANT VOICES & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP focuses on banning single-use plastics, common recycling standards, environmentally sustainable transportation and safeguarding the water supply and drinking water. Additional information and questions for politicians can be found at https://rtoero.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Vibrant-Voices-2020-Environmental-Stewardship_En.pdf.

PART B: RTO & RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ISOLATION ON SENIORS & COVID-19

"Rachel Savage, PhD, out of Women's College Hospital and her team well-known for their work on social isolation and loneliness in older adults partnered

with the Retired Teachers of Ontario to develop a list of suggestions on how to stay socially connected and designed a study to allow older Canadian adults to express exactly how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected them. The team also put together a carefully curated [list of resources](#) designed to provide guidance and assistance to caregivers during this very stressful and uncertain time.” In the social isolation study, 4879 participants were included. Results from the survey indicated concerns around getting supplies or groceries and access to health care, but benefits were also noted such as a slower pace of life during the pandemic. Data from the survey revealed that 28% of men experienced loneliness as compared to 40% women. Concerns about ageism were highlighted and social support was considered critical. There was a need to maintain routines and to create new ones, as well as the importance of limiting news consumption. Due to the seriousness of the virus and its variants, COVID fatigue is dangerous and seniors need to stay at home and stay the course. A lack of technological skills was indicated as a barrier for seniors to remote health care, particularly problems with the Internet in rural areas. One conclusion from the study is that we need to cross age demographics and bring various age groups together to support each other and do things together. The next phase of the research will include online interventions to create success. The research will be posted on the RTO website at <https://www.rtoero.ca>. Tanya S. thanked Frank for his presentation.

SLATE OF OFFICERS: Tanya S. read the proposed 2021-2022 Slate of Officers. The COAGB may nominate other members if so inclined. Elections will be held at the March 12, 2021 meeting via teleconference. Sharron C. asked to include a Member at Large position. David B. will look at the constitution for reference to creating this position.

WALLY H. & COAGB COMMUNICATIONS REPORT: Wally’s report was shared with the COAGB by Chair, Tanya S. and is attached to this ‘At A Glance’.

DAVID B. of BROCKTON (PINKERTON) & COAGB TREASURER’S REPORT. David reported that the Ontario Association of Councils on Aging (OACA) annual membership fee has been paid and the balance in the COAGB account is \$2101.91. David also spoke to the application for the Inclusive Community Grant, and Sharron C. asked that a copy be sent to her.

JAN C. of OWEN SOUND & HOUSING: Jan reported that she intends on participating in the Owen Sound Glassworks Co-op and eco-village discussion on February 24th regarding Aging in Place, and she purchased 46 acres of farm property for this developing project. Initial planning includes beginning with community gardens on the property to get the community involved. Detailed information about the Glassworks initiative can be found at <https://www.glassworks.coop/>. Jan stated that she would like to stay involved with Housing on the COAGB, but specific to the Glassworks project. She plans to

call Pam Mc. in the afternoon following this teleconference, to discuss the possibility of Pam taking on the broader housing portfolio on the COAGB.

ANN M. of OWEN SOUND: Ann reported on the CFUW Owen Sound & Area's presentation by Dr. Arra on the mass immunization plan for COVID-19 vaccines in Grey and Bruce county. Dr. Arra's talk was recorded at this event, and CFUW created a YouTube link, which was shared with members of the COAGB executive board and is available here for any other interested COAGB members and/or their SAC's. <https://youtu.be/7y-tCXQ8aBg>.

SHARRON C. of NORTHERN BRUCE PENINSULA: Sharron reported that the Bruce Grey Seniors' Centre Without Walls (SCWW) is growing in the number of participants who attend by phone call, Trivia Fun, a variety of speakers on various topics and Fun Seated Fitness. Sharron also noted that she is researching housing and Long Term Care needs using Veteran's data. She asked the focus question: How do we 'walk the talk' and take the information that Frank E. provided us with in his RTO presentation and move it forward? How do we become a grass roots voice for change? David B. asked if there was a limit on numbers for Bruce Grey's SCWW teleconference to participate in events and Sharon responded with the answer of up to 100 participants, toll free.

MERI-DIANE of MEAFORD: reported that the Meaford Municipal Council passed their approval for a new privately run (by the same company presently managing the current LTC home). The LTC facility is to be built on a closed public school site. There is a plan to consult seniors regarding the design of the building. Meri-Diane also referred to the 'Butterfly Model of Care' and more information on this may be found at <https://www.primacareliving.com/butterfly-model-of-care>. Frank E. added that the region of Peel has created a Butterfly approach to LTC, and suggested the COAGB visit the Peel region website at <https://www.peelregion.ca> to learn more. A general discussion ensued on LTC. Doug W. stated that in 2005 59% of LTC homes were private, and since then there has been a consistent call for increasing the nursing hours available to residents. That scheduled time per resident has dropped from an average of 2 1/2 hours to 2 hours, with a maximum of 6 minutes scheduled for care staff to get residents up, dressed and down to breakfast. Pam Mc. reported that the statistics reveal that the death rate in private LTC homes in Ontario are the highest in the country.

