



## COAGB TELECONFERENCE

Date: Friday March 12, 2021

9:30 a.m.

### Informal Summary 'At a Glance'

**PRESENT:** via teleconference Tanya S., Wally H., Jan C., David B., Ann M., Sharron C., Lynn S., Pam Mc., Sandra H., Mary Beth L., Linda I., Sharon Mc., Meri-Diane C., Frank E., Muriel S., Ed P., Loretta D., Randy H., Doug W.,

**GUESTS:** Natalie Mehra, Executive Director, Ontario Health Coalition

**REGRETS:** Colleen B.

Tanya S., Chair of the COAGB, welcomed all those on the call. Ann M. introduced Natalie Mehra, Executive Director of the Ontario Health Coalition, as guest speaker to the COAGB.

**PRESENTATION:** by Natalie Mehra, Executive Director of the Ontario Health Coalition. Natalie began her talk by discussing the most recent report from the Ontario Health Coalition, published online today which reads: **RELEASE & REPORT: Almost 4,000 Dead in Long-Term Care as We Approach End of Wave 2: Wave 2 Deaths Exceed Wave 1.** She stated that data is unavailable on home care, as has been the case for the entire pandemic. There is plenty of information on hospitals and Long-Term Care (LTC) homes where tracking started immediately and where cases escalated at a rate of 500 to 600 cases per week, or almost 100 a day. The 2nd wave took longer to gain momentum and by December 2020 cases started shooting up the same way they did in April 2020. Natalie reported that by January 2021, one LTC resident per hour was dying in LTC homes and that this continued into mid February. Now new cases have leveled off, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave has been far more devastating than the 1<sup>st</sup> wave with double the deaths. She noted the false information present in the Public Health Ontario reports. Currently, states Natalie, 74 of 626 LTC homes are experiencing an outbreak. Although that number has come down significantly, the virus is still actively spreading. Natalie commented on the profound ageism evident in our health care system and that this pandemic has laid that bare in its cruelty for all to see. The realities in LTC cross every moral line in our society, says Natalie.

Natalie continued by saying that there are 956 cases of the UK variant in Ontario, and the South African and Brazilian variant numbers have stayed low, fortunately. We are currently at the beginning of the third wave, and it is a different pandemic now because the UK variant is far more contagious. In Ontario, states Natalie, just over 1 million single dose vaccines have been

administered. With fourteen and a half million people in Ontario, the slow rollout of the vaccine is now a major problem. Any claim that vaccine administration in LTC homes is finished is not true states Natalie. We need to force the government to spend the money they don't want to spend to address dire staffing shortages in LTC and home care and not enough staff to provide sound and safe care. We need to demand a plan from the provincial government, which reaches across the system's needs and includes much more stringent infection controls, (after controls broke down in ways they should not have during the pandemic).

Natalie ended her presentation by referring to the LTC Act of 2007, stating that it was a sincere Act to try to improve conditions, with all sorts of powers evident in it. The fundamental principle of the Act is that LTC should be a safe and secure environment, but this principle has been shattered. Public policy can no longer follow the will of 'For Profit' LTC homes, says Natalie, and real accountability needs to break the ties between the provincial government and the 'For Profit' homes.

At this point Doug W. of the COAGB noted that the USCO has been fighting these issues for over 20 years, and he expressed his appreciation for the work Natalie and the Coalition are doing. Doug spoke of an upcoming teleconference where he'd like to connect the president of the USCO with Natalie. Natalie agreed to this and provided her number below. Doug will ask president, Suzanne to give Natalie a call. Pam Mc. noted that LTC should be a major issue in the next provincial election, with the information Natalie has presented kept at the fore when it comes to vote.

#### ONTARIO HEALTH COALITION

Natalie Mehra, Executive Director: 416-230-6402.

Website: <https://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca>

Natalie will also send along the slides she spoke from today during the teleconference.

The Ontario Health Coalition relies on DONATIONS to do its work. Included in this summary is information on how to donate to the OHC here.

<https://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca/index.php/donate-now/>

Tanya, Chair of the COGB thanked Natalie for her powerful and comprehensive presentation.

#### SLATE OF OFFICERS: & ELECTIONS: 2021-2022 COAGB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Wally H. called for nominations 3 times.

Moved by: Wally H.

Seconded by: Doug W.

**That the COAGB Executive Committee nominations be closed.**

**Carried**

Wally read the proposed Slate of Officers.

Moved by: Wally H.

Seconded by: Sharon Mc.

**That the COAGB Slate of Officers for 2021-2022 stands.**

**Carried**

**COAGB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SLATE OF OFFICERS, April 1, 2021 to  
March 31, 2022**

Tanya Shute: Chair

Wally Halliday: 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair/Communications

Sharron Colter: 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair/Alternate OACA Rep

Frank Emptage: Secretary

David Bradley: Treasurer/OACA Rep

Tanya Shute/Wally Halliday: Past Co-Chairs

Randy Hughes: Member at Large

Wally H. thanked Jan C. and Ann M. for their contributions to COAGB. Jan C. is only stepping down from the Executive Committee, but will remain on the COAGB. Tanya S. congratulated all on the newly appointed Executive Committee and thanked all for their confidence in her leadership as Chair.

