



# Sunburst

The Newsletter for Alberta Seniors United Now

**3rd Quarter 2009  
Issue 17**

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## Sun wants to hear about your experiences and concerns.

As the SUN board of Directors prepares for a September planning session, they are requesting membership input. SUN consistently strives to be a member driven organization. Write or email us with your suggestions.

For your convenience we have enclosed a colored response form in conjunction with the membership renewal form.

### Some Thoughts for your Consideration.

What concerns you the most about your future? Healthcare, Transportation, Long-term Care, Aging in Place, Finances, Wills & Estates, Guardianship.

What problems have you or your family had with the healthcare system, transportation, home maintenance/renovations/modifications.

What are the positive and negative circumstances that you are presently facing that affect your ability to sustain a comfortable standard of living.

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Annual Membership Fees  
 \$15.00 individual    \$25.00 Couple  
 \$100.00 Group/Affiliate organization

Lifetime Membership  
 \$150.00 individual    \$250.00 Couple  
 N/A Group/Affiliate organization

**ARE YOU DUE FOR RENEWAL???**  
**SEE PAGE 12**

## Presidents Report:

I am pleased to report that Alberta Seniors United Now held a very successful Annual General Meeting on Wednesday April 22, 2009. Our keynote speaker was Pam Whitnack, Alberta Health Services Chief Operating Officer, Rural & Community Services. She delivered a very informative talk on the current health care system, as it affects seniors, and the future directions Alberta Health Services is taking.

We were also fortunate to have Mr. James Darwish speak on the subject of the joint lawsuit being pursued against the Alberta Government over the Government overcharging for support service costs thru co-insurance premiums. We were pleased that Mr. Ken Allred MLA St. Albert & Mr. Doug Elniski MLA Edmonton-Calder were in attendance. Also attending of note were Dr. Brian Staples of SALT and Mr. David Eggen of Friends of Medicare. The business of SUN was conducted in a very orderly fashion at a great facility, The Platinum Center in St. Albert. Over 140 SUN members were in attendance and participated in a respectful manner and enjoyed an awesome lunch with the opportunity to network with other members, the new Board of Directors and Executive Director Jacqueline Biollo.

The serious issue that has taken the majority of the Boards time is the Alberta Pharmaceutical Plan Proposal. We were opposed to the implementation of an income threshold as it creates a two-tier health system and violates the principal of universality of Health Care. I am pleased to advise that SUN with our partners have been successful in having pharmaceutical Income thresholds abandoned by the government.

In looking forward, the next challenge facing SUN is the board is receiving information that Long-Term care Co-Insurance premiums may rise to \$100.00 per day or \$36,500.00 per year. This is an unacceptable increase and you can be assured that SUN board will be actively opposing such a proposal.

I am pleased to be re-elected as your President and will continue to advocate on your behalf and for all seniors in the Province of Alberta.

Gordon Voth,  
President

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## Interesting Research

### **Seniors stay healthier when they live with spouse**

Elderly, community-dwelling men and women appear more likely to obtain preventive health care when they live with their spouse, as opposed to living alone or with an adult child, researchers report in the American Journal of Public Health.

### **Volunteering may increase retirees' lifespan:**

Volunteering, may improve health outcomes by expanding retirees' social networks, increasing their access to resources and improving their sense of self-worth.

## Executive Director Report:

After recently attending the Greying Nation Conference, I was reminded of ‘**Keeping Ahead of the Wave**’. But what does that really mean, and how can organizations such as SUN, or their membership, put that philosophy into practice? From my perspective that includes *reframing the situation*; appreciating that we need to challenge the government of the day to find workable solutions, advocate for change, and reduce voter apathy when elections are called. I have been humbled by your stories, your drive and determination, your research on issues, and your support of other seniors in and around your community. There is strength in numbers, and with SUN’s administrative help, we wish to thank, applaud, and encourage you to continue writing to your local MLAs... let your voices be heard. Over the past six months, issues of importance to you have broadened (as outlined in the chart below). As referenced on the front page of this newsletter, we are asking for your feedback. The Board of Directors will be reviewing their strategic plan and priorities come the fall of 2009 and using statistics such as these to guide their decision making process.

These statistics represents members concerns brought to the attention of SUN.