PAM Mc. of the TOWN OF BLUE MOUNTAINS: reported that 22 sessions a month are offered through their SCWW with over 200 participants attending. These sessions include an exercise program once a week, dementia information, a check in and chat option, information on tax benefits and credit, and a small ongoing support group for seniors dealing with grief, as well as a regular hour-long session on an open line to talk about elder abuse.

LYNN S. of GREY HIGHLANDS: reported that she is meeting with her local Senior's Advisory Committee (SAC) on Monday February 15/21. She applauded the presentation by Constable Nick Wilson on fraud and scams, etc. that impact seniors. This event was presented as a 'Lunch and Learn' project focusing on safety for seniors and was well received. There is interest in having a Zoom event not specific to Grey Highlands, and Lynn noted that the OPP in other areas could pick up on this.

ED P of DURHAM & MARKDALE'S SAC REP.: no report with the exception of mentioning that Constable Nick W.'s presentation was excellent, and the challenge of getting the information on fraud out to seniors without computers. Nick's presentation is available on the municipal website

RANDY H. of KINCARDINE SENIOR'S ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (KASAAC) reported on the Zoom meeting with the KASAAC group earlier this month where there was enthusiastic participation. The group is motivated to gain more traction later in the year ahead, and a local Councilor is interested in learning more about the KASAAC, and in sitting in on meetings. Randy thanked Wally H. for keeping the COAGB and SACs apprised with all pertinent communications, and noted that Wally's information keeps people engaged and interested in what's going on in the province and globally.

FRANK E. of RTO – no additional report beyond his RTO presentation

STEPHANIE L-A. of GREY COUNTY PLANNING: reported that Grey County remains interested in staying connected with Rockwood LTC expansion and the Grey County consultant regarding the Campus of Care model. Grey County is moving away from the conventional LTC model. The consultant has already connected with the COAGB. Stephanie also noted that Grey County is looking to proceed with the Age Friendly Report slated for 2021 and consultation with the COAGB is ongoing and Grey County will connect in the future with the COAGB again. Meri Diane asked Stephanie for an update on Grey County Transportation and Stephanie will bring back more information and an update to a future meeting of the COAGB.

COLLEEN B. of HOME & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES: Colleen reported on the new program initiated before Christmas called the 'Adopt a Grandparent' program. Students in primary classes in the Montessori School and Timothy Christian School (Owen Sound) are writing pen pal letters. Colleen called for grandparents who are willing to write one letter a month back to the students with everything provided including postage and a resource list of ideas as what to write about. She asked the COAGB to put the word out. Interested grandparents can contact the Coordinator of the 'Adopt a Grandparent' program at 519-372-2091. She is also hoping to connect with the local Women Institutes and Lynn S. will include the information in her column.

MARY BETH L. of GEORGIAN BLUFFS: no report

MURIEL S. of SOUTHGATE SAC: reported that first SAC meeting in a year took place with a full agenda, of which not all topics were covered. There were many questions around housing and Internet updates. The SAC used the township's GoTo software for their virtual meeting.

DOUG W. of ARRAN ELDERSLIE SAC & UNITED SENIOR CITIZENS OF ONTARIO (USCO) REP. reported that in Chesley just before Christmas a LTC resident (who had once participated in the Olympics in Japan) celebrated his 80th birthday and the town gave him a drive by birthday party. Doug also noted that once the lockdown is lifted, carpet bowling and curling, with social distancing measures in place, will be available again to seniors

GUESTS:

KARLA T. of THE MEETING PLACE, TOBERMORY: thanked the COAGB for the invitation to attend today's teleconference and stated that many of the issues discussed today are of personal interest. Karla has 4 years professional experience in LTC and first hand insights and opinions about LTC. She emphasized that we need to press the government for more home care and other options and a strong advocacy movement towards alternative models of long term care. A lengthy discussion ensued. Tanya extended a welcome to Karla to attend COAGB meetings at any time. Sharron C. offered to share today's Minutes with Karla.

CONSTABLE NICK WILSON: reported on the police presentations on fraud that are available to the seniors' community. Nick is putting together an information sheet with tips on how to protect us from becoming victims of fraud and he will send this resource to Lynn S. to distribute. Nick reported that 9 out of 10 seniors are safe from fraud, but for those who are victims, scam calls can be rerouted and difficult to trace and scammers can easily remain anonymous. The resource will become available in a week or so for distribution. Sharron C. noted that it's a challenge to encourage participants in the SCWW to teleconference because seniors are concerned about calling in due to a fear of the many possible scams and pranks going around. Lynn S. asked if Constable Wilson could attend more regularly the meetings of the COAGB

Mary Beth L. thanked Tanya for excellent job Chairing meeting

REMINDEES: Tanya asked Amber S, to give the COAGB a COVID-19 update, but Amber was unable to attend today's meeting because she has clear parameters around her job during this busy pandemic. She did report that there is an upcoming session on February 22nd via live stream that will be posted on YouTube. When the link becomes available Tanya will send it from Amber to Wally to post.

MEMBER AT LARGE: please reach out to Tanya and Wally if interested in this position instead of waiting until elections in March

The Grey Bruce Public Health Unit's website offers the opportunity to sign up for regular COVID-19 updates.

Grey Bruce is reopening after the lockdown starting next week. Tanya wished all well and looks forward to speaking with the COAGB again on Friday March 12th.