[WALLY H. COMMUNICATIONS REPORT: see attached report](#)

[DAVID B. of BROCKTON \(PINKERTON\) & COAGB TREASURER'S REPORT.](#)

Carryover from 2020	2201.91
OACA Membership Fee 2021	100.00 Receipt received
<b><u>Balance</u></b>	<b>2101.91</b>

[DAVID B. AS OACA REP](#) then reported on the **OACA (Ontario Association of Councils on Aging)**: OACA has been having monthly Strategic Planning sessions (Zoom) and are making good progress. The OACA has a Vision, Mission, Values and Goals in place and is now working on specific activities to achieve their Goals.

Currently the OACA has set up various committees including:

- an Executive Committee
- a Planning and Development Committee – I am on this committee and one of our tasks, is to develop a Tool Kit that will layout a road map of how to startup new Councils on Aging.
- A Communications Committee

The OACA has submitted a 60K\$ application for the “Inclusive Community Grant”, states David, with a focus on encouraging more small urban and rural communities to start their own Councils on Aging to promote Age Friendly Communities. In addition the OACA was asked to provide input into the MSAA’s Vaccine Task Force and how this task force can better support the rollout of Vaccine to seniors. Lillian Wells (President), Dominic Ventresca and Margaret Denton represented the OACA.

**JAN C. of OWEN SOUND:** reported that she has moved onto the Board of Glassworks and recently attended their “wonderful presentation”. Jan will have a more detailed report for the COAGB after Glasswork’s next board meeting. Jan clarified that she is staying on the COAGB, but stepping down from the Executive Committee. She also stated that she will be getting the Owen Sound Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) active again and will be contacting Sharon Mc. to discuss a plan of action. Finally Jan said that she was very appreciative of this morning’s presentation by Natalie Mehra.

**PAM Mc. of the TOWN OF BLUE MOUNTAINS:** reported that the New Horizons Grant was approved for over \$20,000 for SCWW next year. Pam added that the phone in Grief Support group has begun, with 6 participants registered. Work on the prevention of abuse of older adults is ongoing, and Canada Revenue is presenting its 2<sup>nd</sup> session this week on taxes, credits etc. Pam added that the CRA have been offering sessions on the phone, and have been very accommodating with the support they provide. Pam will send the COAGB CRA’s contact information.

**LYNN S. of GREY HIGHLANDS:** no report

**SANDRA H., ALZHEIMER SOCIETY:** reported that there are no new updates, with the exception of a notable increase in participation in the educational component of the learning series that they run. Her team is well, states Sandra, and appreciating the flexibility of working from home.

**LORETTA D.:** reports that there is not a lot new at VON and that most staff is still working from home. Discussion is ongoing as to what VON will look like in the future after the pandemic. As well, Loretta noted that there is a free video course available on line on dementia and Loretta will send the link on to the COAGB.

Finally, Loretta commented that she is pleased that the COAGB is keeping the teleconference and Zoom options open for meetings as this format has become the new way of the future.

**MARY BETH L. of GEORGIAN BLUFFS:** reported that the local church has opened up again, but that she hasn't initiated any meetings until all members are vaccinated.

**SHARRON C. of NORTHERN BRUCE PENINSULA:** reported that the Bruce Grey Seniors' Centre Without Walls' (BGSCWW) micro grant ends March 31, 2021 and the final report is due April 30, 2021. Sharron is phoning participants (vs. emailing to include those without a computer) to evaluate the program using 13 statements and an overall statement about the program. Many of the procedures in place for BGSCWW have protected the vulnerable, the lonely, and the seniors living alone because they know Sharron and she them and they are in the safety and comforts of their homes. The participants strongly agree overall about the benefits of the BGSCWW. Final results will be shared in April. Sharron also reported on a \$2,000.00 grant cheque received from the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula to fund the BGSCWW after March 30th. She also noted that the executive of the Northern Bruce Peninsula Community Support Advisory Action Committee voted unanimously to move forward with the April 2021 Community Fundraiser, which will be a 'hands-off fundraiser' as any donation will go directly to the recipient organization. This community fundraiser encourages people to donate to any organization of choice. Advertising the event will have to be by e-mail or postal mailings due to pandemic restrictions. Sharron asked that the COAGB send information on the fundraiser to their contacts. Sharron added that the NBPCSAAC executive is looking into other possible donors or sponsors for the BGSCWW to continue until March 2022. Finally, Sharron reported that she will invite M.P. Alex Ruff and M.P.P. Bill Walker to answer some specific advance questions that have been sent in prior to their speaking date. Doug W. said that the information from Natalie's presentation would inform powerful questions for these politicians.