Pharmaceutical	11%	Healthcare	16%
Advocacy	21%	Chapters/Volunteers	21%
Inter-agency relations	9%	Utilities	5%
Housing/Thresholds	5%	Legal	7%
Taxes	3%	Transportation	2%

September will also bring the launch and reintroduction of our **Information/Speakers Series** (and Chapter Development). Information regarding dates/times/location and keynote speakers will be forthcoming.

As some of you take comfort under your favorite oak tree, on the deck by some water, or in a hammock with your favorite book and a glass of cold iced tea, we wish you the very best of health and happiness with friends and family. Our work will continue throughout the summer, preparing for meetings and letters of correspondence with elected officials, stakeholders, inter-agency partners, and members meetings.

Regards,  
Jacqueline Biollo – Executive Director

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## SUN offers their Congratulations

### **Grimshaw New Horizons Drop-In Center - SUN Group members Minister of Seniors Recognition for Exceptional Service to Seniors**

The Grimshaw New Horizons Drop-In Centre has just been awarded the above recognition and the Minister citation read as follows: "The centre organizes and offers crib tournaments, serves lunches and offers monthly adult wellness clinics. The centre offers seniors many activities, including a group that makes quilts for charitable groups and fundraises for the centre, monthly meetings at the centre for the Lac Cardinal Pioneer museum, and cooking classes with tips on how to cook ethnic dishes and practice barbecue safety. Each year, the centre works closely with the Town of Grimshaw Community Services Department to implement programs for seniors. Programs include the Seniors Cardia Challenge and Fitness, and the Seniors Snow Removal Program."

Our members are proud of this recognition and thank the Town of Grimshaw Community Services Advisory Board for its nomination.

For further information, please contact Huguette Ropchan at 780-332-1075, Executive Secretary.

Excerpt from Alberta's New Pharmaceutical Strategy for Seniors - DOA **"Dumped On Again"**

The three levels of premiums are 50%, 75% and 100%, of the rates the government has set for the Blue Cross Non-group Plan. However, the government also plans to triple the premium rates for this plan by the time the new seniors' plan kicks in on July 1, 2010.

**Alberta Blue Cross Non-Group Annual Premium Rates**

<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>Single</b>	<b>Family</b>
Current	\$246.00	\$492.00
July 1,2009	\$492.00	\$984.00
July 1,2010	\$762.00	\$1,416.00

A 25% or 50% discount on premium rates the government plans to increase by 300% is not much of a break. Once again, the government's approach is essentially one of privatization, at the expense of our public health system and our more vulnerable groups. While the provision of free prescription drugs to low-income seniors is a smart move, many middle-income seniors are going to find these premium rates unaffordable. Even the lowest premium rate is about 50% higher than the same coverage currently costs, and that ignores the cost of the co-pay and the numerous non-prescription and uncovered medications that seniors often require. The middle premium rate for drugs alone is approximately equal to the Alberta Health Care premium rate that was discontinued for all Albertans on January 1, 2009 and was eliminated for Alberta's seniors before that. Healthy Albertans of modest income, including seniors, will tend to opt out of this optional plan because the premium rates are well in excess of the actual cost of the drugs they require. In doing so, however, they will be gambling that they are not going to be hit by a chronic condition, because opting back in involves a three- month waiting period before coverage begins. A proper pharmacare plan should not be an invitation to gamble. Prescription drugs are part of preventative medicine, and putting financial barriers in the way of people obtaining the medications they require is shortsighted. They end up seriously ill in the emergency room and frequently have to be admitted to hospital where, under the terms of the Canada Health Act, the medicine they require is freely available to them. Such treatment in acute care hospitals will cost far more than any money saved by altering the current drug plans. Middle-income seniors do not begrudge free prescription drugs for their low income peers, but they do feel this plan betrays those who have carefully planned and saved for their retirement, confident that the current, long-standing premium-free seniors plan would be available for them. Minister Liepert's view, however, is that seniors "should not have a sense of entitlement simply because they turn sixty-five." Universality is a key principle of health care coverage. What the government doesn't seem to understand is that seniors don't want to be divided into income categories. During our working lives and even in retirement, we have purchased supplementary health care insurance with fixed coverage, a fixed deductible, and a fixed premium; income doesn't enter into it. MLAs of all people should understand that; they all enjoy a generous, subsidized, supplementary health care plan that covers a lot more than just prescription drugs, and they all pay the same flat rate, regardless of income. And that subsidized plan continues for five years after they leave the legislature, or until they turn seventy.

