



The Catholic Women's League of Canada
ALBERTA MACKENZIE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

ONE HEART
VOICE
MISSION

**Meeting with MLAs
April 12, 2016**

On April 12, 2016, President Cathy B. and Vice-President/Spiritual Development Standing Committee Chair Judy L. joined me in a meeting with the Honourable Sarah Hoffman, Minister for Health and the Honourable Lori Sigurdson, Minister for Seniors and Housing, and members of their staff. The Ministers listened carefully to our concerns and appreciated the work of the CWL.

The main areas of concern the Provincial Council brought to the ministers were our Provincial Initiative for an Independent Seniors' Advocate, and Physician Assisted Death. We would have liked to bring up more issues and did briefly discuss Resolution 2014.04 Income Qualification for Alberta Dental and Optical Benefits for Single Seniors with Assistant Deputy Minister, Seniors and Housing.

Judy did an excellent job presenting our Seniors' Advocate Initiative, including the petitions, and very good discussion followed. According to Minister Lori Sigurdson, the Provincial Government is intending to begin recruitment of a dedicated Seniors' Advocate who would report directly to the Seniors and Housing Minister. Other seniors issues discussed included how facilities handle complaints and the difficulty seniors may have navigating the Health and Seniors websites. When asked if there is a possibility of a Seniors Act, we were told it was not on the agenda right now.

As for physician assisted dying, we expressed our grave concerns for physicians who may be forced to refer for assisted death against their personal consciences. Minister Hoffman told us that she is in contact with colleagues in other provinces and all are working to comply with and respect the Supreme Court's decision. Objection and access are important issues. The government has received almost 11,000 responses to the survey. Palliative care is another issue and Minister Hoffman thanked the CWL for our advocacy and volunteerism.

Assistant Deputy Minister John Cabral advised us that our numbers were out of date in regards to Single Seniors Optical and Dental Benefits. An income of \$26,400 or less ensures seniors receive 100% coverage for Dental and Optical benefits. Benefit levels begin to decrease starting at \$26,401 and phase out completely at \$31,676. He also suggested that using a median income rather than average income is a better reflection of income for the majority of seniors.

This concludes my report.

Betsy F.
Provincial Legislation Standing Committee Chair