**SHARON Mc., ACTIVE LIFESTYLES CENTRE (ALC) REP, OWEN SOUND:** reported that the ALC is open again for programs with under 10 participants and that the Board of Directors are meeting there in person. Sharon added that there is a new Senior Peer Support Leader for ASK, Dave Wynne, and suggested he be invited as a guest speaker to the COAGB. Sharon also noted that work is ongoing at the ALC to meet the deadline of March 2022 for the Seniors ASK grant.

**LINDA I. SOUTH BRUCE PENINSULA:** reported that the recent grant money is slotted for the Seniors Centre and is not available to a SCWW program that she has been trying to start up. Sharron C. invited Linda and all those interested, to

join the NBSCWW. Linda noted that they have been participating and will talk to Sharron after today's meeting. Linda added that the Community Foundation Grey Bruce grant applications are online this year, and questioned whether grant deadlines have passed. Tanya S. offered to follow-up on this and report back to Linda.

**MURIEL S. of SOUTHGATE SAC:** reported that a SAC meeting is scheduled for April, and so is back on track with their meeting schedule. Senior's housing is an ongoing agenda item but the Southgate CAO was unable to attend the February meeting so there is no update. Another local group has been formed concerning homelessness and housing and this group has sought input from Tanya S. and others. The housing group's next step will be to approach Municipal Council to advocate for affordable and also rent geared to income housing. This group's efforts would be inclusive of seniors' needs.

**DOUG W. of ARRAN ELDERSLIE SAC & UNITED SENIOR CITIZENS OF ONTARIO (USCO) REP:** confirmed that he will connect the USCO President with Natalie Mehra of the Ontario Health Coalition. Doug also reported that in Chesley carpet bowling and curling are now active and all safety measures are in place, but that any formal meetings will not occur until vaccinations are completed. Vaccinations began Wednesday for those 80 and over said Doug.

**MERI-DIANE of MEAFORD:** reported that Meaford remains locked down and so the SAC has not been able to meet or access other programs. Frank E. has sent SCWW calendars to the Meaford library to help keep all informed. Meri-Diane commented on the LTC home slated to be built in Meaford and said that a small group plan to keep in touch to monitor its progress.

**FRANK E. of RTO & SECRETARY, COAGB:** reported that the RTO Grey Bruce Spring Newsletter is ready to be published and it includes a Call for Action to RTO's 1600 members to add their voice through a letter-writing campaign on the 3 key advocacy issues noted at the previous COAGB. Frank stated that 'We must not let age define us. We must define our age' and he shared his letter with the COAGB. RTO plans to make these 3 issues an election focus across all levels of government. He also added that he's sent the ALC's ASK poster to RTO, and that he is continuing with his presentations in collaboration with Sharron C. Finally Frank reported that he has been working with the local library to ensure resources for seniors are in place.

**RANDY H. of KINCARDINE SENIOR'S ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (KASAAC):** thanked Wally H. for his confidence in him as COAGB's Member at Large and stated that he was impressed with Natalie's presentation and that it was humbling to see all she has done. He's looking forward to more presentations to keep us motivated. Randy reported on the discussions with the SAC and the municipal councilor via Zoom, which are focused on local transportation needs for seniors and the community at large. LTC and home care

remain major concerns for the SA, but the task of ensuring Municipal Council considers it a priority is a challenge. Randy noted that vaccines for 80+ are in rollout stage.

**ED P of DURHAM & MARKDALE'S SAC REP.:** commented on the interesting COAGB meeting today. Ed reported that the SAC has been keeping track of its members by phone. He also stated that David B. is familiar with the challenges related to a specific home care case that has been brought forward, and the challenges that those over 90 years of age receive home care as a free service, but those under 90 are required to pay \$150 bring.

**TANYA S., GREY HIGHLANDS & COAGB CHAIR:** commented that conversations about housing can be frustrating because of the priority placed on for profit models, making affordable housing unavailable. She spoke of a proposed solution whereby a certain percentage of housing development was approved at market value, as well as a percentage designated to subsidized housing developments, all with equally high standards. The same concept applies to LTC says Tanya, whereby set standards and accountability are the expectation, but the reality is that it all comes down to available resources and the people needed to oversee the maintenance of those standards. In the end it's the taxpayers paying for LTC inspectors, so the public needs to be aware and willing to pay their part as well states Tanya. She then reported on the COVID vaccine clinic that took place at Southeast Grey Community Health Centre where 600 seniors 80+ years old were vaccinated recently. The clinic was well run and received very positive reviews. Tanya also commented on the new hire for ALC's **Seniors ASK program**, Dave Wynne. He is based out of Saugeen Shores and has a decorated work history. Seniors ASK was in Markdale 10:30 AM Friday March 6<sup>th</sup> and then will be in **Dundalk** on **Wednesday March 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM at the Erskine Centre**. Dave Wynne is looking for volunteers, and determining interest in the program at this March 24<sup>th</sup> event, so if interested in driving to this on-site, socially distanced ASK event, rsvpTanya through her email address.

**ANN M. of OWEN SOUND:** no report

**REMINDERS:** NEXT COAGB MEETING: FRIDAY APRIL 9, 2021 at 9:30 AM. Note: Tanya is not available for this meeting, as well as the September 2021 meeting.