**Now that's what I call a sense of entitlement!**

**Seniors Action & Liaison Team  
Brian Staples Chair-SALT 780-466-8042**

The new seniors' drug plan, • **effective July 1, 2010**, will be a premium-based program with optional registration

Taxable income will be based on the amount found on line 260 of the senior's 2009 tax return.

### Family income

Taxable Income	Premium	Co-payment
\$0-\$24,000	\$0	\$0
\$24,001 - \$48,000	\$0	20% of each prescription's cost up to \$15
\$48,001 - \$72,000	\$59.00 per month	20% of each prescription's cost up to \$15
\$72,001 - \$96,000	\$88.50 per month	20% of each prescription's cost up to \$15
\$96,001 or more	\$118.00 per month	20% of each prescription's cost up to \$15

### Single income

Taxable Income	Premium	Co-payment
\$0 - \$12,000	\$0	\$0
\$12,001 - \$24,000	\$0	20% of each prescription's cost up to \$15
\$24,001 - \$36,000	\$31.75 per month	20% of each prescription's cost up to \$15
\$36,001 - \$48,000	\$47.62 per month	20% of each prescription's cost up to \$15
\$48,001 or more	\$63.50 per month	20% of each prescription's cost up to \$15

**The plan is optional. If you choose to enroll at a later date, there will be a three month waiting period.**

### How is my income determined?

Your income will be based on the amount you provided on Line 260 of your 2009 tax return—your taxable income.

### How will eligibility for a reduced premium be determined?

Premium and co-payment amounts will be based on your taxable income as reported on Line 260 of your tax return. Full or partial premium reduction will be provided to lower-income seniors. Seniors will need to authorize Canada Revenue Agency to release this information to Alberta Health and Wellness.

**What will change?**

The seniors' drug plan will become a premium-based plan. Premium and co-payment amounts will be based on income level, with seniors whose income is below a certain level receiving either:

- Coverage with no premium and no co-payments.
- Coverage with co-payments only.
- Coverage with co-payments and a partially reduced premium.

**How will I register for the new seniors' drug plan?**

Over the next 12 months, Alberta Health and Wellness will provide you with more information about the new seniors' drug plan including registration details.

The existing plan remains in effect until **June 30, 2010**.

**Do I have to participate in the new seniors' drug plan?**

No, the plan is optional. You will have the freedom to choose whether or not you wish to participate. A three month waiting period will apply to seniors who choose to participate at a later date.

**When does the new seniors' drug plan take effect?**

July 1, 2010.

**What happens if I want to enroll, but choose not to disclose my annual income?**

If you don't provide your taxable income, you will be responsible for the entire monthly premium amount.

**How will I pay my premiums through the new seniors' drug plan?**

Information will be provided to you in the coming months.

**If I have to pay premiums, why would I want to participate in this plan?**

If you have ongoing prescription drug needs, the new seniors' drug plan provides good value. For the majority of seniors, the cost of your premiums will still be far less than the cost of purchasing drugs without such coverage.

**I have other drug coverage through a retiree or other private plan. Will benefits be coordinated between the new seniors' drug plan and my other drug coverage?**

Yes, eligible drug expenses will be coordinated between the plans to maximize your benefits.

**What drug products are covered?**

Drugs listed in the *Alberta Health and Wellness Drug Benefit List* will continue to be provided. The current list can be accessed on the Internet at [www.health.alberta.ca/AHCIP/drug-benefit-list.html](http://www.health.alberta.ca/AHCIP/drug-benefit-list.html).

**Will the pharmacy have access to my income information?**

No.

**How will my pharmacist know what to charge me?**

The process used by pharmacies will be the same process used today. You will present your card to enable the pharmacy to validate your eligibility. The system will calculate how much you will be charged, and you will pay the appropriate co-payment amount.

