

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Communique #1 -- November 2011
Vi L., Standing Committee Chair

Here we are, just a few days away from the first Sunday of Advent. At last I was able to put together my first communique and hope that you will find it informative. My report will be in two parts - "Education" and then "Health".

EDUCATION

1. The new premiere for Alberta, Allison Redford, keeps her promise to return \$107 million to the education budget. School boards will be receiving funds soon.
2. On November 15th the opportunity for public input to review the proposed Education Act was announced and an invitation has been extended to all of us to study the first component called "Our Children, Our Future: Getting It Right" which will be held on the following dates:

Date	Location
Saturday, November 26	Edmonton
Tuesday, November 29	Red Deer
Thursday, December 1	Calgary
Saturday, December 3	Bonnyville
Monday, December 5	Lethbridge
Wednesday, December 7	Fort McMurray
Friday, December 9	Peace River

For more information, and to register, please follow this link:

<http://ideas.education.alberta.ca/engage/current-initiatives/education-act-getting-it-right>. Following submission of registration, participants will receive a confirmation. If you have any questions, please contact the project team by email at Engage.Education@gov.ab.ca or by phone at 780-422-1484 (dial 310-0000 first for toll-free access in Alberta). Space is limited. Other forms of communication will be available. Check the website noted above.

3. **The Alberta Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) will be hosting the biennial "Catholic Conference" in Calgary on March 9 - 10, 2012.** This conference is designed to give all Catholics, from all walks of life an opportunity to come together and pray and celebrate their faith. The Conference theme is *"Open Wide the Doors..." Welcome the New Evangelization.* I will advise you of updates when they are received. Also check your local parish bulletins for updates.

HEALTH

1. At the 91st National Convention, held in Toronto, August 14-17, 2011, two resolutions under Education & Health were passed.

- *Resolution 2011.03 - National Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Registry*
- *Resolution 2011.04 - Caffeine in Energy Drinks*

Check the Fall 2011 issue of *The Canadian League* magazine for the action plans.

2. Three more *proposed resolutions* were – raising awareness of colorectal cancer and the importance of early detection; clean, potable water for First Nations communities; and limiting the sodium in food were referred directly to the education and health standing committee. Below is the updated information and action plan(s).

Raising awareness of colorectal cancer

Statistics support the fact that early detection of colorectal cancer is directly related to a significant reduction in mortality. This cancer has few or no symptoms in the early stages, but there are some signs that raise a red flag:

- blood in stool or stools that are narrower than usual
- change in bowel movements – diarrhea, constipation or a feeling that the bowel does not empty
- stomach discomfort and/or vomiting
- unexplained weight loss
- fatigue

ACTION

1. Encourage members to make an appointment with their doctor to have an immediate checkup should they notice any of these symptoms. Early intervention is of utmost importance as colorectal cancer can be cured if diagnosed at an early stage. After age 50, members should have a colorectal screening every two years. If a parent or sibling had colorectal cancer there is an increased risk.
2. Please encourage members to write to members of their provincial legislatures and members of parliament urging them to increase funding for education which would reflect the importance of testing and screening for colorectal cancer.

Limiting the sodium in our food

Sodium is an essential element that is required **in small amounts** for normal functioning of the body. The maximum daily intake is 2,300 mg. The Adequate Intake level recommended is 1,500 mg per day for persons aged 9-59 and less for those older or younger. Excessive amounts of sodium have been shown to cause chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, a major cause of cardiovascular diseases that are a burden on health care budgets.

ACTION - Please suggest the following actions to councils in your province:

- a) Write letters to the prime minister and the federal minister of health, with a copy to the local MP, urging the federal government to act immediately to impose

regulatory standards governing the amount of sodium manufacturers use in packaged and processed foods products.

- b) Write letters asking for improvements to the current nutrition labelling system in Canada to facilitate consumer use, particularly as it relates to sodium.
- c) Encourage parish councils to invite dietitians to address members with respect to proper amounts of sodium intake and how it relates to health issues.

This is just a small excerpt of the communique regarding these proposed resolutions. If you wish a complete report go to:

<http://www.cwl.ca/index/education/ehcomm4.htm>

- 2. The Catholic Health Alliance of Canada applauds the recommendations of the all-party Parliamentary Committee as an important step toward improving palliative end-of-life care in Canada. For the full report and recommendations go to: www.chac.ca. Click the word 'English' or 'French' and under "NEWS" click on: *November 17, 2011 – Catholic Health Alliance applauds Parliamentary Committee Report on palliative care.*
- 3. Remember to get your yearly influenza immunization. Be sure to check your local community newspaper for the schedule or just call the health and wellness centre near you.
- 4. Just for your information. *Celiac Disease* is a medical condition in which the absorptive surface of the small intestine is damaged by a substance called gluten. Although statistics are not readily available, it is estimated that 1 in 133 persons in Canada are affected by celiac disease. I was diagnosed with Celiac on April 2010. It was a bit of a shock as I was not even aware that I had symptoms, but I am glad that I know, so that I took the necessary steps to control it. Perhaps at your next checkup, ask your doctor to include a blood screening test. There is no cure for Celiac but it is manageable with a gluten-free diet. For more information go to: www.celiac.ca.

May God's blessing be with you and your family this Christmas and may the new year bring you peace, joy and good health!!