**Sherwood Park Chapter...****Quarterly Activity Summary**

The Sherwood Park Chapter is now firmly established. The first meeting was held on Tuesday Mar31/09 @ Festival Place. A tremendous turnout occurred with over 150 seniors attending this meeting. Following this successful inaugural meeting, the newly elected executive organized two chapter meetings, the first was held May 27, 2009 @ Bethel Lutheran Church, the 40 members in attendance were treated to an informative presentation on elder care in nursing homes by guest speaker Carol Wodak. On June 29, 2009 the Chapter hosted guest speaker Ruth Adria of the Elder Advocates of Alberta, her enlightening presentation on elder abuse in regards to trusteeship and guardianship was appreciated by the members in attendance. The chapter will be manning an information table at the Sherwood Park Mall Wide registration on Friday August 21 & Saturday August 22. **Volunteers are needed for three hour shifts.**

The Sherwood Park Chapter Executive are busy planning for the fall chapter meetings and with the support of the local members the chapter will continue to grow and will become a strong voice for seniors in the Sherwood Park community.

We need **your involvement** to have a successful chapter.

For further info contact Gary Hanson @ 780-467-3235

**St. Albert Chapter...****Quarterly Activity Summary**

Our Chapter meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month except July, August and December. Elections were held in March/09 and the new executive includes Dick Tansey (Chair) Ireen Slater (Vice Chair) Doreen Chopp (Treasurer) and Dave Walsh (Telephone Chair) and Joanne Kells (volunteer secretary). Our Executive continues to try and keep our membership informed on any progress on the identified local issues which include property tax, user fees, utility costs and transportation.

We are pleased to report progress on the Property Tax Deferment Plan the St Albert Chapter initiated many months ago. Which is now being pursued by the SUN Board to the Provincial Government. We are especially pleased to report The City of St Albert city council recently passed a motion to have the Alberta Union of Municipalities Association (AUMA) debate this plan with a view to having them present it to the Government. We also keep our members informed on a number of important issues including proposed changes to Health Care benefits, changes to Blue Cross Pharmaceutical benefits and to any other related matters

Our group members have also been active, with some recently attending the appeals hearing in support of the outstanding Class Action Law Suit relative to obscene increased fees for long term care facilities. In June members Bert McNutt, Sophie Chipluk, Dick Tansey and Ireen Slater represented SUN at the pancake breakfast held during Seniors Week at the Seniors Centre. Over the past months we have enjoyed several guest speakers including Noel Summerville of PIA, addressing Pharmaceutical and Long Term Care Strategies; Laura Pawlechko, Information Officer for Alberta Seniors and Community Support; Leanne MacMillan of FSCC and Leslie MacMillan, St Albert Seniors Centre Director, speaking on the St Albert Seniors working group. We also had our SUN Executive Director, Jacqueline Biollo, speak to us in June, providing us with an overview of the SUN Boards planned initiatives. Be sure to join us for our next meeting on Sept 28/09

**Frequently Asked Membership Questions****How do I join SUN?**

Contact the SUN office @ 780-449-1816 or via email @ [unitenow@telus.net](mailto:unitenow@telus.net)

Membership applications are also available on our website [seniorsunitednow.citymax.com](http://seniorsunitednow.citymax.com)

**I can't attend meetings or no meetings held in my area so how can I help SUN?**

Simply being a current member is the first step; volunteers are needed in all areas of the province, also helping to chair or organize a chapter in your area.

**Interested in starting a chapter in your community?**

What does it take? How do you start a chapter? What is the benefit to having a local chapter?

Contact the SUN office: our Board of Directors will help your community chapter be successful.

Excerpt of letter sent to:

Minister of Health and Wellness Ron Liepert

C.C.. Premier Ed Stelmach

C.C. Seniors Minister Mary Anne Jablonski

May 19, 2009

The Board of Directors of Alberta Seniors United Now commend you on the changes you have made to the Alberta Pharmaceutical Plan to eliminate thresholds. We are however concerned that you have replaced thresholds with a premium plan that is income related.

At our general meeting, held on April 22, 2009 the membership of Alberta Seniors United Now passed a motion "to oppose the use of thresholds or premiums for seniors and to recommend the implementation of a no cost Pharmaceutical plan." This motion was passed unanimously.

It is the position of the 2554 SUN members that Income based premiums creates a two tier pharmaceutical plan. The implementation of premiums is a form of taxation, imbedded in the Health system, which is not acceptable. Health care is a right for all Albertans and in particular seniors. We believe that the pharmaceutical plan should be at no cost for seniors.

We respectfully request that you reconsider and cancel the implantation of an income based plan for seniors. Income should not be an issue within seniors health programs.

Gordon Voth  
SUN - President

### Recommended read

Our Turn To Parent: Shared Experiences And Practical Advice On Caring For Aging Parents In Canada

Author: [Barbara Dunn](#), [Linda Scott](#)

No one can anticipate what it will be like for you the day you discover you must become a caregiver for one or both of your parents. As you begin to care for them, you will be filled with questions and looking for advice. **Our Turn to Parent** shows you how to work with your parent to become their caregiver and their champion, and it provides the tools you need to make decisions and feel confident that you are doing right by your aging parents. With stories from real lives, it also offers honest and personal anecdotes about surviving these trying times.

**Our Turn to Parent** offers practical advice on

- deciding when you need to step in and help
- developing the caregiver relationship with your parents
- discussing with the family your parents' hopes and plans for the future
- adapting the home so that it is safe and comfortable for their evolving needs
- finding appropriate care and help in your community
- choosing the right place for your parent to live should independent living no longer be possible
- navigating the medical system
- organizing your parents' finances before they become incapacitated
- making clear your parents' personal care and end-of-life wishes
- caring for yourself

### SUN CASH Raffle #7 Spring Fling

Congratulations to the following SUN members:

Ticket #109- B.Martin           St.Albert  
Ticket #257- J.Zorzut           Tofield  
Ticket #629-B.Querengesser   Edm.

Each of these lucky members received a cash prize of \$468.00 With over 700 tickets sold once again the cash raffle was a success.

Thanks to all those members that purchased tickets, over \$2,000.00 was raised for SUN.

Our first cash raffle was Dec 2005 after 7 raffles 4449 tickets have been sold and over \$11,000.00 has been raised for SUN activities.

## PROPERTY TAX DEFERMENT PROGRAM

A Tax Deferment Program was established in the province of British Columbia in 1974. This Property Tax Deferment Plan allows an individual to apply to defer payment of annual property taxes on their home if they are 55 years of age or older, widowed or a disabled person as defined by regulation and a Canadian Citizen or a landed immigrant and has lived in BC for at least 1 year. The applicant must have a minimum equity in their home of 25% of the current assessed value determined by BC Assessment

Many seniors and disabled persons believed they had retired in good financial shape with a satisfactory fixed income, only to discover that increases in auto insurance, the cost of home maintenance and repairs, steadily increasing municipal property taxes and the development of holes in the health care system, have started to erode their retirement savings

Municipalities should provide a modern, innovative financing alternative to assist senior homeowners and disabled persons to remain living longer in their principal residence next to life long neighbors who indirectly provide them with a measure of safety, security and friendship. This ability to defer payment of municipal taxes would in effect provide low income seniors and disabled persons with an additional amount of income to significantly supplement their annual pension income

This Plan would allow senior homeowners and disabled persons to enjoy the benefits and rights of home ownership along with peace of mind that comes from not having to worry about property taxes. The deferral of taxes will allow homeowners to improve their standard of living today, while using their home equity to pay property taxes tomorrow. While a tax deferral program may not be right for everybody, it does allow each person to make the individual decision for themselves, and many seniors and disabled persons would appreciate knowing that a financial assistance plan has been designed by their municipality, is in place should unforeseen changes in their retirement finances circumstances occur. If older homeowners see the advantage of deferring their property tax in order to stay in their homes, these plans have a role to play.

An individual can apply for tax deferment upon receipt of their property tax notice. The current taxes must be fully paid. They complete an Application for Deferment of Property Taxes, all eligible registered owners of the residence must sign the agreement and the completed application is returned to their municipal office for processing before the property tax due date. All applications are forwarded to a centralized property tax deferment office which will confirm receipt and determine your eligibility. All administration of the program takes place from one location. If the application is approved a certified copy of the signed agreement will be registered as a lien in the Land Title Office. This lien will secure all administration fees and charges, deferred taxes and interest accrued under the agreement. The agreement will remain in effect until the above amounts are paid. An individual may repay all or part of the deferred taxes and interest at any time without penalty.

BC also charges administration fees and interest on the tax deferred amounts. A one time administration of \$60.00 is added to new deferment agreements, a \$10.00 annual renewal fee is added to accounts with renewal applications and simple interest is charged on their deferment account at a rate set every 6 months tied to the rate at which the province borrows money.

If a senior or disabled person decided against a Property Tax Deferment Plan only because they do not want to leave their property to their heirs with taxes owing, they should consult with their children to see how they feel. Most families would prefer to see their parents live as comfortably as possible. A financial gift from a parent on their death will not compensate the child(ren) if they feel that they have gained something at the expense of their parents health, happiness or peace of mind.

It is with these thoughts in mind we request the Government of Alberta to introduce required legislation to provide a Property Tax Deferment Plan for Alberta. Your Board of Directors strongly supports this initiative and will continue to advocate for its enactment.

## Guest Column – David Eggen

At one point in John Hughes' classic 1986 movie *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, John Candy and Steve Martin carelessly turn off an exit ramp and end up traveling the wrong way on a four-lane highway. When concerned citizens in another car try to tell them they are going the wrong way, John Candy is dismissive and arrogant, exclaiming to Steve Martin, "How would he know where we are going?" and so the two buffoons continue at full speed down the wrong way. Suddenly, two semi-trailer trucks racing side by side appear on the horizon and a head-on collision is imminent. But in the fine tradition of slapstick comedy, their car somehow scrapes between the two trucks and the hapless comedians continue with their misadventures.

Real life is not so forgiving, and there's nothing remotely funny about more health cuts in store for Alberta. Health Minister Ron Liepert and Alberta Health Services CEO Stephen Duckett—with Premier Stelmach calling directions from somewhere in the back seat—have sent us all hurtling down the wrong way with more cuts, and putting both our health and our pocketbooks in jeopardy.

Liepert, in his usual fashion, refuses to tell Albertans "where we are going" with his health-care plans. But what we have seen so far tells a pretty clear story. A hiring freeze has been implemented, so hundreds of health-care jobs sit vacant. At the same time, overtime has been limited, which is leading to increased stress and exhausted staff. As a result, surgeries are being delayed and even cancelled, and Albertans are not getting the level of care they were before. And not just so-called elective surgeries like joint replacement are being delayed. Surgeons are reporting the delay of cancer surgeries for multiple weeks due to the crisis. Plus, the vaunted Mazankowski Health Centre, our supposed jewel, sits empty awaiting health-care professionals to bring it to life. Furthermore, Liepert is examining delisting medically necessary services, has ended universality for seniors' pharmaceuticals and downloaded costs for care in nursing homes onto seniors and their families.

You get a pretty clear picture of the government's trajectory. Stelmach, Liepert and Duckett are sending our health-care vehicle hurtling the wrong way at highway speeds. Liepert and Duckett say they must make the cuts to save money, but most of these cuts only postpone an inevitable expense, or download the cost onto the individual. Either way, these cuts will cost us all more in the end and the quality of our health care will suffer.

The government's warnings of "unsustainable health care" have returned, right on cue, to match the latest rounds of cuts. As it happens, health expenditures in relation to gross domestic product in Alberta have stayed at between five and seven per cent for the last 15 years. We continue to compare favorably to other jurisdictions. The Canadian average is about 10 per cent, France and Switzerland are at about 11 per cent and the United States is at 15 per cent. To me, this sounds pretty sustainable.

This helps to reveal the real agenda behind Liepert's and Duckett's draconian actions. It is not about "saving Medicare" or responding to the recession. People don't stop getting sick when the economy is weak. The Alberta government's real plan is to destabilize our health-care system so it can implement private, for-profit experiments to "fix" Medicare. They are purposefully breaking the health-care system so they can hire private contractors to repair it at inflated prices.

Continued from page 10

## Guest Column – David Eggen

The research about private versus public health care is universally conclusive: private, for-profit health care costs more. A library full of studies have been done looking at the comparative costs -the Conference Board of Canada, Canadian Institute for Health Information, Wellesley Institute, Consumers' Association of Canada and the Parkland Institute have all done substantive research on the topic. Their conclusions are the same: Canadians and Albertans would be wise to stick with a publicly financed, publicly administered, single-payer health-care system. It is true that delivering quality public health care doesn't come without costs. And medicare is by no means perfect. Too many services are excluded, wait lists can be too long and still too many people fall between the cracks. But it can be improved affordably. Where there is a wrong way, there most certainly is a better way available, too.

What the Alberta government needs to do is give up on its misguided attempts to insert the profit motive into medicare, and commit once and for all to a publicly funded and delivered health-care system --which is what Albertans want. We need to start putting our energies into improving health care, which we can do so without stretching the budget. We need to look at new models for delivering primary care, such as nurse practitioners and teams of health professionals. We need to expand the medicare umbrella so that it offers a more complete range of care--including pharmacare--to Albertans. And we need to adopt more measures aimed at keeping people healthy in the first place, because as Tommy Douglas once said, "in the long run it's cheaper to keep people well than to be patching them up after they are sick."

Our main problem in Alberta is not the cost of our health-care vehicle, but the direction the government is driving the car. Albertans need to become more vocal; we need to shout as loudly as we can that the government is driving us the wrong way and demand that it turn the car around.

Call your MLA and tell them so. Join our campaign at:  
[www.friendsofmedicare.ca](http://www.friendsofmedicare.ca).

We need to get the message to government before the semi's come bearing down on us.

David Eggen is Executive Director of Friends of Medicare

## An exercise for your children/grandchildren on aging...

1. List 10 of the most important activities in your life
2. Imagine you are 65; eliminate 1 activity & explain why this activity is no longer an option
3. Imagine you are 70; eliminate 2 more & explain why these are no longer an option
4. Imagine you are 75; eliminate 2 more & explain why these are no longer an option
5. Imagine you are 80; eliminate 2 more & explain why these are no longer an option
6. Imagine you are 85; eliminate 2 more & explain why these are no longer an option
7. This is not imagination...This is reality for many elderly seniors.

**It's Never Too Early or Too Late, to Start The Conversation:**

**Talk to Your Family about your Changing Lifestyle Needs for today and tomorrow.**

## Office News

Please assist the administrative office by updating SUN with any changes to your contact information:

Mailing address, phone number, new/cancelled email addresses.

**The SUN office will be closed  
July 10 – 19 & July 31 – Aug 31**

**Messages will be picked up weekly.**

The Switchboard operator is available to take messages:

Mon-Fri 8:00AM-5:00PM

Lunch 12:00-1:00PM daily

Our office administrator is available:  
Fall & Winter hours

Mon-Wed-Fri

10:00AM-3:00PM

**780-449-1816**

Please note we are occasionally out of the office on business during these hours. It is recommended to phone before coming to the administrative office.

Sun's administrative office is moving within the Sherwood Business center to a larger office. There will be no changes to our phone, fax, mailing or email address.

### Attention all SUN members with Email accessibility.

The Sun office deals with many returned emails, the majority are returned with sender unknown or mailbox full messages. How can you help? Remember to regularly empty your inbox, delete messages or file them in other folders. If you have provided your email address for communication be sure to add SUN to your address book.

[unitenow@telus.net](mailto:unitenow@telus.net)

## the OPTIMUM WELLNESS CLINIC



### CHELATION THERAPY

*Will it work  
for you?*

Chelation therapy is the office administration of IV treatment for heart disease, circulation disease, stroke, macular degeneration, arthritis and other degenerative illnesses that increasingly threaten the old and the not-so-old alike.

It works by removing accumulated metals from the system freeing the body to heal itself. Many patients have avoided more aggressive medical or surgical treatment with its use allowing a healthier, more productive life.

*Call, write or visit the Clinic for a free  
information package on Chelation Therapy.*

**356 Saddleback Road (27 Ave)  
Edmonton, AB T6J 4R7 Ph. 439-1200**

## Membership Renewal

If you are a lifetime member or your renewal is:  
**Due September 2009 or later** there will be  
**NO renewal notice** enclosed.

If your membership is due for renewal:  
**June, July or August 2009** enclosed there will be a  
**Yellow** renewal notice.

If your renewal is past-due, there will be a **Pink** renewal  
reminder enclosed.

For specific details as to when your membership is due  
for renewal, please contact Lynn at the SUN office.

780-449-1816

**ARE YOU DUE FOR RENEWAL???**